Calling the fallen: French veteran mobilisation of the war dead on Armistice Day 1919-2009

Sally Carlton
Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

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Abstract

Unbreakable links exist between war survivors, war victims and war remembrance which render it almost impossible for veterans to avoid mention of their lost comrades when reflecting on their war experience. However, the annual commemoration of *11 novembre*, commemorating the Armistice of 11 November 1918 which ended World War One, provides French veterans with an especially powerful opportunity to 'mobilise' their fallen comrades. Two specific issues prompt ex-combatants to mobilise the fallen on Armistice Day. Firstly, in drawing on the dead, veterans intentionally encourage remembrance of the war experience. Secondly, they use Armistice Day commemoration to not only contemplate their past life under arms, but also to recognise and promote lessons for the present and future. Evoking the dead adds emotional and historic depth to these aspirations and admonitions.

There are two methods by which veterans mobilise the fallen: the enactment of rituals designed to facilitate communion between the living and the dead and the use of certain spaces associated with war and wartime death. Through these means, veterans are able to call upon their fallen comrades to add potency to their visions of post-war life. The three primary 'lessons' of war promoted by the veterans are values, unity and peace. This thesis considers each of these methods and motivations.

The striking observation of this thesis is the regularity and predictability of veteran discourse in relation to Armistice Day and the fallen. While the persistence of a certain mode of discourse is perhaps not unexpected given the highly stylised and repetitive nature of commemoration, the inflexibility of veteran discourse is still surprising given that the thesis considers discourse published by the press of different veteran associations at both the national and regional levels, and by different generations of fire. This study explains the invariance of discourse through the notion of 'layers' of memory. In the aftermath of World War One, veterans met to talk of their experiences. From this sharing of 'real' memories developed a homogenous 'imagined' memory promoted by the veteran associations, primarily as a means of aiding survivors come to terms with the past through a certain understanding of the war experience and certain expectations of post-war behaviour. This imagined memory was then adopted by French veterans of later conflicts as 'mythologised' memory because it offered emotional support but also legitimacy, imperative to men and women whose wars were not granted the same status by the government or population as World War One.

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List of acronyms

A.C. ---------- anciens combattants
[veterans]

A.C.V.G. ---------- anciens combattants et victimes de guerre
[veterans and war victims]

A.C.V.J. ---------- Anciens Combattants Volontaires Juifs
[Jewish Volunteer Veterans; association founded March 1928]

A.E.C. ---------- Association des Ecrivains Combattants
[Association of Veteran-Writers; founded 1919; founding members include Gabriel Boissy, Roland Dorgelès, Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, Maurice Genevoix, Henry Malherbe, Jacques Péricard and Gaston Vidal]

A.F.N. ---------- Afrique française du Nord
[French North Africa]

A.G.M.G. ---------- Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre
[General Association of War-Disabled Veterans; founded 1915; disbanded 2004; key personality: Henri Lévèque]

A.G.M.G.-U.N.M.R.A.C. ---------- Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre - Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants
[General Association of War-Disabled Veterans-National Union of War-Disabled and Incapacitated Veterans; founded 1957 from fusion of two disabled veterans' groups; disbanded 2004; key personality: General Dominique Surville]

A.M.Y.G. ---------- Association des Mutilés des Yeux de Guerre
[Association of War-Disabled Veterans with Eye Injuries; founded 1923]

A.N.C.A.C. ---------- Association Nationale Des Cheminots Anciens Combattants, Résistants, Prisonniers et Victimes de Guerre
[National Association of Veteran, Resistance, Prisoner and War Victim Railwaymen; founded 1931]

A.N.Z.A.C. ---------- Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

A.R.A.C. ---------- Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants
[Republican Association of Veterans; founded 1917; key personalities: Henri Barbusse, Paul Vaillant-Couturier; affiliated with the French Communist Party]

C.D.I.H.P. ---------- Commission Départementale de l'Information historique pour la Paix
[Departmental Commission of Historic Information for Peace; government initiative established in 1983]

C.E.A.C. ---------- Confédération Européenne des Anciens Combattants
[European Confederation of Veterans; founded May 1963]

C.I.A.M.A.C. ---------- Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés et Anciens Combattants
[International Conference of Associations of War-Disabled and Other Veterans; founded September 1925]

C.N.A.C. ---------- Commission Nationale d'Action Civique
[National Commission of Civic Action; initiative of the U.N.C.; formerly headed by Claude Le Barillier]

C.N.C.V.R. ---------- Confédération nationale des combattants volontaires de la Résistance
[National Confederation of Volunteer Resistance Fighters; founded 1954; disbanded 2005]

C.N.R.D. ---------- Concours national de la Résistance et de la Déportation
[National Competition of the Resistance and Deportation; established 1961]

D.M.P.A. ---------- Direction de la mémoire, du patrimoine et des archives
[government body responsible for culture, 'memory' and heritage]

D.R.A.C. ---------- Ligue des Droits du Religieux Ancien Combattant
[League of the Rights of the Religious Veteran; founded 1924]

F.I.D.A.C. ---------- Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants
[Inter-Allied Federation of Veterans; founded 1920]

F.N.A.C.A. ---------- Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants d'Algérie
[National Federation of Veterans of Algeria; left-wing organisation; founded 1958]

F.N.A.M. ---------- Fédération Nationale André Maginot des Anciens combattants et Victimes de guerre
[André Maginot National Federation of Veterans and War Victims; continuation of a veterans' group founded after the Franco-Prussian War; adopted Maginot's name in 1953]

F.N.C.R. ---------- Fédération nationale des combattants républicains
[National Federation of Republican Combatants; founded 1922; explicitly left-wing]

F.N.P.G.I. ---------- Fédération Nationale des Plus Grands Invalides
[National Federation of the Most Seriously-Injured Veterans; founded 1922]

F.O.P.A.C. ---------- Fédération ouvrière et paysanne des Anciens Combattants
[Worker and Peasant Federation of Veterans; founded 1916 by trade unionists]

N.A.T.O. ---------- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

O.N.A.C. ---------- Office national des anciens combattants
[National Office of Veterans; created 1946]

O.N.A.C.V.G. ---------- Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre
[National Office of Veterans and War Victims]

O.P.E.X. ---------- Opérations Extérieures
[External Operations]

P.C.F. ---------- Parti communiste français
[French Communist Party]

P.O.W. ---------- Prisoner of War

P.T.S.D. ---------- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

R.S.L. ---------- Returned Servicemen's League
[Australian veterans' organisation; founded June 1916]

S.G.A. ---------- Secrétariat général pour l'administration
[General Secretariat for Administration; governmental body]

T.O.E. ---------- Théâtres d'Opérations Extérieures
[Theatres of External Operations; areas outside of metropolitan France to which French troops are today deployed]

U.B.F. ---------- Union des Blessés de la Face
[Union of Facially-disfigured Veterans; founded 1921]

U.D.S. ---------- Union Départementale de la Seine
[Departmental Union of the Seine; founded 1928 to group together veterans' associations of the Seine *département*; key personality: Jean Volvey]

U.F. ---------- Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, Victimes de guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale
[Federal Union of French Associations of Veterans, War Victims and Youth of the Union Fédérale; founded February 1918; key personalities include René Cassin, Henri Pichot and Léon Viala,]

U.F.A.C. ---------- Union française des Associations de Combattants et de Victimes de Guerre
[French Union of Combatant and War Victim Associations; founded 14 May 1945 upon the initiative of Charles de Gaulle]

U.N.C. ---------- Union Nationale des Combattants
[National Union of Combatants; founded 1918; key personalities include Jean Goy and Henry Rossignol]

U.N.C.-A.F.N. ---------- Union Nationale des Combattants-Afrique du Nord
[National Union of Combatants - North Africa]

U.N.M.R.(A.C.) ---------- Union Nationale des Mutilés et Réformés (et Anciens Combattants)
[National Union of War-Disabled and Incapacitated Veterans; founded 1917; amalgamated with (and Other) A.G.M.G. 1957]

U.P.F.I. ---------- Union Patriotique des Français israélites
[Patriotic Union of Israeli Frenchmen; founded June 1934; ultra-nationalist; key personality: Edmond Bloch]

V.G. ---------- victimes de guerre
[war victims]

Glossary

11 novembre ---------- 11 November (Armistice Day)

14 juillet ---------- 14 July (Bastille Day)

ancien(s) combattant(s) ---------- veteran
[literally: former combatant]

Ancien Régime ---------- Old Regime
[pre-1789 Revolution]

autel de la Patrie ---------- altar of the Homeland

bleuet ---------- cornflower

devoir ---------- duty

devoir de mémoire ---------- duty of memory

esprit [ancien] combattant ---------- combatant/veteran spirit

fédérés ---------- literally: federate
[selected political delegates invited to Paris for Fête de la Fédération]

Fête de la Fédération ---------- Festival of the Federation
[celebrated on 14 July 1790 in commemoration of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille]

fusillé ---------- an executed person

grand(s) homme(s) ---------- great man/men
[used to describe influential figures in French cultural and political history]

grand(s) mutilé(s) ---------- severely disabled veteran

lieu(x) de mémoire ---------- site(s) of memory

lieu(x) de souvenir ---------- site(s) of remembrance

lillois ---------- person/people of Lille

métropole ---------- metropolis
[*France métropole* refers to the country of France; as opposed to 'Greater France' which incorporates colonies, *territories d'outre-mer* and *départements d'outre-mer*]

monument(s) aux morts ---------- war memorial(s)
[literally: monument to the dead]

mort pour la France ---------- died for France

mutilé(s) ---------- disabled veteran(s)

Patrie ---------- Homeland

poilu(s) ---------- French soldier of World War One
[literally: the hairy one(s)]

rayonnement ---------- literally: radiance
[used to describe the dissemination of French political and cultural thought across the globe]

réformé(s) ---------- incapacitated soldier(s)

Relais Sacré ---------- literally: Sacred Relay
[Armistice Day ritual in which Flames travel from the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Paris to Brussels and vice versa]

résistant(s) ---------- member of the Resistance

Union Sacrée ---------- literally: Sacred Union
[used to describe alignment of French political groups during World War One]

vin d'honneur---------- literally: wine of honour

Note on source usages

All translations from the original French into English are the author's unless otherwise stated. The use of italics and bold in the English translations all appeared in the original text, unless otherwise indicated. As well, concept nouns which were capitalised in the French text have been kept as such in the translation, because this method of emphasis provides an insight into the themes considered important by the *anciens combattants* [veterans].[1] However, veteran-writers have more commonly followed the grammatical rules of French and have *not* capitalised concept nouns; in these cases, the words have not been capitalised in the translation, either. Alternatively, words which should be capitalised ('Armistice,' 'Great War' and 'Eternal Flame' provide the most obvious examples) and yet were not, have also been left in the original format.

Commonly, veteran-journalists sign off their articles with key biographical details including name, title and associative affiliation, which not only demonstrate personal prestige but also inter-association relations (the writings of veteran representatives are sometimes published in newspapers of other associations). These details have been included in the footnotes exactly as they were found in the publications. Sometimes, therefore, a piece of writing is introduced in the thesis by a full name and sometimes by initials, even if penned by the same veteran.

Throughout the thesis, French words have been italicised but names of veteran associations have been kept in their original French and not italicised. For an English-language equivalent of these groups, see the List of acronyms.

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[1] '*Ancien combattant*' equates to the English 'veteran.' Capitalised nouns include *Ancien Combattant*, Association, Child, Combatant Movement, Comrade, Country, Cult, Dead, Death, Duty, Field of Honour, Flag, Flame, Future, Generation, Hero, History, Justice, Knights, Life, Liberty, Material, Memory, Men, *Monuments aux Morts*, Nation, *Patrie*, Peace, *Poilu*, Public Authorities, Slavery, Society, Spirit, State, War, War Victim, World, Youth.

Preface

Antoine Prost, the undisputed doyen of French World War One veteran historiography, introduced the first volume of his *Les anciens combattants et la société française* by stating that, "my Algerian experience allows me to imagine the reality of the Great War." He then listed elements common to the Algerian War and the 1914-1918 trench experience: the separation from loved ones, the immersion in an alien universe in which time and habits change, the ever-present threat of death, and the bonds of camaraderie formed between fellow soldiers. However, he remained convinced that neither sentimental affiliation nor the respect and gratitude he felt towards the *anciens combattants* who opened their archives and their hearts to his research affected the impartiality of his work.[2]

Although Prost recognised the differences between the conflicts,[3] the idea remains implicit in his argument that all veterans, regardless of the war in which they fought, have experienced similar ordeals and feelings. If Prost believed himself capable of empathising with the veterans of World War One by virtue of his military engagement, what of commentators who have not experienced warfare? French veterans (of all twentieth century wars) have commonly claimed that civilians cannot understand their situation. Does this experiential void enhance or hinder historical analysis of warfare and its actors? Render it more or less objective? While a definite answer is no doubt impossible, one factor is certain: veteran and non-veteran commentators on the experiences and consequences of soldiering will display different levels of engagement and partiality.

This thesis considers veteran discourse which 'mobilises' the fallen on Armistice Day over the ninety years since the end of World War One. The long timeframe

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[2] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 1.

[3] Prost admitted, for example, that "attacking a handful of marksmen whose heaviest weaponry was a machine gun with the support of tanks, planes and artillery fire gave us no reason to be proud or to think of ourselves as heroes." Prost, *1: Histoire*, p. 1.

means that it is not only the writing of Great War veterans which is analysed, but material produced by veterans of all wars in which France has deployed troops since 1914. Arising from this combination of homogenous subject matter and heterogeneous sample group are three discernable 'layers' of memory of World War One. These layers have been termed 'real' memories (as expressed by Great War veterans about their own individual experiences), 'imagined' memory (which constitutes a homogenous narrative developed from these countless personal memories which was absorbed by Great War veterans and further disseminated as 'true') and 'mythologised' memory (espoused by non-World War One veterans writing about the Great War and its commemoration). In this framework, if Prost wrote of the trench experience, for example, he would be using mythologised memory; he did not 'remember' that exact experience but because of his involvement in later warfare he was, as he himself recognised, at least partly able to relate to the experiences of his forebears.

Since a historian's beliefs are impossible to ignore or cast aside entirely,[4] it is necessary to consider the personal standpoint of the author of this thesis. Far removed from the realities of soldiering, the young, female, non-French, non-combatant author is considering the *ancien combattant* world from the perspective of an outsider. It is not only a matter of (lack of) experience, however; she is also operating from within an entirely different layer of memory - that of a *non-veteran* mythologised memory. In other words, the author has very little sense of the situation expressed in World War One veterans' real memories. The only means by which she can connect to this past is through the sources she has studied. The distance which separates the author from her subject matter might on the one hand be seen to undermine her ability to comprehend the veterans' realities, and on the other hand privilege her neutrality. Yet, over the course of her research, she has come to know many *anciens combattants*; their story is in part now her own, and vice versa. The thesis is the product of a not-wholly impartial witness, therefore, but

[4] Henry Rousso, 'Pour une histoire de la mémoire collective: l'après Vichy,' *Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire du temps présent*, no. 18, 1991, pp. 163-176, p. 173.

of someone emotionally invested in the veteran community, albeit not as much as is the case for veteran commentators such as Prost. This personal bias must be considered when reading the thesis.

This thesis came together with the assistance of a large number of people. The author would first like to mention and extend her heartfelt thanks to her supervisors Rob Stuart, Mark Edele and Hélène Jaccomard, for their help and dedication over the last few years. Of course, she would also like to thank her parents, Bill and Caroline Carlton, for their encouragement, support and love. Many friends and peers have also assisted her with (or distracted her from!) the task at hand. Particular thanks to Jonathon Dix, Wendy Grace, Phillip Keirle, Tarryn Phillips and Kathryn Punch who read over chapters, translations or footnotes and offered their advice.

The author would also like to thank the members of the *ancien combattant* community whose assistance made this thesis possible. Thank you for allowing her to look through your archives and for helping her sift through material; for donating books relating to the *ancien combattant* world; for your kind invitations to Armistice and Bastille Day parades, to the ceremony at Fromelles on 19 July 2010, and to the A.E.C.'s annual *Après-midi du livre*; for your prompt responses to her queries; for providing her with delicious French meals and the occasional glass of champagne; and for your assistance in countless other ways. Too many people helped to mention them all, but the author would particularly like to thank Jean-Claude Rénard and Michel Depriestier (Union National des Combattants, Lille), Pierre Amestoy (Union Fédérale, Lille), Serge Cours (Union Fédérale, Paris), Hughes Dalleau and Michel De Muizon (Union National des Combattants, Paris), Raphaël Vahé, Pierre Gilbert and Paul Markidès (Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Paris), Catherine Lepareur and Eric Daniel (the *Journal des Combattants*, Paris), General Dominique Surville (President of the former Associaion Générale des Mutilés de Guerre, Paris) and Françoise Lemaire (Association des Ecrivains Combattants, Paris).

Introduction

Chapter One

Being familiar with both the military and civilian realms, ex-combatants occupy a unique position within society, such that their grievances, successes and stories can be utilised to illuminate the experiences of the world at large.[1] This verity has become increasingly apparent with the unprecedented scale of military engagement in the twentieth century, which has inextricably interwoven veterans' history with that of their nations, governments and people.[2] Following the two World Wars and numerous other conflicts of the period, many ex-combatants formed or joined veterans' organisations, which both legitimised and homogenised their individual points of view. The hundreds of thousands of men and women who had perished whilst under arms were of fundamental importance to such associations, with their 'absent presence' to a large degree formulating and lending authority to veteran agendas.[3] Analysing newspapers published by selected French *ancien combattant*

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[1] Isser Woloch, *The French veteran from the Revolution to the Restoration*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979, p. xvi. Woloch noted that veterans' issues did not surface sporadically, but rather were constant themes throughout the revolutionary and Restoration eras. In this way, he argued, studying the veterans provided him with a "veritable barometer" of the overall experience. The same conclusions were drawn by Elliott Pennell Fagerberg, who looked at the attitudes and activities of the *anciens combattants* towards French foreign policy in the late 1920s. Elliott Pennell Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' PhD thesis, Université de Genève, thèse no. 175, Ambilly, Annemasse: Imprimerie Les Presses de Savoie, 1966, pp. 19, 228 and 258. Prost, too, in concluding the first volume of his three-volume investigation into the French veterans, noted that the attitudes of veterans provide an insight into the attitudes of the wider population. Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 203.

[2] Particularly during the interwar years, veterans constituted a large percentage of the individuals who exerted influence over the moral, political and economic of France. Janine Bourdin, 'Les anciens combattants et la célébration du 11 novembre 1938,' in René Rémond et Janine Bourdin (eds.), *La France et le Français en 1938-1939,*' Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1978, pp. 95-114, p. 97.

[3] Women are "statistically underrepresented" in Western national armies, in the words of David A. Gerber, a scholar of disabled veterans. David A. Gerber, 'Introduction: Finding disabled veterans in history,' in David A. Gerber (ed.), *Disabled veterans in history*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 1-51, p. 1. In recognition of the far greater proportion of male soldiers (and therefore, male war dead and male veterans), this thesis most often refers to the group as either 'veterans' or 'ex-service*men*.' Despite the gendered bias of this appellation, there is no doubt that women have been as affected by and as involved in war as men. This point was made by Robert Wohl in reference to World War One during discussion with Jay Winter: Robert Wohl in Jay Winter and Robert Wohl, 'The Great War: Midwife to modern memory?' in Jay Winter (ed.), *The legacy of*

associations, this thesis considers the relationship between these ex-soldiers and their fallen comrades as expressed in relation to *11 novembre* [Armistice Day],[4] which commemorates the end of World War One on 11 November 1918. Of specific concern are the techniques which enable veterans to 'mobilise' the fallen on this date, and the reasons which prompt such action. The most striking observation is the uniformity of *ancien combattant* discourse throughout the ninety years under consideration, despite the many major changes during this period and the fact that veterans of different associations and 'generations of fire' have produced these texts. The phenomenon of discursive invariability is explained with the concept of 'layers' of memory.

This Introduction commences by defining the central premise of this thesis; namely, what exactly is entailed by veteran 'mobilisation' of the war dead. It then introduces and examines existing historical studies on the French *anciens combattants*. This approach serves firstly to situate this thesis on veteran discourse and ideas in its intellectual context, and secondly to demonstrate how it revitalises the still under-considered area of veteran scholarship. Discussion of the central observation of this study, and of the various theories put forward to explain this phenomenon, further elucidate the study's innovations and arguments. Finally, the thesis development is outlined chapter by chapter.

This thesis defines 'mobilisation of the war dead' as occurring when veterans reflect upon their fallen comrades, as this action effectively incorporates them into the realm of the living. When veterans talk or write of the disappeared without any background agenda, they 'passively' mobilise the dead. This type of mobilisation involves dialogue and is often individualised, enacted among men and women who

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the Great War: Ninety years on, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009, pp. 159-184, p. 167. The French armed services today accept women into all forces and all positions except the submarine corps for physical reasons. Laurence Duboys Fresney, *Atlas des Français aujourd'hui: dynamiques, modes de vie et valeurs. Préface de Christian Baudelot; cartographie de Claire Levasseur*, Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2006, p. 70.

[4] *11 novembre* is the French term for Armsitice Day, referring to the date on which the Armistice was signed rather than the document itself. For more information on this discrepancy, see 'Appendix I - Languge and translation.'

personally knew those who died. Alternatively, 'active' mobilisation occurs when an individual veteran invokes the 'war dead' (as an anonymous, homogenous mass) for a particular reason and with an audience in mind. This thesis is concerned solely with active mobilisation (henceforth referred to simply as mobilisation), determining how veterans use the dead on Armistice Day to set in motion their associations' agendas, and why this process occurs.

Mobilisation of the fallen is carried out by the leaders and journalists of veterans' groups. Occupying privileged positions within the veteran world, such individuals believe themselves entitled to act and speak on behalf of members of their organisation - and, often, on behalf of all *anciens combattants*. Resulting from such consciously inclusive rhetoric is a 'community' of veterans, a construct which represents not reality but an imagined, mythic ideal. In other words, in illustrating how and why veterans/*anciens combattants* mobilise the war dead on Armistice Day, this thesis refers purely to the opinions and actions of the veteran thinkers and agitators whose writing is published in official press organs.[5]

This study favours the term 'mobilise' because it underscores the military aspect of the veteran-war dead connection. In addition, verbs such as 'draw upon,' 'rally' and 'resurrect,' which illustrate the ways in which veterans call up the dead for their own uses, are employed synonymously. While the focus of this thesis is veteran mobilisation of the war dead, the term 'mobilise' is applied throughout the work to other situations in which a group of people is deliberately and consciously roused into action by another. The first instance of this mobilisation is when veterans draw attention to the least fortunate members of their community,[6] specifically their

[5] For more information on the differentiation between veterans and veterans leaders/journalists, see Chapter Two 'Defining '*ancien combattant*': Veterans, the war dead and identity.'

[6] The *anciens combattants* refer incessantly to the idea of a veteran 'community' and a veteran 'movement.' As is noted later in the thesis (particularly in Chapter Two which details the different associations and Chapter Eight which discusses the theme of unity), the veteran population in France was far from homogenous, with ex-servicemen expressing a range of attitudes on all topics. Since veteran-leaders, -journalists and -activists use the terms in legitimising their activity on behalf of all *anciens combattants*, and it is these same people who pen the discourse under consideration in this thesis, the terms have also been appropriated here.

disabled comrades or the ‘veteran dead’ (an appellation devised for soldiers who have died following the termination of war, either through war-related injuries or of natural causes). Another case in point is when veterans mobilise adherents of their associations, members of the French public and politicians sympathetic to their cause to physically attend and emotionally engage with commemoration, as an audience is required for reference to the war dead to have any resonance. This thesis also uses ‘mobilisation’ and its antonym ‘demobilisation’ in the traditional sense to refer to the action of readying soldiers for, or returning soldiers from, war. Context makes it apparent whether symbolic or authentic mobilisation is occurring.

Indelible links exist between war survivors, war victims and war remembrance which render it almost impossible for veterans to avoid mention of their lost comrades when reflecting on their combatant experience. Nonetheless, two specific issues prompt ex-soldiers to mobilise the fallen on Armistice Day. Firstly, in mobilising the dead, veterans intentionally attempt to counter the process of, and potential for, forgetting. Secondly, the *anciens combattants* use Armistice Day commemoration not only to contemplate their past life under arms, but also to recognise and promote visions for the present and future based on their familiarity with war. They support and add emotional and historic depth to these aspirations and offers of advice by bringing up the dead. Pity, shame, guilt, pride and disgust are central to this process, with veterans targeting different feelings depending on the circumstances. In other words, the veterans mobilise the dead to counter their fears that the French population, state representatives and members of their own community will either forget or disregard the millions of deaths. Fighting against these two scenarios is fundamental not only to veterans’ agendas but also to their self-identification.

There are two standard practices which enable veterans to mobilise the dead on Armistice Day: the enactment of rituals and the use of space. The motivations for invoking the dead are more varied, but can be categorised into the promotion of republicanism, patriotism and civic responsibility as favoured values; appeals for

unity; and appeals for peace. The French war historian Annette Becker has recognised that in providing consolation to mourners and reiterating the sacrifice of the fallen, the act of war commemoration is situated between the realms of the living and the dead.[7] For this reason, Armistice Day provides an especially powerful moment for resurrecting war victims; festival is in itself an instrument of mobilisation.[8] The *anciens combattants* constantly ask the population, "Was this day [11 November 1918] not the most prodigious in all French History?"[9] thus capitalising upon the date's historical magnitude and exceptionality.[10]

Veterans employ many tactics to commandeer the dead. On the one hand, they cite the exemplary social and moral behaviour of the fallen to inspire similar levels of devotion from the living. On the other hand, the example of the dead is used reprovingly to illustrate the discrepancies between the dead and the living, the past and the present, in order to chastise or criticise people for their perceived weaknesses and follies. This inspiring/criticising duality means that the dead can be

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[7] Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire 1914-1930*, Paris: Armand Colin Éditeur, 1994, p. 105.

[8] Danielle Tartakowsky, 'Les fêtes de la droite populaire,' in Alain Corbin, Noëlle Gerôme and Danielle Tartakowsky (eds.), *Les usages politiques des fêtes aux XIXe-XXe siècles. Actes du colloque les 22 et 23 novembre 1990 à Paris*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994, pp. 305-316, p. 305.

[9] Edmond Bloch, '11 novembre: jour de la fierté française,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 47e année, nouvelle série, no. 844, samedi 17 novembre 1962, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1. A lawyer by trade, Edmond Bloch was also a prominent member of the interwar and post-World War Two veteran community. Decorated with the Croix de Guerre and an Officier of the Legion of Honour, Bloch published widely, was very active in the U.N.C., maintained links with the A.G.M.G. and Croix de Feu, and was a friend of Georges Lebecq (President of the Parisian veterans' group) and Jean Goy (National President of the U.N.C. during much of the 1930s). Philippe E. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs face aux défis des années trente,' *Archives Juives*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2003, pp. 10-24, p. 16. Apparent in the relations he maintained was his right-wing poltical stance. This position was also evident in his central role in the ultra-nationalist Union Patriotique des Français israélites (U.P.F.I.) and his motions to exclude the left-wing associations the A.R.A.C. and the F.O.P. from the Confédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre because of their communist affiliations. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 61.

[10] However, while veterans underscore the exceptionality of *11 novembre*, they do not shy from comparing it to other events if this method can enhance its prestige. For example, Paul Michel appropriated Bastille Day (and hence the legacy of the French Revolution) to link the two national festivals into the single notion of French historical grandeur. Paul Michel, '14 juillet - 11 novembre: grands anniversaires,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 33e année, nouvelle série, no. 124, samedi 17 juillet 1948, p. 1.

mobilised through either the positive notions of 'dying for [a cause]' and 'sacrifice,' which stress the worthiness of wartime death, or the more accusatory notions of 'dying in vain' and 'blood debt' which contrast soldiers' suffering and death with perceived contemporary weaknesses. The latter ideas are used when veterans are particularly discontented with the contemporary situation.

In terms of mobilising the dead to evoke emotion, veterans refer to the fallen either as living soldiers in the past or as corpses in the present. Both these scenarios exercise power over the audience's imagination: allusions to "passing years and disappeared faces"[11] deliberately conjure up images of fallen friends or relatives, while discussion of cadavers - and especially sites where the bodies lie - arouses sentiments of pity and horror, as well as the human fear of death. At times, veterans invite the fallen to rise from the grave to admonish their compatriots in the hope of prompting change. More extreme discourse even mobilises the fallen to exact revenge and forcibly implement 'correct' social behaviour. As well as talking *of* the dead, however, veteran-writers sometimes presume to talk *for* them. Either directly referencing them (using quotation marks to signify speech) or purporting to act as their spokesmen, this is a particularly powerful way of mobilising the dead. In other words, the veterans rhetorically or symbolically mobilise the fallen, attributing agency to lifeless bodies. In spite of their insentient state, however, the dead actually exercise considerable *real* power over the veterans whose sense of duty to perpetuate the memory of war and its victims leads them to continually invoke the fallen. Dead soldiers thus influence - *mobilise*, even - the living, simply by virtue of having died whilst under arms. Thus the veteran-war dead relationship is in actual fact reciprocal.[12]

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[11] François Malval, 'Un jour, une date trop mémorables pour les A.C.,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 3e année, no. 121, dimanche 20 novembre 1921, p. 1.

[12] The war dead-veteran relationship is but one manifestation of the interaction between the dead and the living. This relationship is reciprocal: the dead depend on the living to preserve their institutions and memories, and their example helps those who come after them. Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 158.

Consideration of the veteran-war dead connection is best understood after examination of the veterans themselves. These men and women have been scrutinised in the past by scholars from many disciplines, either on a case-by-case basis or as a group. Medical and sociological experts have for instance delved into the complexities of veterans' physical and psychological health.[13] Historical consideration of ex-combatants has generally produced biographies of outstanding individuals[14] or accounts which detail the development and activities of certain associations. Most veteran histories consider the ex-combatants of one country; the few cross-border studies tend to treat veterans of different nations in separate chapters or articles, with only an introduction outlining the parallels and similarities among nations.[15]

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[13] One of the major fields of medico-psychological investigation into veterans is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or P.T.S.D. See for example the August 2007 *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, which features numerous contributions and rebuttals from medical experts relating to the incidence of P.T.S.D. among veterans. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, August 2007, vol. 52, no. 8, pp. 499-518. One particularly intriguing aspect of this investigation is the discrepancy between immediate and delayed onset of P.T.S.D. On this issue, see for example Z. Solomon, Y. Singer, and A. Blumenfeld, 'Clinical characteristics of delayed and immediate-onset combat-induced post-traumatic stress disorder,' *Military medicine*, vol. 160, no. 9, 1995, pp. 425-430; N. Hermann and G. Eryavec, 'Delayed onset Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in World War II veterans,' *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 39, no. 7, 1994, pp. 439-441. There are also studies which combine science with history. See for example D. Murphy, A. Iversen and N. Greenberg, 'The mental health of veterans,' *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, vol. 154, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 135-138 which contrasts post-Gulf War symptoms with problems experienced by Vietnam War veterans.

[14] For example Micheline Dupray, *Roland Dorgelès*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2000; Roland Leroy, *Vaillant. Préface de Georges Marchais; textes d'Aragon en postface*, Paris: Editions L'Humanité, 1987; Claire Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne de 1930 à 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004; Jean Relinger, *Henri Barbusse: écrivain combattant*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994; Noële Roubaud and R. N. Bréhamet, *Le colonel Picot et les gueules cassées*, Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, 1960.

[15] For example David A. Gerber (ed.), *Disabled Veterans in History*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000. Gerber has also considered disabled veterans from different countries in his articles: David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans and public welfare policy: Comparative and transnational perspectives on western states in the twentieth century,' *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*, vol. 11, 2001, pp. 77-106 and David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans, the state, and the experience of disability in western societies, 1914-1950,' *Journal of Social History*, vol. 36, no. 4, Summer 2003, pp. 899-918. Of the book he edited, Gerber wrote: "[it] is a collection of fourteen essays that contribute to the general history that needs to be written." Gerber, 'Disabled veterans and public welfare policy,' p. 78. See also Stephen R. Ward (ed.), *The War Generation: Veterans of the First World War*, Port Washington, N.Y. and London: Kennikat Press, 1975; Alec Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go? Veterans and the politics of demobilisation,' in Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira, *Irregular Armed Forces and their role in Politics and State Formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 96-117. This research gap is slowly being filled, however, with various comparative studies currently being developed. Among these projects are Mark Edele and Martin Crotty's comparison of Soviet and Australian veterans' welfare systems, and the major collaborative project 'Demobilisation after the two World Wars: Global

The limited international perspective and comparison are striking since themes in veteran discourse have recurred across national boundaries and across the decades since the termination of World War One. Ex-combatants' reactions to the processes of demobilisation and reintegration, their struggle for political, economic and moral recognition, the experience of living with traumatic memories and survivor guilt, and the dilemma of how to remember war - particularly the men and women who did not return - are not nation- or era-specific. On the contrary, these issues have resurfaced in vanquished and victorious countries and with each successive 'generation of fire,' albeit under different designations and with different consequences.[16] One key way in which this thesis deepens understanding of veteran history is through its long-term standpoint, which highlights the invariant themes and language of veteran discourse over nine decades.

In France, the scale of World War One mobilisation led to the creation of the first mass veterans' organisations, which engaged in moral and political advocacy on behalf of the ex-combatant population. France's participation in subsequent wars produced new 'generations of fire,' many of whom joined existing *ancien combattant* organisations. For this reason, several core First World War veteran associations remain central to the French political and social landscape even today. Given the size and influence of the combatant community, its relative neglect in academic work is surprising. One historian of the *anciens combattants* attributed this oversight to the "fragmentation" of the 'veterans' movement.'[17] Indeed, the

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Perspectives' organised by the University of Western Australia and the University College Dublin, led by Mark Edele and Robert Gerwarth.

[16] The effect of war on a soldier's psychological wellbeing is one example of the renaming of a recurrent wartime phenomenon. Soldiers of the American Civil War were thought to suffer from 'nostalgia.' During World War One, mental trauma was labelled 'shell-shock.' For the next global conflict, it was renamed 'combat fatigue' before the appellation 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder' came into use just after the Vietnam War. Jay Winter, *Remembering war: The Great War between memory and history in the twentieth century*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 7-8; Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, 'Telling stories of the war: Ageing veterans coping with their memories through narrative,' *Oral History*, vol. 26, no. 2, Autumn 1998, pp. 57-64, p. 58.

[17] Lynette Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s: An analysis of the nature of *ancien combattant* associations, their aims, activities and achievements,' PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1972, p. 10. Fagerberg also used the term, even going as far as describing the "extreme

quantity and disparity of French veterans' associations have led most researchers to conduct either 'vertical' analyses which focus on the historical development of one particular group, or 'horizontal' analyses which look at a broader group of associations over a more limited timeframe.

Antoine Prost's three-tome *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939*, an example of the 'horizontal' approach to veteran history, is undoubtedly the most influential work on the French veterans.[18] With volumes dedicated to 'History,' 'Sociology' and 'Mentalities and Ideologies,' the enormous scope of material and wealth of primary sources (including conference minutes, personal letters and journals, veterans' literature and official publications) makes it the starting point for any researcher interested in the subject. In addition to this definitive work, Prost has also written numerous articles about the *ancien combattant* population and its place in French society.[19]

Constituting the only major work to detail the origins of the French veterans' movement and its developments until the outbreak of World War Two, Prost's 'History' volume provides invaluable information relating to the associations under consideration in this thesis. It is, however, the section of the 'Mentalities and Ideologies' volume concerned with commemoration which bears most upon this

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fragmentation" of the veteran groups. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 60.

[18] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire; II: Sociologie; III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977.

[19] To cite some of the more significant of Prost's articles and book chapters: Antoine Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne 1933-1938,' in Henri Michel (ed.), *La France et l'Allemagne 1932-1936. Colloque tenu à Paris du 10 au 12 mars 1977*, Paris: CNRS, 1980, pp. 131-148; Antoine Prost, 'Les anciens combattants aux origines de la Légion: les mouvements d'anciens combattants,' in René Rémond (ed.), *Le Gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942: institutions et politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin et Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1972, pp. 115-121; Antoine Prost, 'Combattants et politiciens. Le discours mythologique sur la politique entre les deux guerres,' *Le mouvement social*, no. 85, octobre-décembre 1973, pp. 117-154. Prost continues to write articles on the *anciens combattants*, most recently for the S.G.A./D.M.P.A.-produced *Chemins de la mémoire* magazine. Antoine Prost, 'La naissance des associations d'anciens combattants,' *Les Chemins de la mémoire*, novembre 2009, no. 199, pp. 2-4. This article provides a very brief outline of the development of veterans' associations post-World War One, basically condensing the information contained in *Les anciens combattants et la société française* into three pages.

work and vice versa.[20] To cite one example: Prost labelled the veterans "patriotic pacifists" (which despite combining two seemingly incompatible ideologies, actually perfectly describes the *anciens combattants*' pro-international and pro-France standpoint) in recognition of their treatment of Armistice Day as both a funerary cult of the fallen and a patriotic ceremony.[21] Focusing more wholly on veterans' attitudes towards Armistice Day and over a much greater length of time, this thesis provides evidence to support this appellation. Prost's almost exclusive focus on the interwar years, and the fact that the majority of his work was published over thirty years ago, before recent conceptual innovations in the study of memory and identity formation (which have altered not only how cultural historians, but also the veteran-writers themselves, interpret, use and respond to commemoration), mean that despite his ground-breaking research, there is still much room for developing the cultural aspect of veterans' history.

Whilst Prost traced the development of the *ancien combattant* movement throughout the interwar years, another excellent work focuses solely on the 1930s. Lynette Chaffey's unpublished doctoral dissertation 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s' considers the projects and attitudes of France's ex-servicemen in the particular pre-World War Two political environment.[22] Using interviews and conversations with members of the *ancien combattant* elite as well as association publications, Chaffey's analysis is invaluable in its highly detailed and specific consideration of this era, when, at the peak of both their influence and their political activity, veteran associations were embroiled in the ideological battles which divided the country. Particularly insightful are her considerations of veterans'

[20] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, Ch. 2 'Commémorations collectives. Le culte de souvenir' and Ch. 3 'Le patriotique pacifisme des anciens combattants.'

[21] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Ch. 3 'Le patriotique pacifisme des anciens combattants.'

[22] Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' p. 4. Chaffey has also published articles relating to the French veterans under different names: Lyn Gorman, 'The *anciens combattants* and appeasement: From Munich to war,' *War and Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, October 1992, pp. 73-89; Lyn Gorman, 'War, defeat and occupation: French *anciens combattants* of 1914-18 and the events of 1939-40,' *The French Historian*, vol. 7, no. 1, September 1992, pp. 25-40; Lynette Shaw, 'The *anciens combattants* and the events of February 1934,' *European Studies Review*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1975, pp. 299-311.

attitudes to changing international circumstances, and her demonstration of how the relationship between France and Germany affected the foreign policy outlooks of key *ancien combattant* groups.[23] Contested by this thesis, however, is Chaffey's claim that veteran sources lend themselves almost purely to political interpretation.[24] Instead, this thesis demonstrates that important cultural conclusions can also be derived from these documents.

Another dissertation, Elliott Pennell Fagerberg's 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' which focuses on the period between 1925 and 1930, considers the internationalist attitudes of the veterans and the degree to which they influenced government policy.[25] The depth of research and scope of this dissertation make it a most useful reference. Two of Fagerberg's conclusions are clearly supported by this thesis. Firstly, the historian noted that during this period veterans were far more concerned with domestic issues than with foreign policy,[26] a trend which is visible over the ninety years considered in this thesis: the most enthusiastic veteran commentary tends to centre on their material benefits. Secondly, this longer-term analysis also supports Fagerberg's remark that when the veterans *did* engage in the area of foreign policy, their action was principally defensive and reactive.[27]

Robert Soucy also wrote of the major political doctrines and actions undertaken by the *anciens combattants* during the pre-World War Two period,[28] looking extensively at the events of 6 February 1934 when large numbers of people, including the veterans' group the Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.) and

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[23] Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' especially Part III, Ch. 2 '*Ancien combattant* reactions to specific crises.'

[24] Chaffey attributed two reasons to her focus on the political aspects of veteran history: her personal training and the fact that her material "lead into political history rather than sociology." Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' p. 7.

[25] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy.'

[26] In his estimation, 80% of conference discussion and press content from this period focused on issues relating to pensions, preferential employment and special treatment. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' pp. 229-231.

[27] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 234.

[28] Robert Soucy, 'France: Veterans' politics between the wars,' in Stephen R. Ward (ed.), *The War Generation: Veterans of the First World War*, Port Washington, N.Y. and London: Kennikat Press, 1975, pp. 59-103.

the veteran-led Croix de Feu, took to the streets in protest against the government.[29] The riots resulted in several deaths and levels of violence "unseen in France since the 1871 Paris Commune," according to the veteran Robert Perraut.[30] Focusing on the protest does not present a balanced view of "veterans' politics between the wars" as indicated by Soucy's title, despite the fact that *anciens combattants* had indeed been prominent in the protests. As the author himself admitted, the protest was unrepresentative of the French veteran population, which was generally inclined towards political moderation.[31]

While Soucy noted that most veterans harboured tempered political beliefs, René Rémond's 'Les anciens combattants et la politique' reaches an entirely different conclusion. Asking if "the *esprit ancien combattant* naturally inclines to the right," he replied in the affirmative.[32] Excluding groups such as the communist Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (A.R.A.C.) on the grounds of their political bias, too far-removed from the supposed apolitical stance of most organisations,

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[29] After a series of diplomatic catastrophes which undermined the credibility of the left-wing ruling powers and perpetuated the anti-parliamentarianism already rife within certain sectors of society, Edouard Daladier presented his new government to the Chamber of Deputies on 6 February 1934. Right-wing groups and paramilitary leagues clashed with police, resulting in several deaths. One estimate puts the number of veterans present at the riot at 20 000. Nicolas Roussellier, 'La contestation du modèle républicain dans les années 30: la réforme de l'Etat,' in Serge Bernstein and Odile Rudelle (eds.), *Le modèle républicain*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992, pp. 319-335, p. 325. The disturbance profoundly divided the French people, including the former combatants. Detailed accounts of the riots include Jacques Chastenet, *Histoire de la Troisième République. IV: Déclin de la Troisième République 1931-1938*, [n.p.]: Librairie Hachette, 1962, Ch. 4 'Le 6 fevrier;' Philippe Bernard and Henri Dubief, *The Decline of the Third Republic 1914-1938*, trans. Anthony Forster, London: Cambridge University Press, 1985, Ch. 20 '6 February: Day of crisis.' An in-depth analysis of the role of veterans in the riots is Shaw, 'The *anciens combattants* and the events of February 1934.' For information regarding the origins of the Croix de Feu, see among others Kevin Passmore, 'The French Third Republic: Stalemate society or cradle of fascism?' *French History*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1993, pp. 417-449.

[30] Robert Perraut, 'Tristes journées,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 19e année, no. 216, février 1934, pp. 35-37, p. 35.

[31] Soucy, 'France: Veterans' politics between the wars,' p. 100. Ariane Chebel D'Appollonia commented that while in the interwar years veterans were strongly antiparliamentarian, they were also indisputably republican. Ariane Chebel D'Appollonia, *L'extrême-droite en France: de Maurras à Le Pen*, [s.p.]: Editions Complexe, 1996, p. 161. In Prost's opinion, although certain veterans were obviously attracted by the politics of the extreme right, the veterans' associations were one of the primary hindrances to the spread of French-style fascism. Prost, *III: Mentalités et idéologies*, p. 119.

[32] René Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 5, no. 2, avril-juin 1955, pp. 267-290, p. 288.

Rémond looked at associations in France, Germany and the United States to show that, either consciously or sub-consciously, right-wing ideology underlies the veteran culture.[33]

One of few comparative studies of veteran history, Rémond's article is valuable for political, but also cultural and intellectual veteran scholarship, yet the argument is not wholly convincing. As Rémond himself mentioned, effective comparative studies require substantial background knowledge in order to eliminate local factors and isolate elements recurrent across national frontiers. Yet the three countries considered do not provide this sort of homogeneity. Using Rémond's own arguments, the social and psychological situation of veterans in France and America, as victorious powers, did not correspond to the place reserved for the vanquished German veterans. In addition, multitudinous veterans' associations existed in the European nations, whereas the American Legion was a monolithic body.[34] However, it is exactly these discrepancies which Rémond used to illustrate his argument, as similar right-wing tendencies emerged in all three countries.

In addition, Rémond did not consider the veterans' movement as a whole. The French section of his study is almost solely concerned with the Croix de Feu and the Légion des Combattants created under Vichy, with the U.N.C.'s participation in the 6 February 1934 riots cited to support his argument. Although he admitted that the U.N.C. was not representative of the entire veteran population, being primarily composed of conservative bourgeois members,[35] Rémond did not consider the responses from other veterans' organisations which illustrate their discontent with the fraught situation. The Union Fédérale, for example, "unanimously deplore[d] the fact that Frenchmen were able to fall beneath the blows of other Frenchmen,"[36] and

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[33] Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' pp. 267-290.
[34] To these points could be added the political activism of American and German veterans, despite their different statuses as victors and losers, and the aversion of the French *anciens combattants* to overt political activism. Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go?' p. 108.
[35] Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' p. 275.
[36] René Cassin, 'Responsabilités et leçons,' *Les Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants et de Victimes de la Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, 4e année, no. 51, 15 février 1934, pp. 3-4, p. 3.

the Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre (A.G.M.G.) referred to the period as "sad days."[37] One reason why this thesis considers newspapers from a range of associations (including the communist A.R.A.C.) is to present conclusions more indicative of the attitudes of the entire veteran body.[38]

In contrast to such 'horizontal' analyses, many historical works have adopted a 'vertical' approach in order to consider the development and activities of a single veterans' association over a larger amount of time. Demonstrating the importance of this approach is Sophie Delaporte's work on the Union des Blessés de la Face (U.B.F.), an association created after World War One to group conflict survivors who suffered serious facial injuries and ongoing physical after-effects.[39] Her sensitive yet thorough medical and cultural history has given a posthumous voice to these neglected men, known colloquially as the '*gueules cassées*' (literally 'the broken faces').[40] It could even be said that Delaporte has posthumously *mobilised*

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[37] Robert Perraut, 'Tristes journées,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 19e année, no. 216, février 1934, pp. 35-37, p. 35.

[38] In describing the processes he underwent to determine 'French public opinion' at the outbreak of World War One, Jean-Jacques Becker noted that while the press does not provide a complete picture of public opinion, with a varied enough selection, qualitative data can be garnered. In terms of quantitative data, he recognised that journalists and editors often seek to publish what will satisfy their readership. Jean-Jacques Becker, 'L'opinion publique française et les débuts de la guerre de 1914 (printemps-automne 1914),' *Le mouvement social*, vol. 104, July-September 1978, pp. 63-73, p. 68. Following this line of thought, the veterans' associative press represents the opinions of its members. The four national associations and one independent newspaper considered in the thesis were chosen partly because of their political tendencies. The Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.) was associated with right-wing movements in the 1930s but has mellowed over the decades, the Union Fédérale (U.F.) is more left-leaning, the Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (A.R.A.C.) is the communist veterans' group, the Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre (A.G.M.G.) is conservative but has refrained from participating in overt protest like the U.N.C., and the *Journal des Combattants* is independent and therefore reflects the political whims of its journalists and editors. More information on the political orientations of these associations is presented in Part II, Chapter Two 'Veterans, the war dead and identity.'

[39] Amongst other works, see Sophie Delaporte, *Les gueules cassées: les blessés de la face de la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Editions Noêsis, 1996; Sophie Delaporte, 'Le corps et la parole des mutilés de la Grande Guerre,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 205, mars 2002, pp. 5-14; Sophie Delaporte, '15 000 "gueules cassées,"' *L'Histoire*, no. 225, octobre 1998, p. 40. For an introduction to the Australian case: Kerry Neale, '"Without the faces of men": The return of facially disfigured veterans from the Great War,' in Martin Crotty (ed.), *When the soldiers return. November 2007 Conference proceedings*, Brisbane: School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, University of Queensland, 2009, pp. 114-120.

[40] In reviewing Delaporte's book, one commentator described the *gueules cassées* as the "forgotten ones among forgotten ones," referring to the fact that severely disabled soldiers have been almost

these men, through her research rescuing them from historical obscurity and returning to them some dignity. In the still under-developed area of veteran studies, the possibility of producing such inspiring and pioneering work is real.

Some of the most detailed associative histories are published by the organisations themselves. Written either by a committee or by an enthusiastic member, these accounts provide information on the organisation's founding fathers, key dates, aims and success stories. The historical benefit of such publications is immense, as few external researchers have conducted similar studies. Whether arguing definitively in an association's favour or promoting its history, the drawback of such sources is their obvious bias and, in some cases, explicit propaganda.[41] Notably the U.N.C.,[42] the A.R.A.C.,[43] the Croix de Feu[44] and the Ligue des Droits du Religieux Ancien Combattant (D.R.A.C.)[45] have produced their own histories. This array of

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entirely obscured from historical consideration, and those with facial disfigurements even more so. Jean-Yves Le Naour, '[Review of] Sophie Delaporte, *Gueules cassées. Les blessés de la face de la Grande Guerre. Préface de Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau*, Paris, Noesis, 2001,' *Revue Annales de démographie historique*, vol. 103, no. 1, 'La population dans la Grande Guerre,' 2002, pp. 213-214. Cairn Info, <http://www.cairn.info/revue-annales-de-demographie-historique-2002-1-page-213.htm> accessed 10 Janury 2011. Delaporte attributed this 'forgetting' to the social need for unification after the Armistice. Delaporte, '15 000 "gueules cassées,"' p. 40.

[41] One prime example is Malherbe's 1934 biography of Colonel de La Rocque. The obviously pro-La Rocque *ancien combattant* glowingly presented the enigmatic leader of the Croix de Feu as "the interpreter of our wishes" who "nothing will deter from achieving his intentions." Such adoration denies the account the perspective desired in historical analyses, but Malherbe was concerned with exalting his leader, not academic acceptability. Henry Malherbe, *La Rocque: un chef, des actes, des idées*, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1934, pp. 30 and 57.

[42] François Malval, *Onze ans d'action: histoire de l'U.N.C. 1919-1930*, Malakoff, Seine: Imprimerie Durassié et Co., La Voix du Combattant, 1930; Paul Lotterie, *Historique: Union nationale des anciens combattants des Ardennes U.N.C.-U.N.C.A.F.N. 1919-1988*, Charleville-Mézières: Imprimerie Guichard, 1989.

[43] Older works written and published by the A.R.A.C.'s central committee include: *Association républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, Paris: Presses de l'Imprimerie centrale commerciale, 1971; *Trentenaire de l'A.R..A..C.: 30 ans en service de la France. Supplément au Réveil des Combattants. Album illustré édité à l'occasion du 24e Congres National tenu à Clichy, les 24,25 et 26 mai 1947*, Paris: Georges Lang, 1947. In honour of the organisation's ninetieth anniversary, a thick volume was recently published containing original documents from the A.R.A.C.'s history: Georges Doussin (ed.), *L'A.R.A.C. Association républicaine des Anciens Combattants 1917-2007: Combattants pour la vie; des voix pour l'espoir*, Pantin: Le Temps des Cerises, 2007.

[44] Malherbe, *La Rocque*.

[45] D.R.A.C. (Ligue des Droits du Religieux Ancien Combattant), *Les associations des anciens combattants et les religieux anciens combattants*, Paris: Imprimerie Française de l'Edition, [n.d.]. For further information on the D.R.A.C., see Nicholas Atkin, 'The politics of legality: The religious

movements is interesting in that, apart from the mainstream U.N.C., these groups have appealed to a limited *ancien combattant* public. It is probable that the associations intended to stimulate interest and membership through circulating their histories.

As well as histories, veterans have also issued documents reflecting on situations or sentiments specific to their 'movement.' Henri Pichot, Henri Barbusse, Maurice de Barral, René Cassin and Henri Chatenet are among the many influential (predominantly interwar) *ancien combattant* leaders whose writings and speeches have been published.[46] These works need to be analysed with a degree of caution, of course, as the writers were emotionally invested in their subject matter and influenced by the contemporary context.

Further complications occur when considering the writings of men like Georges Rivollet, a prominent *ancien combattant* figure in the interwar and early Vichy periods, who published a number of accounts of his experiences as General Secretary of both the Union Nationale des Mutilés et Réformés (U.N.M.R.) and the Confédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, and as Minister of Pensions.[47] Hence, in addition to his influential positions within the movement, Rivollet also represented the veterans in government. His personal involvement in both political and veteran spheres no doubt affected the style and content of his analyses. Nonetheless, despite the obvious problems associated with

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orders in France 1901-1945,' in Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (eds.), *Religion, society and politics in France since 1789*, London: Hambledon Press, 1991, pp. 149-166.

[46] Veteran-produced documents published during the interwar years include Henri Barbusse, *Ce que veulent les anciens combattants. Discours au Congrès national de l'A.R.A.C. à Lyon le 7 septembre 1919*, Paris: Imprimerie La Productrice, 1919; Maurice de Barral, *Les combattants dans la nation: principes d'action*, Paris: Editions-librairies Étincelles, 1928; André Gervais, *L'esprit combattant*, Paris: Durassié et Cie, 1934; René Cassin *et al.*, *Le Pacte Briand-Kellogg de renonciation à la guerre et l'action internationale des anciens combattants en faveur de la paix. Séance du Comité national d'Etudes sociales et politiques du lundi 3 décembre 1928*, Boulogne-sur-Seine: Imprimerie d'Etudes sociales et politiques, 1929; Henri Pichot, *France vivante. Allocution d'ouverture du Congrès National du 11 au 16 avril 1938 à Reims*, Paris: Editions Union Fédérale, [n.d.].

[47] Georges Rivollet, *Les anciens combattants devant le problème franco-allemand. Conférence de 15 juillet 1943 au Cercle Européen*, Fontenoy-aux-Roses, Seine: Imprimerie L. Bellenand, 1943.

utilising the works of such prominent veteran spokesmen, the information they contain - the personal points of view as well as the facts - is extremely valuable.

As well as 'horizontal' analyses (which generally presume to talk of the French veteran population as a whole during a single period) and 'vertical' analyses (which consider the history of a single organisation), another set of researchers of the *anciens combattants* have focused their studies on associations in particular regions of France.[48] Especially when considered together, these studies of smaller, more localised groups provide valuable insight into the diversities and similarities of veterans' attitudes and actions across the country. Yet, because regional groups are affected by specific characteristics, including historical and cultural factors and long-standing political affiliations and loyalties, and in addition campaign primarily for local concerns, they do not necessarily constitute a microcosm from which to view the behaviour of French veterans in general.[49] This discrepancy is taken into consideration by this thesis, which incorporates examples from northern France to illustrate the regional point of view but simultaneously acknowledges the unique situation of veterans in that area of the country.

Philippe Manneville's analyses of the terms employed in the names and statutes of Seine-Maritime *ancien combattant* associations for the wars 1870-1871, 1914-1918

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[48] Among these researchers is Philippe Barrière, who has concentrated on the *anciens combattants* of Grenoble at the time of the Liberation. Philippe Barrière, '"Au nom de la mémoire": les associations grenobloises d'anciens combattants et victimes de guerre à la Libération (1944-1947),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 52, no. 205, 2002, pp. 35-53. Many historians of the *Annales* school have conducted regional studies. For British historian Peter Burke, this decision has been partly because their desire to write 'long-term total history' has necessitated restricting the scope in another way, partly because studying the region rejects the traditional concern for histories of the nation-state, and partly because the historians identify with their own area. Peter Burke, 'French historians and their cultural identities,' in Elizabeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald and Malcolm Chapman (eds.), *History and Ethnicity*, London and New York: Routledge, 1989, pp. 157-167, p. 159.

[49] Part of the reason why local veterans' associations do not necessary represent the attitudes and activities of their national counterparts is that many regional groups actually played a major social role in interwar rural France. Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne,' p. 133; Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Associations et souvenir de la Seconde guerre mondiale en France,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 291-301, p. 295.

and 1939-1945 constitute an appealing regional study.[50] He determined exactly whom the associations catered to (for example *anciens combattants*, *mutilés*, former soldiers or victims of tuberculosis) and what activities the groups intended to carry out (for example assistance, friendship or memory).[51] Unfortunately, the historian rarely interpreted the discrepancies between the generational usage of terminology,[52] transforming a potentially highly interesting and relevant semantic study into a rather dry data analysis. Manneville himself excused his lack of interpretation; having only consulted the Regional Archives due to the lack of reliable archival material available through the associations, he felt himself ill-placed to generate many conclusions.[53] However, while recognising that the shortcomings of sources vitiate historical research, it is also important to decipher available information in order to establish meaning.

Through its ninety-year time span, its combined horizontal-vertical examination and its incorporation of previously neglected primary material, this thesis brings a fresh approach to the cultural behaviour of the *anciens combattants*. Writing before 1977 and focusing purely on the 1920s and 30s, Prost for example was neither concerned with nor privy to perhaps the one real development of veteran discourse regarding memorialisation and commemoration of war which has occurred since 1918: the veterans' dedication to matters of 'memory.' In the last couple of decades, memorialisation has taken on increased importance across the world, simultaneously contributing to an escalating recognition of victims and a push for internationalism. The *anciens combattants*' concern with memorialising war for the future has been

[50] Philippe Manneville, 'Les associations d'anciens combattants en Seine-Maritime: témoins de la population,' *Les Normands et l'Armée, Revue de la Manche*, vol. 38, nos. 150-151, 1996, pp. 189-206; Philippe Manneville, 'Anciens combattants et mutilés, trois guerres, trois types de vie associative. L'exemple de la Seine-Maritime,' *Société havraise d'études diverses*, 1996, pp. 59-75.
[51] Manneville, 'Anciens combattants et mutilés,' p. 63.
[52] Manneville's one concession to interpreting his data was the suggestion that the abundant employment of '*amicale*' [club], '*amitié*' [friendship] and '*amical(e)*' [friendly] in the titles of post-First World War associations hints at the *anciens combattants*' desire to maintain the camaraderie experienced at the front. There were 54 *amicales* established in the Seine-Maritime region after World War One (a total of 14.91% of all *ancien combattant* associations set up at this time). '*Amical(e)*' was the most frequently-used adjective, occurring in the titles of 57.31% of associations. Manneville, 'Les associations d'anciens combattants en Seine-Maritime,' p. 195.
[53] Manneville, 'Les associations d'anciens combattants en Seine-Maritime,' p. 201.

sharpened by declining numbers of eyewitnesses. The emergence of (albeit, still limited) memory theory in veteran discourse has empowered veterans dedicated to the cause of memorialising warfare, providing tangible evidence for its importance in the first instance and sophisticated theoretical arguments to support it, in the second. As well as altering how veterans view war and its remembrance, the pervasiveness of 'memory' in the contemporary world has also influenced how veteran discourse is received and analysed.

The specific intellectual and cultural focus of this study - the centrality of the war dead to veteran reflection on Armistice Day, and in particular the methods through and the reasons for which survivors 'mobilise' their fallen comrades on this date - also constitutes an entirely new avenue of investigation. In relation to the *anciens combattants*, associative or political histories have been the norm, with little attention spared for commemoration and memorialising.[54] In comparison, while scholars of 'war culture' have indeed recognised the importance of the war dead in commemoration,[55] none have as yet traced this centrality over such a large timeframe, considered the themes which surface and the reasons why such a phenomenon might occur, or placed the war dead in relation to their surviving comrades.

In addition to allowing for the formation of new insights into the French veterans, the primary material, long-term timeframe and reference to recent methodological

[54] Chaffey, Fagerberg and Prost are the most obvious examples of this political and associative history. Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s;' Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy;' Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-*1939, 1977. One reason for this tendency towards associative history was stipulated by Martin Crotty, outlining his project for the Australian Returned Servicemen's League (R.S.L.). While he wanted to view the R.S.L. through the lens of citizenship, he recognised that matters of influence and demands could not be separated from the group structures and memberships. Martin Crotty, 'The rise, fall and rise of the R.S.L. 1916-1946,' in Martin Crotty (ed.), *When the soldiers return. November 2007 Conference proceedings*, Brisbane: School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, University of Queensland, 2009, pp. 218-227, p. 218.

[55] Including Becker, *La guerre et la foi*; Luc Capdevila et Danièle Voldman, *Nos morts: les sociétés occidentales face aux tués de la guerre XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris: Payot, 2002; George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; Prost, *III: Mentalités et idéologies*, esp. pp. 35-61. Becker has noted that survivors attempted to appropriate the dead in support of particular post-war issues, both pro-peace and bellicose, but did not expand on this comment. Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 125.

advances in 'memory' of this thesis reinforce conclusions reached by past scholars of the *anciens combattants*, especially Antoine Prost, as well as researchers of war culture generally. To cite one example: this thesis shows that the desire expressed by soldiers to testify to and come to terms with the horror of war through writing (the case of Great War French soldiers is masterfully presented in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau's account of trench journalism[56]) was continued through into the post-war eras of all France's twentieth century conflicts.[57] The need to accept the past constituted one primary reason for the development of an *ancien combattant* discourse after World War One, and was also central to its continued propagation by subsequent generations of fire.

This thesis is a history of discourse relating to the methods through, and the reasons for, which French veterans invoke the war dead on Armistice Day. In order to make this topic manageable, '*ancien combattant* discourse' has been limited by two criteria. Firstly, this study focuses almost exclusively on articles and speeches published in official veterans' newspapers - written, therefore, most often by association leaders or journalists - relating specifically to *11 novembre*. Intermittent references to a few veteran-produced works of fiction illustrate that the fallen are mobilised in literature as well as in journalism, an insight which highlights the

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[56] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at war 1914-1918: National sentiment and trench journalism in France during the First World War*, trans. Helen McPhail, Oxford: Berg, 1992. The years 1914-1918 were a watershed in terms of correspondence. Martha Hanna, 'A Republic of Letters: The epistolary tradition in France during World War I,' *American Historical Review*, vol. 108, no. 5, 2003, pp. 1338-1361. In his work on war narratives, Samuel Hynes distinguished between letters sent while at war, diaries kept while at war, and memoirs written after war's end. These three types of soldier narrative differ in terms of audience and immediacy. Samuel Hynes, 'Personal narratives and commemoration,' in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 205-220, p. 208-219. Neither the soldiers' nor the veterans' accounts are more "true," Horne believed; rather, they present different interpretations of the war experience. John Horne, 'Entre expérience et mémoire: les soldats français de la Grande Guerre,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 60, no. 5, 2005, pp. 903-919, p. 918.

[57] Several historians have underscored the catharsis of writing about war, including Nicolas Beaupré, 'Témoigner, combattre, interpréter: les fonctions sociale et culturelles de la littérature de guerre des écrivains combattants de 1914 à 1918 (France, Allemagne),' in Anne Duménil, Nicolas Beaupré and Christian Ingrao (eds.), *1914-1945, l'ère de la guerre. I: 1914-1918, violence, mobilisations, deuil*, Paris: Agnès Viénot, 2004, pp. 169-182; Elizabeth Snyder Hook, 'Awakening from war: History, trauma and testimony in Heinrich Böll,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 136-153, p. 137.

importance of the war dead as symbolic constructs for the veteran community. Other forms of information such as conference proceedings, associative paperwork, personal correspondence and interview material have not been given the same attention. The focused nature of this source base was intentional, as this thesis is concerned with the veterans' thoughts and sentiments regarding the war dead and Armistice Day as published in (and therefore condoned by) official veteran journals. The second defining criterion restricts '*ancien combattant* discourse' to the newspapers of four key national associations - the Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre (A.G.M.G.), the Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (A.R.A.C.), the Union Fédérale (U.F.) and the Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.), - the independent *Journal des Combattants*, and regional newspapers from northern France.[58]

The continuity of publication was of major importance when selecting the associations, as many veteran organisations issued journals which only survived for a short period. Many of these irregular and short-term journals appeared in the interwar years, part of the "wave" of veterans' newspapers generated by groups particularly active at that time.[59] Such publications were not integrated into this analysis of veterans' discourse over the ninety years since 1918 because their lack of continuity did not suit the thesis aim to search out long-term discursive patterns.[60] Even the journals produced by the above-mentioned associations cannot

[58] Articles written by journalists or leaders from other associations, as well as Veterans' Ministers and other notables, are considered in this thesis provided they have been published in one of these newspapers (which occurs relatively often). For a list of the northern French veterans' papers, see the 'Primary source bibliography.' No selection criteria were imposed on the selection of northern French veteran newspapers, other than the stipulation of having been produced by veterans' associations from the Nord. This non-specificity constitutes the major discrepancy between the newspapers for the national associations, selected because of the continuity of their publications, and the northern French newspapers for which such a criterion proved impossible to impose; records from this area are very incomplete, partly due to its occupation during both World Wars. The journals considered in this thesis, therefore, are simply the papers which survive in the Regional Archives, with no consideration given to the continuity of publication like the national groups. For this reason, almost all the regional newspapers were published in the interwar years.

[59] Delaporte, 'Le corps et la parole des mutilés de la Grande Guerre,' p. 5.

[60] This selectivity means that groups which were formed and disbanded during the interwar period, when veterans were numerically the largest and politically and socially the most active of all the years between 1919 and 2009, were not considered. One consequence of this process was the omission of some of the more outspoken associations. The centrality of republicanism to veteran

strictly claim continuity. The regularity of publication has been dependant on factors such as membership figures, the contemporary influence of the veteran community, and the dedication and motivation of leaders. Practical and political issues such as paper shortages and censorship have at times also played a role, notably during World War Two. All these factors have meant that the journals oscillate between fortnightly, monthly or bi-monthly publications. In addition to the unbalanced publication rates, the newspapers' titles have changed with astonishing rapidity over the years as publications have been superseded or transformed to correspond more fully with contemporary contexts.[61] Nonetheless, despite these issues the journals have been published more or less regularly since the end of World War One.

While this thesis hoped to consider ninety years' worth of veteran discourse, in actuality the years 1939-1945 (and particularly 1940-1944) are not covered. The reason for this omission is purely practical: the Occupation years constitute an anomaly to the regular functioning of the French veteran system and very few *ancien combattant* publications were produced during this period. As a researcher of the French veterans has written, "the history of the *mouvement combattant* during the Occupation is the subject for a complete and separate study."[62] The majority of Great War veterans' associations were disbanded by Vichy leaders fearful of autonomous groups (and especially the war-related veterans' associations) and replaced with the Légion française des Combattants.[63] However, although certain

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agendas as posited by this thesis would not have held true, for example, had some of the leagues, in which veterans often played primary roles (Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go?' p. 107), been incorporated.

[61] For the title changes of these newspapers, see the 'Primary source bibliography.'

[62] Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' p. 5.

[63] The Legion was founded by a law passed on 29 August 1940. Jean-Paul Cointet, the expert on this association, has traced its development and also documented the characteristics inherent in the pre-war veterans' organisations which can be interpreted as developing into the Legion's pro-National Revolution mentalities and activities. Cointet's many works on the Legion include Jean-Paul Cointet, 'Contribution à une socio-politique de l'Etat française: la Légion française des Combattants de la Vienne 1940-1943, *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire moderne*, Paris, sér. 15, vol. 71, no. 2, 1972, pp. 10-19; Jean-Paul Cointet, *La Légion française des combattants 1940-1944: la tentation du fascisme*, Albin Michel, 1995; Jean-Paul Cointet, 'La Légion française des Combattants 1940-1944. Mouvement civique et parti unique sous l'Etat français,' *L'Information historique*, vol. 55, no. 1, 1993, pp. 30-33; Jean-Paul Cointet, 'La Légion française des combattants et les officiers 1940-1944,' in Olivier Forcade, Éric Duhamel et Philippe Vial (eds.), *Militaires en République 1870-1962. Les officiers, le pouvoir et la vie publique en France*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999, pp. 521-

organisations were allowed to continue operating (mainly the smaller, decidedly apolitical groups, for example those providing disabled veterans' assistance, but also the U.F. and the U.N.C.[64]) and some organisations continued to meet and even publish clandestine journals under the Occupation,[65] publication of the five newspapers under consideration in this thesis dried up almost entirely. The years 1940-1944 are therefore excluded from the scope of this thesis.

The four associations and the *Journal* are based in Paris, with nation-wide offices to encompass and cater for the smaller regional organisations which operate under their guidance and influence. Understanding the attitudes of the national associations is important before attempting an analysis of regional groups. In addition, references in this thesis to groups from the Nord region demonstrate that despite the more localised approach of regional veterans' groups and the different experiences and customs of the area, their journalists in fact express very similar sentiments to their Parisian comrades.

527; Jean-Paul Cointet, 'La Légion française des combattants ou la veine recherche d'un encadrement des esprits en zone sud,' *1940, entre Loire et Garonne. A Mémoire*, no. 1, 1998, pp. 151-153; Jean-Paul Cointet, 'Les anciens combattants: la Légion française des Combattants,' in René Rémond (ed.), *Le gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942: institutions et politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin et Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1972, pp. 123-143; and Jean-Paul Cointet et Georges Riond, 'Les anciens combattants: la Légion française des Combattants,' in René Rémond (ed.), *Le gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942: institutions et politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin et Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1972, pp. 123-148 and pp. 326-331.

[64] Cointet, 'Les anciens combattants: la Légion française des Combattants,' p. 130; Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' pp. 77-78; Georges Rivollet, *Les anciens combattants devant le problème franco-allemand. Conférence de 15 juillet 1943 au Cercle Européen*, Fontenoy-aux-Roses, Seine: Imprimerie L. Bellenand, 1943, p. 21. The Union des Blessés de la Face was also allowed to continue operating - perhaps because Pétain was their patron of honour. Delaporte, *Les gueules cassées*, p. 200.

[65] For example, the Union Fédérale claimed that although it was technically disbanded, some of its leaders were able to meet and continue the association's "work of solidarity" in the occupied zone. Union Fédérale, *Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre 1918-1998: 80 ans d'histoire*, Houilles: Atelier R.V.S., 1998, p. 9. The Comité de la Flamme, responsible for the Eternal Flame beneath the Arc de Triomphe, also continued to operate clandestinely. Details in Marcel Dupont, *L'Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile et le Soldat inconnu*, Paris: Les Editions françaises, 1958, pp. 42-54. For information on clandestine journals published in the Nord during the Occupation, see Lynne Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration: Popular protest in northern France 1940-1945*, New York: St. Martin Press, 2000, p. 63.

The situation of veterans in northern France is shaped by the particular context of the primarily industrial area.[66] With a culture, economy, climate and 'personality' influenced by and arguably more similar to its Belgian neighbour than the rest of France,[67] the Nord typifies the truism that frontier regions do not necessarily fit the 'national' experience.[68] In relation to war, the most important elements of the northern French ordeal were its occupation and subsequent isolation from the rest of the country during both World Wars.[69] Annette Becker, indisputably the historian most concerned with the cultural consequences of these episodes, has noted that post-World War One memorialists in the Nord deliberately downplayed the uniqueness of the *département*'s memory of war (combatant, civilian and resistant[70]) in a bid to suit the overarching narrative of the nation.[71] Her hypothesis is supported by this thesis: despite the numerous differences between the experiences and concerns of veterans writing for the local northern French associations and the journalists of the much larger, national organisations, their

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[66] The primary industries of the region are coal mining and metallurgy in the Pas-de-Calais and textiles in the economic hub of Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing. Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*, p. 7.

[67] Julien Drouart, 'La manifestation de rue à Lille (novembre 1919-juillet 1926),' Mémoire de maîtrise, Université Charles de Gaulle, 2003-2004, p. 44; Taylor, *Between Resistance and Collaboration*, p. 7. Taylor labelled the Franco-Belgian border a "political artifice" (p. 7).

[68] Annette Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre: mémoire de l'Occupation et de la Résistance 1914-1940,' *Le Nord-Pas-de-Calais, région résistante. Revue du Nord*, vol. 76, no. 306, 1994, pp. 453-465, p. 454; Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Les variables politiques,' in E. Damoi et Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 89-102, p. 92.

[69] For details on the Autumn 1914 invasion of France, including forced deportations, hostage situations and rapes, see John Horne, 'Corps, lieux et nation: la France et l'invasion de 1914,' *Annales*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, pp. 73-109. During World War Two, certain Vichy initiatives such as the Légion française des Combattants and its violent off-shoot, the *milice*, were forbidden in the northern occupied zone, which came under the command of the German military governor in Brussels. Julian Jackson, *La France sous l'Occupation 1940-1944* [*France, The Dark Years 1940-1944*], trans. Pierre-Emmanuel Dauzat, France: Flammarion, 2001, p. 280. In recognition of its "courage" and the hardships enduring during the two occupations, Lille, capital of the Nord, was awarded the Croix de Guerre on 11 November 1948 by Defence Minister Ramadier. Archives municipales de Lille 2I1/11.

[70] Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre,' p. 455; Annette Becker, 'Le nord de la France, mémoire de l'Occupation. D'une guerre, l'autre 1914-1940,' in Antoine Fleury et Robert Frank (eds.), *Le rôle des guerres dans la mémoire des Européens: leur effet sur la conscience d'être européen*, Bern: Peter Lang, 1997, pp. 7-19, p. 9.

[71] Becker, 'Le nord de la France, mémoire de l'Occupation,' p. 10; Annette Becker, 'Mémoire et commémoration: les "atrocités" allemandes de la Première guerre mondiale dans le nord de la France,' *Revue du Nord*, no. 295, avril-juin 1992, pp. 339-354, p. 340.

discourses relating to the mobilisation of the dead have remained surprisingly similar.[72]

The striking observation of this thesis is the regularity and predictability of veteran discourse in relation to Armistice Day and the fallen. In one sense, the persistence of a certain mode of memorialisation is perhaps not unexpected given the highly stylised and repetitive nature of commemoration. In addition, the importance and solemnity of Armistice Day renders it too sacred to mar with the divisions and tensions which otherwise characterise *ancien combattant* relations: the very real political, social and economic differences between the veterans' associations are downplayed, condemned or (most commonly) ignored in relation to the commemoration. In this way, Armistice Day provides a clear example of the veterans' preference for mythic unity over divisive reality. Yet despite these two significant stabilising factors, the inflexibility of veteran discourse is noteworthy. The themes of veteran discourse, as well as the terminology and style of writing they employ, have remained constant despite the passing of ninety years, the disparity of opinions between associations and their leaderships, the fluctuation of veteran concern and enthusiasm as shaped by the domestic and international context, and the very fact that different authors have penned the articles, writing from within distinct personal, associative, geographical and generational parameters.[73] This study cites articles from different associations, eras and generations of fire in a bid to underscore the invariability of veteran discourse throughout the decades. The few instances in which veteran writing does not follow established trends highlight the standardisation of such discourse.

One divergence from the model of veteran discourse is the abundance of religious references in immediate post-World War One northern French newspapers. This

[72] Despite only considering national associations, Lynette Chaffey believed that a study of regional *ancien combattant* group documents would reveal similar findings as for a national study. The examples from the Nord definitely support her hypothesis. Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' p. 5.

[73] Pierre E. Landau, in his study of the interwar Jewish *ancien combattant* press, noted that journalists repeatedly returned to the same topics. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs,' p. 19.

commentary is no doubt indicative of both its era and its region: the Nord is more Catholic than much of the country, and positioning religion as a means of overcoming the pain of war was especially prominent directly after the Great War.[74] However, despite the fact that the theme's atypical nature renders it remarkable, it is not overly prominent. Religion surfaces only in suggestions for Christian living as a way of ensuring France regains her pre-War eminence and in passages inviting readers to pray for the fallen.

The only real discrepancy in veteran writing has taken place in the last couple of decades. Two factors in particular have provoked this change. Firstly, 'memory' has become paramount throughout the world. Alongside this memorialisation are an associated interest in and awareness of victims' stories and a push for internationalism. Secondly, as eyewitnesses to France's wars have gradually aged and died, veteran-writers have become increasingly insistent that other French citizens - and especially young people, believed to 'embody' the future - participate fully in remembrance services. While veterans have long encouraged the public to attend such ceremonies, as well as invited youth to carry out ritualistic activities alongside veteran or political leaders, a degree of urgency is definitely detectable in more recent times. Essentially the idea remains the same - participation is seen as guaranteeing emotional attachment with the themes commemorated - but it has of late been more explicitly expressed. The language of 'memory' adopted by a few key veteran-writers has assisted the veteran community in voicing these fears and in formulating strategies for future engagement.

[74] According to a survey of 2500 people conducted by the C.S.A. Group between 2000 and 2001, between 13% and 20% of the Nord and Pas-de-Calais populations practice religion (putting both *départements* among the most practicing in the country). Fresney, *Atlas des Français aujourd'hui*, p. 67. La Moselle is the most Catholic *département*, according to the Institut national des statistiques et des études économiques. See Anon., 'Terre catholique,' *Le Républicain Lorrain*, 28 juin 2010. Le Républicain Lorrain, <http://www.republicain-lorrain.fr/fr/GRDC_URWeb_Detail.aspx?iCategorieRedactionnelle=79&iURWeb=3394541> accessed 10 January 2011. One manifestation of this religiosity was the widespread influence of the Catholic right-wing Fédération Républicaine party in the Nord during the 1930s. Passmore, 'Stalemate society or cradle of fascism?' p. 431.

Yet despite this development in parallel with changing paradigms, the French veteran community has throughout the ninety years since 1918 continued to espouse similar themes, in an almost unchanged vocabulary, when mobilising the dead on Armistice Day. Given the numerous other conflicts of the twentieth century (and the new types of warfare, machinery and killing which evolved) as well as the fundamental changes to the political, social and economic makeup of France, Europe and the world during this time, this invariability is astonishing. From such inflexibility arises the question: Why? In answer, this thesis purports that veteran discourse has remained comparable because of the notion of 'layers' of memory - real, imagined and mythologised.

In the aftermath of the Great War, ex-combatants met to discuss the war experience and their fallen comrades, exchanging 'real' memor*ies* of their past endeavours.[75] Through sharing ideas and stories (enacting 'passive mobilisation' of the dead), a single cohesive 'imagined' memor*y* quickly developed and was ingrained in associative space as truth.[76] Relatively soon after the war, therefore, veterans were already espousing a more-or-less homogenous narrative of the trench experience. Veterans of later wars, initiated into the associations and doctrines of the Great War *poilus*,[77] drew upon their forebears' imagined memory to write of World War One and its commemoration with the same fluency and expertise as their elders despite having never experienced it. This action constitutes 'mythologised' memory, because its proponents essentially pass on myth, not actual life experience.

[75] As Susan Bluck and Nicole Alea have stated, reminiscence functions as a tool of social interaction, empathy and bonding. Susan Bluck and Nicole Alea, 'Exploring the functions of autobiographical memory: Why do I remember the autumn?' in Jeffrey Dean Webster and Barbara K. Haight (eds.), *Critical advances in reminiscence work: From theory to application*, New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2002, pp. 61-75, p. 65.

[76] Steven Knapp recognised that collective memory both presents and confirms specific narratives. Steven Knapp, 'Collective memory and the actual past,' *Representations*, no. 26, 'Memory and Counter-Memory,' Spring 1989, pp. 123-149, p. 123. *Ancien combattant* 'memory' adheres to Knapp's statement; however, this thesis avoids the term 'collective memory,' preferring instead to employ both 'imagined' memory and 'mythologisd' memory to talk of the different processes at work within 'collective memory.' On the semantic confusion surrounding the term 'collective memory,' see Duncan S. A. Bell, 'Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity,' *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2003, pp. 63-81. This article is considered in more detail in Part I, Chapter Three 'Veterans, the war dead and memory.'

[77] '*Poilu*,' an adjective meaning literally 'hairy,' was the colloquial term used to describe the (often unshaven) French troops of the World War One front lines.

Basically, veterans developed, then relied and built upon, one particular, homogenous and acceptable view of the Great War and its victims as viewed through the commemoration of Armistice Day. This narrative is still employed by veterans today, despite the fact that, with no French veterans of World War One alive, no one can actually *remember* the combatant experience or the men who perished. The fact that veterans of later wars espouse the *poilus*' imagined memory accounts for the unchanging nature of veteran discourse relating to the war dead and Armistice Day.

This thesis puts forward two interrelated theories to suggest why a cohesive narrative developed among the disparate World War One veteran associations, and why members of later generations of fire have appropriated this 'memory.' The first explanation is the 'safety' which such discourse has offered the *anciens combattants*. For veterans returning from the World War One trenches, this safety was above all emotional: the imagined memory enshrined in the associations helped them come to terms with the trauma of the war experience, and particularly the deaths of so many comrades. It seems that veterans of later wars also found in the discourse generated to aid survivors of the World War One ordeal a means of externalising the trauma engendered by their own wars. The discourse established by and for Great War veterans also granted veterans of later wars an additional type of safety in the form of legitimacy. For many ex-servicemen and -women of subsequent conflicts, the pain of war participation was made even more unbearable by perceived public and state indifference or hostility to their plight; inserting their wars into the (victorious) tradition of the *poilus* afforded them authority. The second explanation for the invariability of veteran discourse is the connection between veteran creed, practice and language, which means that ideals promoted as central to the *ancien combattant* 'identity' and agenda are enforced and reiterated through both text and action. The two ideals which are particularly compelling for veteran associations are unity and duty, positioned as means of simultaneously maintaining the positive elements of the war experience and warning against its evils. The benefit of finding some positive in war, and of putting war's horrors to use by

bettering present and future society, are inherently designed to help survivors come to terms with their past and exteriorise their trauma.

The first theory proposes that the unchanging nature of veteran discourse stems from its ability to help veterans externalise and come to terms with the trauma of war, regardless of the disparities between conflicts. The continuing primacy of World War One in this narrative stems from the conflict's 'watershed' status: during the First World War, over 44 million men were mobilised throughout the belligerent states, of which 9.5 million died and eight million were left permanently disabled.[78] The destruction of landscape, property and human life caused by advances in technology, the level of mobilisation and the blurring of the civilian/soldier divide through 'total war' were new and frightening developments which fundamentally changed perceptions of war, death and mourning, and which resulted in a new discourse designed to make some sense of the horror.

The desire to come to terms with the guilt and pain of the war experience prompted veterans to meet up and share their real memories after World War One. These acts of personal catharsis resulted in the creation of a universal discourse - the veterans' imagined memory - which was then used as a tactic of collective trauma healing. Primary to the narrative developed in the aftermath of the Great War was the positive designation of giving one's life for a higher reason. The positive designation of 'dying for' a cause - particularly 'dying for France' which promoted giving one's life for the nation as the epitome of selfless, patriotic behaviour - was able to partially appease survivors' pain and survivor guilt.[79] Veterans of World War Two and later have adopted and barely adapted the discourse of their forebears, even though its language no longer seeks to help survivors accept the particular trauma for which it was developed. This persistence points to the power of the

[78] Deborah Cohen, *The war come home: Disabled veterans in Britain and Germany 1914-1939*, Berkeley, New York, London: University of California Press, 2001, p. 188.
[79] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftung der Überlebenden,' in Odo Marquardt und Karlheinz Stierle (eds.), *Poetik und Hermeneutik Bd. 8*, München: Fink, 1979, pp. 255-276, p. 257.

discourse to address the trauma resulting from participation in - and survival of - war.

In order to make some sense of the phenomenon of 1914-1918, and particularly to come to terms with the unprecedented loss of life, specific remembrance practices and discourses were invented, of which *11 novembre* was the most important. As the date set aside specifically for reflection on the Great War experience, it was central to the healing process of survivors, allowing grieving civilians and disillusioned soldiers to externalise and share their grief.[80] Nine decades after the conclusion of World War One, civilians today no longer attend Armistice Day services seeking to exteriorise their mourning but instead yearn to comprehend the past and empathise with their ancestors; yet, the ceremony continues to draw large crowds. It appears that the particular practices of *11 novembre* still resonate with members of the public.[81] For ex-servicemen, the occasion enables them to mobilise a discourse whose messages and language target traumas engendered by conflicts other than the one being commemorated.[82]

Another reason for the persistence of Great War veteran discourse is the war's relatively unproblematic position in French history. Veterans of wars considered less 'glorious' have associated themselves with the *poilus* in order to claim some of their forebears' legitimacy. Numerous aspects contributed to the supremacy of World War One - and its Armistice - as an event worthy of national

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[80] Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, 'Rituels funéraires de sociétés en guerre 1914-1945,' in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, Christian Ingrao *et al*. (eds.), *La violence de guerre 1914-1945. Approches comparées des deux conflits mondiaux*, Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002, pp. 289-311, p. 301.

[81] This same phenomenon is also occurring in other countries. For example, in the Preface to his study of Australian returned servicemen, Stephen Garton drew attention to high levels of attendance at remembrance services. He believed such behaviour attested to the "widespread emotional involvement in the [Anzac] legend." Stephen Garton, *The cost of war: Australians return*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. viii.

[82] In this way, this thesis counters Geroge Mosse's belief that a new Myth of the War Experience was created following World War Two which sought less to counter trauma than exorcise crimes; this thesis suggests that trauma was an ongoing and primary reason for this persistence of a certain mode of thinking across the generation of fire - and of the discourse which described it. George L. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 4, October 1986, pp. 491-513, p. 498.

commemoration. Firstly, and most obviously, the war was *won*, in contrast to the conflicts of 1939-1940, Indochina and Algeria. Secondly, the 1918 victory was the product of Allied cooperation, in which the French army had played an undeniably vital military role. Credit was not only attributed to the army, however, but to the entire French population which had contributed to the nation's triumph through civilian home front mobilisation and the implementation of the *Union sacrée*. Thirdly, Allied propaganda promoted the war as a crusade against German barbarism. Memorialists built upon this propaganda to position 11 November 1918 as a victory of good over evil. This terminological campaign of 'liberation' was credible to the population as a large proportion of the war had been fought on French soil.

In contrast to the purportedly unified experience of World War One, France's roles in the next world war and the wars of independence in South-East Asia and Africa were far from clear-cut. Embarrassment, military failure, disillusionment and especially Franco-French division characterised these wars. Without a 'unanimous' experience to draw on, commemoration proved challenging,[83] which explains in part the reluctance of later *anciens combattants* (and other commemorative participants) to abandon the tried-and-tested practices of Great War remembrance.[84] On the one hand, persisting with accepted terminology and themes allowed the veterans a chance to recreate the social unity associated with World War One. On the other hand, adopting such discourse enabled veterans of later wars to insert themselves into the sacred soldiering tradition of the *poilus*, enhancing claims for

[83] François Bédarida, 'Commémorations et mémoire collective,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 11-13, p. 12. In his study of World War Two memory, Jean-Pierre Rioux noted that *8 mai*, the date of Nazi Germany's capitulation, has never been able to rival *11 novembre* for a central place in French national space. Rioux, 'Associations et souvenir,' p. 300.

[84] Winter, *Remembering war*, p. 1. World War Two commemorations were very similar to their predecessors. Philippe Barrière, *Histoire et mémoires de la Seconde guerre mondiale: Grenoble en ses après-guerre 1944-1964*, Grenoble: Presses universitaires Grenoble, 2004, p. 220. It was not only veterans who yearned to establish links between commemoration of World War One and later wars. In considering the "sociopolitical need to commemorate," Gérard Namer noted that on 8 May 1945, crowds of people celebrated and danced in the streets as though they wanted to repeat the festivities of 11 November 1918 and link the date with pre-war balls. Gérard Namer, 'La confiscation sociopolitique du besoin de commémorer,' in Christian Coq (ed.), *Travail de mémoire 1914-1998. Une nécessité dans un siècle de violence*, Paris: Editions Autrement, 1999, pp. 175-179, p. 177.

recognition and legitimacy and somewhat compensating for the perceived military weaknesses of their generation of fire.[85]

Further supporting the hypothesis that the continuity of veteran discourse regarding mobilisation of the dead on *11 novembre* lies in the 'safety' it provides is the suggestion that, in an ever-changing world, Armistice Day remains a constant. Except for the Vichy years, the date has remained a public holiday since its inception in 1922.[86] Perhaps people find reassurance in the ceremony's repetition, especially when other aspects of life seem to be rapidly shifting.[87] While a change of government can sometimes engender slight changes in the ceremonial programme, and although certain Presidents have been more enthusiastic about the possibility of commemoration furthering their approval ratings (Mitterrand in the 1980s was the prime example of this[88]), the ceremony remains central to French

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[85] The adoption of Armistice Day rituals and themes in remembrance ceremonies of later wars was a practical manifestation of both these desires. Antoine Prost, 'D'une guerre à l'autre,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 25-29, p. 25; François Marcot, 'Rites et pratiques,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 31-39, p. 33.

[86] For information regarding *11 novembre* under Vichy, see Avner Ben-Amos, 'La commémoration sous le régime de Vichy: les limites de la maîtrise du passé,' in Christophe Charle, Jaqueline Lalouette, Michel Pigenet *et al.* (eds.), *La France démocratique: combats, mentalités, symboles. Mélanges offerts à Maurice Agulhon*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998, pp. 397-408; Rémi Dalisson, 'La propagande festive de Vichy: mythes fondateurs, relecture nationaliste et contestation en France de 1940 à 1944,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 207, no. 3, juillet-septembre 2002, pp. 5-35; Ethan Katz, 'Memory at the front: The struggle over revolutionary commemoration in Occupied France 1940-1944,' *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 'Cultural memory in France: Margins and centres,' June 2005, pp. 153-168. The invasion of the non-occupied southern zone on 11 November 1943 was a deliberate attempt to (re)appropriate the 'memory' of World War One. The date also prompted much resistance activity, attesting to the power of the heritage of 1914-1918. Pierre Laborie, 'La mémoire de 1914-1918 et Vichy,' in S. Caucanas (ed.), *Traces de 14-18. Actes du colloque international tenu à Carcassonne du 24 au 27 avril 1996*, Carcassonne: Les Audois, 1997, pp. 219-232, p. 231.

[87] There is a large scholarship devoted to the increase in 'memory' and 'identity' concerns in recent decades, which holds that rapidly changing circumstances in the contemporary world are challenging people's sense of self. Part I, Chapter Three 'Veterans, the war dead and memory' explores this idea further.

[88] Many historians have considered Mitterrand's pro-commemoration politics, especially for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989. See for example Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999; David Beriss, 'High folklore: Challenges to the French cultural world order,' *Social Analysis*, no. 33, September 1993, pp. 105-129, pp. 105-106. According to Avner Ben-Amos, Mitterrand's successful commemorative agenda stemmed from his ability to continue traditions whilst introducing elements suitable for the cultural climate of 1980s

national space.[89] The success of *11 novembre* in retaining its character regardless of contemporary politics and other changes provides one justification for the veterans' continued devotion to similar themes and vocabulary.

The other main explanation for the conformity of French veteran discourse is the crossover between veteran language, practice and principles. Particularly the ideals of unity and duty are projected as ways of accepting the traumatic past, and are constantly reiterated in veteran writing and supposedly reflected in veteran practice. The concept of unity was intended to help heal war's trauma in two ways: veterans advocated the fraternity of the front lines as the one positive aspect gleaned from an otherwise horrifying experience, and attempted to see this lesson transposed onto post-war society as a way of putting their knowledge to present and future good. The ideal of unity was one of the motivating factors behind the foundation of veterans' associations, which aspired to prolong the camaraderie of the trenches and campaign for veterans' rights. While this first reason was paramount in terms of claiming veteran moral superiority, the push for material benefits in fact generated the only real 'unity' within a vastly heterogeneous body of individuals. When veterans of later wars joined the ranks of their World War One successors, the discourse - and supposed practice - of unity was expanded to include multiple generations of fire. It seems likely that the double benefit incorporated in notions of

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France. Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory in modern France 1789-1996*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 369. For Gérard Namer, Mitterrand's genius lay in stimulating interest in the army by once more incorporating military vehicles into the *14 juillet* [Bastille Day] parade and allowing people access to military technologies. Gérard Namer, *La commémoration en France de 1945 à nos jours*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987, p. 201. This tactic built upon the policies of the Popular Front, which promoted union between the army and the people. Georges Vidal, 'Le P.C.F. et la défense nationale à l'époque du Front populaire 1934-1939,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 52, no. 215, 'Missions et attachés militaires. Défense et Front populaire,' juillet 2004, pp. 47-74, p. 50. Olivier Wieviorka made note of how Mitterrand's commemorative politics opened space for alternative Resistance memories. Olivier Wieviorka, 'La génération de la Résistance,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 22, 'Les générations,' April-June 1989, pp. 111-116, p. 115.

[89] For a detailed description of the changes implemented to *14 juillet* and *11 novembre* ceremonies since the end of World War Two, see Namer, *La commémoration en France*. One major change implemented by Valérie Giscard d'Estaing, for example, was to reroute the traditional Bastille Day parade to incorporate the 'popular' suburbs, the Place de la Bastille and the Place de la République. Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory*, p. 368; Julian Crandall Hollick, 'France under Giscard d'Estaing - A retrospect,' *The World Today*, vol. 37, no. 6, June 1981, pp. 204-210, p. 204.

‘unity’ - that of a moral ideal with tangible practical outcomes - has contributed fundamentally to the rigid structure of *ancien combattant* discourse. Just as veterans purport to act as a group for moral and practical reasons, so too does the narrative they promote aspire to create a sense of community.

The other major element fundamental to the veteran narrative, and central to the veterans’ very identity, is duty. Erstwhile combatants believe themselves beholden to enact a range of duties, and this conviction is reiterated constantly in veteran writing: the word ‘*devoir*’ [duty] appears regularly in veteran discourse, most obviously in the incessant reiteration of a *devoir de mémoire* [duty of memory] to ensure warfare and its victims remain at the forefront of French national consciousness. In enabling veterans to mobilise the dead to propose or impose a certain pathway for post-war life, such duties constitute both a way of dealing with the trauma of war and a way of putting this trauma to a positive use (perhaps the most powerful means of coming to terms with the past). The ideal of ‘duty’ thus functions much as unity does in constructing a reciprocal relationship between language, action and dogma. Veterans of later wars appropriated the ‘memory’ of their forebears, as well as the responsibilities it entails; veteran practice and discourse have thus reinforced these duties over the decades.

The continuity of discourse as clarified through ‘layers’ of memory poses a challenge to the credibility of veteran mobilisation of the fallen. Speaking of and particularly for the dead implies an intimate and unique bond between the fallen and their living representatives. Conflict survivors believe themselves both entitled and beholden to this ‘spokesperson’ role by virtue of their wartime participation; however, do veterans of later wars have the right to mobilise the dead of World War One, a war they ‘know’ only through story? For that matter, have First World War veterans given any justification for their claim to speak for the fallen? Even more cynically: does mobilising the dead hold any meaning if the veterans have no personal connection to the men who died? Given the immense symbolic power of the fallen, a power occasionally deployed to condemn and accuse, such questions

are inescapable. The veterans, however, fail to engage with such matters, calling up the fallen as it suits them.

Several paradoxes and contradictions occur in veteran mobilisation of the war dead on Armistice Day. Some of these inconsistencies are caused by competition between veteran 'memory' and official memory produced by the state. In this way, the veterans' approach to war combines real and imagined memories of the trauma with official memory and propaganda as it is enacted through state-sponsored remembrance.[90] As one example, veterans seek to remind the population and government of the horrors they endured on the battlefield, but often utilise 'high diction' to describe the experience.[91] The dilemma, as Paul Fussell has eloquently pointed out, is that war has to be described in known language.[92] It is also an inherent paradox that, whilst questioning the motivations for specific wars and warfare in general, and underscoring the meaninglessness and folly of war, the veterans simultaneously provide reasons to justify their participation. Despite the seeming incompatibility of the discourses, veterans promote both attitudes, seeking the legitimacy and justification for war and wartime death provided by the state's interpretation of events but also wanting to reveal war's evils.

There are many other ambiguities in veteran discourse. Included in this category are the idea of remembering war to promote peace; espousing themes such as blood-and-soil devotion and civic pedagogy in a rhetoric reminiscent of fascism, but in

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[90] The conflict arising from the veterans' need to justify and find some greater meaning in the sacrifice meant they promoted both war's horrors and its glories. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 6. For an analysis of the dilemma between horror and glory which veterans faced, see Stephen Garton's analysis of the autobiography *There and back: The story of an Australian soldier*: Stephen Garton, 'Longing for war: Nostalgia and Australian returned soldiers after the First World War,' in Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (eds.), *The politics of memory: Commemorating war*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000, pp. 222-239, pp. 228-231. Men writing during the Great War itself also grappled with this incompatibility. Horne, 'Entre expérience et mémoire,' p. 914.

[91] 'High diction' refers to the language adopted by the majority of official memory-makers in the aftermath of World War One, seeking to construct some sort of justification for the loss of life through acclamatory terminology. Words such as 'courage,' 'bravery,' 'hero,' martyr,' and 'camaraderie' are all part of this semantic group. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 21-23. Fussell was himself a veteran of World War Two.

[92] Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, p. 174.

defence of peace[93]; wanting to forget the war experience but simultaneously recognising that it must not be forgotten[94]; calling for national unity in a nation of immense diversity; and oscillating between portraying the dead and themselves as either heroes or "victims of hatred"[95] depending on the circumstances. The fundamental paradox relating to veteran mobilisation of the dead is this: if, in dying, men ensured the successful implementation/continuation/re-evaluation of a certain worthy cause (as the veterans claim in positioning the dead as having 'died for a cause'), why is there any need to endlessly reiterate that cause after the termination of conflict? Attention will be drawn to the various inconsistencies of veteran discourse throughout this thesis.

There are three sections in this thesis. Part I (Contexts and Concepts) continues to develop the notion of 'mobilising the dead' through reference to the themes of identity, memory and commemoration. Each of these key themes is fundamental to this study: the war dead are central to the *ancien combattant* self-perception; remembering the fallen and ensuring their deaths were not futile constitutes the veterans' vitally important *devoir de mémoire*; and commemoration provides the arena for showcasing veteran-war dead relations. Part II (Methods) details the two means through which veterans mobilise the fallen on Armistice Day: rituals and space. Part III (Motivations) illustrates the three primary reasons which motivate veterans to call upon their disappeared comrades: propagation of key value systems; appeals for unity; and appeals for peace.

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[93] Note that René Rémond believed that remembering the front line experience pushed the French veterans towards activities which resembled fascism. Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' p. 276. This idea finds resonance in the fascist-like language of some *ancien combattant* discourse: the terms have been transposed from the war environment into the civilian realm in an effort to prolong - and promote - the trench experience.

[94] David Cannadine, 'War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain,' in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of mortality: Studies in the social history of death*, London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1981, pp. 187-242, p. 217.

[95] Georges Pineau (de l'Association des Ecrivains Anciens Combattants), 'L'esprit combattant,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 8e année, no. 436, vendredi 11 novembre 1927, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

Part I, Chapter Two deals with the interrelationship between veterans, the fallen, and identity. It concentrates on the development of the *Journal des Combattants* and the four national associations considered in this thesis (specifically the groups' origins, key leaders and agendas) as well as the particularities of post-World War One generations of fire in order to define exactly whose writing constitutes 'veteran discourse' according to this study. The chapter terminates with a discussion of veterans' identification with the dead. In considering the veteran-war dead relationship, the chapter demonstrates that the *anciens combattants* feel themselves both obliged and entitled to mobilise the dead.

The idea of mobilisation as being both a right and a duty is continued in Part I, Chapter Three, which considers the French veterans' preoccupation with questions of 'memory' and remembering. This fascination stems from an awareness that their role as 'actors' in the arena of warfare has resulted in a unique responsibility: remembering and memorialising are framed as a *devoir de mémoire* which needs to be accomplished, partly to prevent the reoccurrence of such folly and partly to give some sort of meaning to the tragedy. Having agitated since World War One for adequate public and state remembrance of the wartime experience and especially of its victims, in the last couple of decades veteran-writers have engaged with and applied the theory of 'memory studies' to more fully justify and support their own demands and actions. This chapter more fully explores the idea of 'layers' of veteran memory.

Part I, Chapter Four considers the watershed that was the Great War and how this affected memorialisation of the soldiering experience. Two means were adopted by the state to aid French people in coming to terms with the conflict: the invention of 'sacrifice' and the implementation of rituals of remembrance, both of which are considered in the chapter. Tracing the development of ceremonies of communal mourning until the introduction of the first official *11 novembre* in 1922, the chapter demonstrates how remembering fallen soldiers helped communities - and the veterans - exteriorise and share their trauma. The chapter also considers the

indelible links between Armistice Day, veterans and the fallen, and the necessity of rallying - *mobilising*, even - members of the public, state representatives and *anciens combattants* at ceremonies of remembrance to guarantee that the messages behind resurrecting the dead be absorbed.

Part II (Methods) deals with how veterans mobilise the war dead during commemoration. The first chapter in the section, Chapter Five, delineates the rituals which developed during and after World War One to remember and honour the fallen multitudes, and the continuing role of ritual in ceremonies of remembrance. As the physical enactment of rituals constitutes a public (re)affirmation of adherence to a specific 'memory' - in the case of Armistice Day, a veteran- and state-constructed memory of French wartime experience and the soldiers who participated in these conflicts - rituals are central to *ancien combattant* consideration of mobilising the dead.

Part II, Chapter Six considers the role environment plays in remembering: specifically, how space can be manipulated to draw upon and relate to the war dead. France's national commemorations take place in specific physical environments which are believed to exert powerful symbolic force on the audience's conscience. For the celebration of *11 novembre*, space maximises the potency of rituals designed to empower the dead. War memorials including the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, battlefields and military cemeteries are prolific examples of physical sites which provide space for the diffusion of remembrance of war and its victims.

Through a combination of ritual and spatial management, the French veteran community engenders communion between the living and the dead which enables them to use the fallen for their own agendas. Part III (Motivations) takes up this idea, detailing the various reasons which prompt the French veteran community to mobilise the dead. While the impetus and enthusiasm for calling up the fallen vary according to context, the topics addressed in the section's three chapters have remained fundamental to veteran discourse throughout the ninety years since 1918.

Part III, Chapter Seven demonstrates that, in positioning the war dead as champions of France and its ideals, veterans are able to mobilise their former comrades in defence of moral and political principles which they consider important. The most important values are the inextricably intertwined concepts of republicanism, patriotism and civic responsibility. As examples of the purest values, the fallen are positioned as inspiration for contemporary citizens and public figures to emulate. Particularly the youth, as representatives of the future, are encouraged to connect with the dead.

Unity, considered in Part III, Chapter Eight, is a central theme in *ancien combattant* writing. Its importance stems in large part from the mythic ideal of camaraderie, which as the single positive element gleaned from the experience of trench warfare was fundamental to veteran self-perception after World War One. The establishment of veteran associations constituted a means of attempting to translate this ideal into post-war civilian life; however, activists encourage unity on a wider scale, too. For the wellbeing of France, veterans urge national unity; and as a deterrent against future conflict, unity amongst humankind beyond national boundaries. Drawing on the war dead enhances such arguments.

After the mass death of World War One, foremost among the veterans' causes was the push for peace. Such is the theme of Part III, Chapter Nine. The primacy of this concern has not dissipated over the years: the veteran community has continued to envision and advocate a world of harmony throughout the decades. One way in which *ancien combattant* activists attempt to accomplish the responsibility bestowed upon them as survivors of war is by referring to its victims, as allusion to the fallen automatically adds potency to their claims. For example, eighty years after the Armistice in an article entitled '11 November 1918: May war be forever damned,' an anonymous A.R.A.C. author reiterated the folly of war by emphasising its human cost: "How many dead people, how many innocent victims, how many massacres, rapes, ruins and tears are still needed to apply this truth [that no problem

justifies the use of weapons], the sole pathway to true human wisdom?"[96] The war dead thus play a fundamental role in the *anciens combattants*' anti-war/pro-peace arguments, contributing to the war dead-Armistice Day-peace triad which occupies primary position in the French veteran outlook.

Having considered the reasons which encourage veterans to rally the war dead, the Conclusion of this thesis reflects on the issue of 'mobilising the dead' and the reasons why veteran discourse has remained essentially unchanged over nine decades. It ends with some remarks regarding the contemporary situation of the *anciens combattants* and the potential directions in which the movement - and particularly its 'memory' and discourse - might progress.

The central observation of this thesis is that despite the radical changes of the near-century under consideration, when mobilising the dead on Armistice Day *anciens combattants* have continually espoused the same themes in a comparable language. This study responds to the issue of comparable veteran discourse with the notion of 'layers' of memory. These real, imagined and mythologised memories have enabled veterans of later wars to write of World War One and its war dead with the same familiarity as their forebears, despite having never experienced the conflict or known its victims. To explain the development of the *poilus*' imagined memory and its appropriation by veterans of later generations of fire as mythologised memory, this thesis puts forward two suggestions. The first is the hypothesis that the discourse developed to remember and help survivors come to terms with the first industrialised war has continued to resonate with veterans of later wars because it provides them with 'safety' - as a means of dealing with trauma and as a means of claiming legitimacy. The second suggestion is the connectivity of veteran dogma, discourse and practice; in taking on the *poilus*' 'memory,' veterans of later wars also adopted Armistice Day and the causes, themes and responsibilities which their forebears associated with the date. Espousing in their writing and (attempting to)

[96] Anon., '11 novembre 1918: maudite à jamais soit la guerre!' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, no. 630, novembre 1998, p. 1.

implement in reality the key ideals of ‘unity’ and ‘duty,’ veterans have been able to find a way of dealing with their pasts and putting their knowledge towards some greater good. The centrality of such ideals across the disparate associations and generations of fire has contributed to the homogeneity of veteran writing. These ideas are traced throughout this thesis, which demonstrates, through examination of the methods and the motivations for veteran mobilisation of the war dead, the invariability of veteran discourse.

Part I - Contexts and Concepts

Chapter Two

Defining '*ancien combattant*': Veterans, the war dead and identity

> "Total war has singularly expanded the notion of 'combatant.'"
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> - A. Duchesne (Secrétaire Nationale de l'A.R.A.C.), 'Le 11 Novembre: Fête de la Paix,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 41, samedi 2 novembre 1946, p. 3.

This chapter is the first of three Contexts and Concepts chapters, which develop the idea of 'mobilising the dead' through consideration of the themes which underpin this study: identity, memory and commemoration. Succinctly put: it is through identifying with the fallen that veterans mobilise the dead in the first place; ensuring against forgetfulness constitutes the most compelling reason for mobilising the dead; and commemoration, as the formalised enactment of memory, provides the space for mobilisation to occur. The fallen are therefore indispensable to veteran engagement with these key topics. In demonstrating the interrelationship between veterans, the dead, and identity, memory and commemoration, the Contexts and Concepts section sets the scene for later discussion of the methods and motivations for veteran mobilisation of the dead in relation to *11 novembre*.

This chapter on 'Veterans, the war dead and identity' serves two functions.[1] By focusing on the formation and publications of the four associations and one independent newspaper under consideration, as well the different 'generations of fire,' it firstly develops a classification of 'veteran' as understood in this thesis. Outlining these defining criteria is imperative in order to establish exactly in which contexts and by whom the war dead are mobilised.[2] The chapter secondly demonstrates the centrality of the war dead to both externally- and self-constructed conceptions of 'veteran.' It lays bare the indestructible bonds which join ex-combatants to their fallen comrades, particularly the Unknown Soldier who, as representative of the dead, receives special attention in the veteran press. The chapter argues that the unchanging nature of veteran discourse is noteworthy given the heterogeneity of the *ancien combattant* movement, and that the war dead are central to the veterans' 'identity.' The well-entrenched veterans' memory culture, and the ideas of trauma, unity and duty which underlie it, are central to this homogeneity.

France as a nation was deeply affected by World War One, firstly because much of the fighting took place within its borders. The Western Front ran from the Belgian coast down to north-eastern France. With this line in flux, property and landscape were totally devastated, leaving local populations psychologically and materially scarred.[3] The sheer scale of mobilisation constituted a second reason. Almost eight million Frenchmen donned the uniform of the armed services during the four years of conflict, with most of them witnessing periods of front line combat. By the Armistice in 1918, almost 1.4 million had been killed (equating to almost one in six

[1] The term 'identity' has been used in the chapter despite the problems associated with its usage. For a masterful discussion of the problems inherent in the term, see Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "identity,"' *Theory and society*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1-47. The authors pointed out that the term's overuse from the mid-1970s has left it devoid of meaning (p. 3).

[2] When 'memory' and 'counter-memory' are evoked, it is necessary to ask who, where, in which context and against what. Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, 'Introduction,' *Representations*, no. 26, 'Memory and Counter-Memory,' Spring 1989, pp. 1-6, p. 2.

[3] Inhabitants were faced with the difficult choice to either remain and face death or flee as refugees. Those who returned after the Armistice often came home to ruined buildings and landscape. Roland Dorgelès' celebrated novel *Le Réveil des Morts* is set in the village of Crécy in the north of France and addresses, among other subjects, the theme of post-war reconstruction. Roland Dorgelès, *Le Réveil des Morts*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1923.

mobilised), with millions more wounded or disabled.[4] During or in the aftermath of the war numerous veterans' groups were established, each responding to different needs and circumstances within the veteran population. As the ex-soldiers' official representation, these groups sought material assistance for their members and endeavoured to maintain the (mythic) camaraderie of the front, an idea fundamental to all layers of veteran memory. In the early 1930s, the apogee of the veterans' 'movement,' these associations grouped together more than three million members.[5] The Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre (O.N.A.C.V.G.), the state body responsible for veterans and other war victims, today caters to more than 3.5 million French citizens.[6]

For Antoine Prost, the leading figure in French veteran historiography, veterans' associations are so essential that his definition of '*ancien combattant*' refers to both "the men who fought the war" and their organisations.[7] The importance of these groups stems from the fact that veterans do not form a social group *per se*; rather,

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[4] Charles Sowerewine put the number of French dead at 1 358 000, with another 1 040 000 permanently disabled and 3 000 000 partially disabled. Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, politics and society*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 117. Among the dead, 252 900 were unidentified or missing. Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, *Nos morts: les sociétés occidentales face aux tués de la guerre XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris: Payot, 2002, p. 54. In the aftermath of the War, there was a great reluctance to research the exact number of casualties; no precise figure exists and it is today too late to attempt to reconstruct this past. For details of the tallying process, see Antoine Prost, 'Compter les vivants et les morts: l'évaluation des pertes françaises de 1914-1918,' *Le mouvement social*, vol. 222, no. 1, 2008, pp. 41-60. The report relating to France's casualties prepared by Louis Marin in the War's immediate aftermath remains the only one to have been conducted. Thierry Hardier and Jean-François Jagielski, *Combattre et mourir pendant la Grande guerre 1914-1925*, Paris: Imago, 2001, p. 334.

[5] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. II: Sociologie*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 53. Prost's recent contribution to the *Chemins de la mémoire* magazine also puts *ancien combattant* association membership figures during the 1930s at three million. Antoine Prost, 'La naissance des associations d'anciens combattants,' *Les Chemins de la mémoire*, novembre 2009, no. 199, pp. 2-4, p. 2. This article is also available on the internet: Chemins de mémoire, <http://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/page/affichepage.php?idLang=fr&idPage=16666> accessed 10 January 2011. In 1935, there were 5.5 million former soldiers in France (4.5 million of whom had fought), equating to between 42 and 43% of the male population above the age of 20. Antoine Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne 1933-1938,' in Henri Michel (ed.), *La France et l'Allemagne 1932-1936. Colloque tenu à Paris du 10 au 12 mars 1977*, Paris: CNRS, 1980, pp. 131-148, p. 131.

[6] Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre, <http://www.onac-vg.fr/fr/> accessed 10 January 2011.

[7] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 1.

wartime participation constitutes the only common ground among individuals drawn from all levels of society and from all political orientations.[8] In other words, the *anciens combattants* exist as a group only because they are aware of their particular position and because they are organised in associations.[9] It is also through these associations that veterans are most able to exercise agency in campaigning for rights.[10]

It is therefore difficult to separate 'veterans' from the associations which group them together. The fact that *anciens combattants* responsible for producing discourse tend to write of "the veterans" or "the [association name]" as a bloc serves to exacerbate the interconnectivity between 'veterans' and veteran organisations. For this reason, while the discourse under examination in this thesis is constructed by individual agitators working for official *ancien combattant* associations founded during or immediately after World War One, it encompasses and purports to speak for the mass of returned servicemen and -women - including those veterans who

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[8] Alec Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go? Veterans and the politics of demobilisation,' in Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira, *Irregular armed forces and their role in politics and state formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 96-117, p. 104; Philippe Barrière, '"Au nom de la mémoire": Les associations grenobloises d'anciens combattants et victimes de guerre à la Libération (1944-1947),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 52, no. 205, 2002, pp. 35-53, p. 40.

[9] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 2. Alec Campbell also believed that without organisation in the post-war period, demobilised troops tend to re-enter civilian life and lose the potential to formulate a collective consciousness; without organisational representation, veterans are incapable of acting as 'veterans.' Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go?' p. 104. Note, however, that this assumption has been challenged. Prost's reading of the veterans' movement as evolving from the formation of associations (often founded by key protagonists) presupposes a high level of organisation from above. Mark Edele, in his analysis of World War Two veterans in the Soviet Union, has shown how despite resolute resistance from the state, countless individual demands for recognition eventually fostered an understanding of the commonalities between veterans. In this vein, veterans constituted a social and political force before they became aware of it. Mark Edele, *Soviet veterans of the Second World War: A popular movement in an authoritarian society 1941-1991*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 12. Although the situation in post-World War One France was markedly different to the Soviet Union under Stalin, Edele's comments suggest that Prost's 'top-down' approach underestimates the power of French veterans' grass-roots drive.

[10] David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans and public welfare policy: Comparative and transnational perspectives on western states in the twentieth century,' *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*, vol. 11, 2001, pp. 77-106, p. 99. Former Director of the O.N.A.C. Serge Barcellini described the veterans' associations as "the central and omnipresent actor of the *monde combattant*." Serge Barcellini, 'Introduction,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 205, no. 1, 'Le monde combattant,' 2002, pp. 3-4, p. 3.

voluntarily abstain from joining associations.[11] *Ancien combattant* journalists and leaders constantly create and rely on a myth: unity within the veteran ranks.

One explanation for the myth of veteran unity is the ability and right of ex-service personnel to belong to numerous associations: disabled veterans can for instance join groups for any type of servicemen (able-bodied or otherwise), any type of disabled veteran group, and groups for men with specific disabilities.[12] Another reason for the veterans' group outlook is their belief that sharing the experience of war imposed certain attributes on individual soldiers, creating, in the words of an anonymous Union Fédérale writer, a "unanimous [veteran] personality."[13] Although indelible links were in reality forged between men who knew each other - one 98-year old World War One veteran reminisced, for example, that his regiment "had just one heart and one soul"[14] - the bonds which connected ex-servicemen were believed to transcend separate units and encompass the entire soldering body. This myth and ideal of unity, translated into the civilian world via the creation of veterans' associations, was fundamental to *ancien combattant* self-perception.

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[11] It is difficult to ascertain the opinions of returned servicemen who voluntarily abstain from joining official bodies: aside from publishing private memoirs or works of fiction, these combatants have restricted outlets for expression. It would seem logical to assume, also, that men who do not join associations are less interested in remembering - or at least memorialising - their war experience. Most importantly for this thesis, in failing to speak to or for a group of veterans, such men are unable to actively mobilise the dead (in other words, address an audience and use the dead for a specific purpose), putting their work outside the scope of this thesis which focuses exclusively on official association-endorsed publications. Thanks to Ian Isherwood, who is writing his doctorate at the University of Glasgow on the publication rates of British war memoirs, for his thoughts on this matter.

[12] David A. Gerber, 'Introduction: Finding disabled veterans in history,' in David A. Gerber (ed.), *Disabled veterans in history*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 1-51, p. 27. For an explanation of why the three types of association (which Gerber labelled 'mixed,' 'composite' and 'single-population') are relevant, see David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans, the state, and the experience of disability in western societies, 1914-1950,' *Journal of Social History*, vol. 36, no. 4, Summer 2003, pp. 899-918, pp. 901-904.

[13] Anon., '11 novembre 1932: Quatorzième anniversaire de la victoire et de la paix. Manifeste de l'Union Fédérale,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants et de Victimes de la Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, 2e année, no. 23, 15 novembre 1932, p. 5. In his analysis of demobilised soldiers, Alec Campbell noted that the common experience of war can lead to the creation of a "unique veterans' consciousness" if veterans are organised. Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go?' p. 104. Leed believed that this adoption of a common identity was especially true for younger soldiers. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 13.

[14] Lucien Finance (98 ans), 7 août 1995, in Jean-Noël Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles: paroles des derniers survivants de la Grande Guerre*, Strasbourg: Editions La Nuée Bleue, 2006, p. 151.

Entrenched in veteran 'memory,' it powerfully explains the homogeneity of *ancien combattant* discourse.[15]

The veterans' position in post-war society was also vital to the formation of a collective attitude, for two reasons. Firstly, not only was participation in war a unique experience, it was also one which civilians could never comprehend.[16] Veterans were thus automatically distinct from the rest of the population: for Eric J. Leed, author of a ground-breaking study on Great War soldier identity, the veterans' "common identity"[17] resulted as much from their post-war social marginalisation as from their conflict experiences.[18] Secondly, the act of reflecting on war (sharing 'real' memories) created a homogenous 'imagined' memory of the experience which was readily absorbed by veteran associations and then imparted to their members.[19] In this way, the act of remembering created certain characteristics distinctive of a 'French veteran,'[20] an identity which has been adopted and affirmed by successive generations of fire. The incomprehensibility of the wartime experience constitutes one reason why a single narrative (the veterans' imagined memory) was presented to the non-veteran population after World War One, and then adopted by veterans of later generations of fire: an omnipresent and universal reading of the war experience proved easier for non-combatants to absorb and relate

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[15] This idea is explored further in Chapter Eight 'Mobilising the dead to encourage unity.'
[16] 'Civilian' is interpreted throughout this study as someone who has not served in the armed forces.
[17] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 12.
[18] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 210.
[19] One example of the imparting of a certain morality/ideology/language by leaders to rank-and-file members is the following instruction, penned by Maurice de Barral, a prominent figure on the interwar and post-World War Two veteran scene. He advocated that "'French dignity,' 'national ideal,' 'collective conscience,' 'spirit of duty' and other such expressions need to constitute the habitual and normal vocabulary [of the *anciens combattants*]." Maurice de Barral, *Les combattants dans la nation: principes d'action*, Paris: Editions-librairies Étincelles, 1928, p. 31. Benjamin Ziemann's work on peasant soldiers in Bavaria has demonstrated that an overarching narrative of the war experience was not readily discernable in the veterans' associative press - members "were not provided with guidelines on how to remember the lived experience of the front," in Ziemann's words - probably because the image of heroism was hard to promote in defeat. Benjamin Ziemann, *War experiences in rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. Alex Skinner, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007, pp. 250-251. In comparison to France, however, relatively few men joined associations (p. 252).
[20] Remembering creates identity. Davis and Starn, 'Introduction,' p. 4. Maurice Crubellier noted that the *anciens combattants* fostered a 'memory' supplemented with legend in order to enforce their sense of identity. Maurice Crubellier, *La mémoire des Français: recherches d'histoire culturelle*, Paris: Henri Veyrier et Kronos, 1991, p. 14.

to than the plethora of real memor*ies*. It has also been noted that former servicemen realised that non-combatants tended to focus chiefly on the positive, heroic aspects of the war experience.[21] Choosing to belong to a veteran association meant accepting the processes of de-individualisation responsible for the formation of a veteran 'identity' and 'memory;' it was within the distinct environment of veteran associations that such characteristics were fostered.

While this thesis focuses on veterans as members of *ancien combattant* associations,[22] the designation refers in practice to the leaders and journalists who presume to act on behalf of such people - the men and women whose articles are published in the associative press (and which constitute 'veteran discourse' according to this thesis).[23] However, despite being penned by individuals, the views and arguments presented are supposed to reflect and emphasise the opinions of their memberships.[24] These journalists are referred to in this thesis variously as 'veteran-writers,' 'veteran-intellectuals,' 'veteran-memorialists' and 'veteran-activists' in

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[21] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 170. Conversely, the more 'appealing' elements of veterans' tales were appropriated by myth-makers as legitimate. George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 6.

[22] Other researchers have also restricted their study to "organised" *anciens combattants*. Among those who have specified this criterion are: Elliott Pennell Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' PhD thesis, Université de Genève, thèse no. 175, Ambilly, Annemasse: Imprimerie Les Presses de Savoie, 1966, p. 17; Lynette Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s: An analysis of the nature of *ancien combattant* associations, their aims, activities and achievements,' PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1972, p. 10.

[23] As René Rémond appreciated, the actions of the veteran leaders orient the 'movement' and thus shape its appearance. René Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 5, no. 2, avril-juin 1955, pp. 267-290, p. 288. First World War veteran leaders were generally urban middle class, whereas the rank-and-file were mainly rural. Prost, *II: Sociologie*, Ch. 4 'Le recrutement du mouvement combattant: les adhérents' and Ch 5 'Le recrutement du mouvement combattant: les dirigeants.' According to Jean-Pierre Rioux's study of World War Two veterans' groups, people who are well-placed in the "socio-political hierarchy" are selected to lead. Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Associations et souvenir de la Seconde guerre mondiale en France,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 291-301, p. 292.

[24] However, as Elliott Pennell Fagerberg recognised in his study into the *anciens combattants* as pressure groups, the views of the leadership do not necessarily reflect those of their members. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 18. He followed up this observation with the remark that while leaderships advocated for certain approaches to international questions, most rank-and-file members in fact seemed apathetic to questions of foreign policy (p. 19).

recognition of the diversity of the topics they cover and the roles they take on; many of the journalists are also leaders within the veteran world. The fact that the men and women responsible for producing *ancien combattant* newspapers also drive the movement probably partly accounts for the invariability of veteran discourse; as this thesis suggests, veterans' language reflects the aims and practices of their associations, and vice versa.

There have been hundreds of French veteran associations, founded to address the different situations and needs of the millions of soldiers returned from war since 1914. Prost identified four main categories of association established after World War One: groups catering to disabled veterans with specific problems, which had necessarily small membership figures because of their specialisation; associations which grouped together men of a certain profession; political associations; and others.[25] Additionally, associations have been established to cater for veterans with specific religious affiliations,[26] from certain geographical areas,[27] with particular citations,[28] of certain regiments or, from 1945, of certain wars. Describing the

[25] Prost, *I: Histoire*, pp. 87-89. Examples of associations which cater to veterans with specific ailments or disabilities are the Union des Blessés de la Face (U.B.F.), the Association des Mutilés des Yeux de Guerre (A.M.Y.G.) and the Fédération Nationale des Plus Grands Invalides (F.N.P.G.I.). Associations which group together men of a certain profession include the Association des Ecrivains Anciens Combattants (A.E.C.), the Association Nationale des Journalistes Combattants and the Association Nationale Des Cheminots Anciens Combattants, Résistants et Prisonniers (A.N.C.A.C.). Politically-orientated associations include the A.R.A.C. and the Fédération nationale des combattants républicains (F.N.C.R.).

[26] Religious organisations founded after World War One included the Ligue des Droits du Religieux Ancien Combattant (D.R.A.C.) for Catholics. Two Jewish associations were founded in the interwar period in response to rising anti-Semitism: the republican Association des Anciens Combattants Volontaires Juifs (A.C.V.J.), founded in March 1928, and the nationalistic Union Patriotique des Français israélites (U.P.F.I.), founded in June 1934. For information regarding the attitudes of these associations as promoted through their (very few) publications, see Philippe E. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs face aux défis des années trente,' *Archives Juives*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2003, pp. 10-24.

[27] One example is the Union Départementale de la Seine (U.D.S.) for veterans in the Parisian area.

[28] The Croix de Feu was the most notable proponent of distinguishing between *anciens combattants* who had engaged in front line combat and those who had not, as indicated by its formal title, the Association des combattants de l'avant et des blessés de guerre cités pour action d'éclat [Association for combatants of the front and for combatants disabled by war who have been cited for special action]. The terms of membership was relaxed in 1929, two years after its establishment, to include men who had seen at least six months' of front line action but had not necessarily received an award or been injured during their engagement. Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' p. 272.

situation after World War One, Pierre Chanlaine, former President of the Association des Ecrivains Combattants (A.E.C.), wrote:

> I myself regret this proliferation [of associations], but I understand its necessity. Writers and actors fought; blind veterans and disabled veterans have particular needs. These groups formed a special state of mind and it is natural that they want to be amongst each other.[29]

Thus ironically the combatant 'movement' (in the singular) is characterised by its fragmentation. Explanations for this division include the diversity of problems facing ex-servicemen, "legendary French individualism"[30] and personal rivalries between leaders. The number of associations makes the homogeneity of veteran discourse significant.

Regardless of factions within the movement, the veterans insisted - and continue to insist - upon their unity and affinity. This belief in unity is a cornerstone of the veteran 'identity,' reinforced in the narratives promoted by both imagined and mythologised memories. One representation of this sense of togetherness is the supposed apolitical nature of veterans' groups. Despite the falsehood of the veterans' claim to exist beyond political divisions (as manifest on occasions such as February 1934), with the exception of a few overtly ideological associations, *anciens combattants* steadfastly declare their refusal to succumb to divisions caused by divergent political views. "In this journal we do not engage in politics,"[31] claimed one northern French veteran-writer soon after the Great War on behalf of his association. Exercising far greater influence in his capacity as President of the Office National des Mutilés, André Maginot advised his fellows: "*Mutilés*, we

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[29] Pierre Chanlaine (Président de l'Association des Ecrivains Combattants), 'Nos Associations,' *Mutilé-combattant. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre, Anciens Combattants, et toutes Victimes de Guerre*, no. 295, mai 1953, p. 1. Pierre Chanlaine was President of the A.E.C. for many years, and contributed articles to numerous publications including the *Journal des Combattants* and the *Mutilé-combattant.*

[30] Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' p. 15. René Rémond also recognised the importance of personality in contributing to the fracture of the *ancien combattant* movement, citing "downright individualism." Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' p. 271.

[31] P. Desorbaix, 'Le Toussaint, le Jour des Morts et la Fête de l'Armistice,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1.

should not practice politics within our associations; we should just remember our great duty of solidarity."[32] Maginot here posited the maintenance of fraternity as one of the veterans' many duties; this obligation, like the other responsibilities attributed to the veteran community, aided survivors in coming to terms with their past trauma by putting it towards the construction of a positive present and future. A more nuanced description of *ancien combattant* attitudes to politics was posited by Maurice de Barral in the *Journal des Combattants*, who argued in 1952 in response to the Paris-Bonn Accords relating to the rearmament of Germany, a scheme which many veterans fundamentally opposed, that "the veterans and war victims, as much as they are, do not and will never get involved in politics if it is not the politics of France."[33] For de Barral, only extremely worrying situations warrant veteran engagement with politics. The veterans thus pertain to act en masse beyond political divisions and their discourse reflects this ideal. The continual reassertion of the veterans' apolitical stance highlights three issues: firstly, the importance of the concept, particularly in terms of healing past wounds; secondly, the fact that the idea has been ingrained in French veteran 'memory;' and thirdly, the possibility that veterans are themselves aware of how far removed from the reality of the combatant world this claim actually is.

Another expression of veteran union is the cherished notion of the 'generation of fire,' a constantly-reiterated ideal which subsumes all the individual participants of a war into a single entity. According to one theoretician, an age group is connected via its position in history.[34] For Olivier Wieviorka in his study of Resistance

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[32] M. Maginot (Président de l'Office National des Mutilés), 'Paroles au Séance de la Chambre du 3 décembre 1926,' in Anon., *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1.

[33] Maurice De Barral, 'Malgré 1918 et 1945 l'Allemagne ne change pas,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 37e année, nouvelle série, no. 340, samedi 8 novembre 1952, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

[34] Arnold Bergsträsser, 'Die Kriegsteilnehmergeneration 1914-1918 und ihre Entwicklung,' in Robert Tillmanns (ed.), *Ordnung als Ziel: Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte*, Stuttgart und Köln: Verlag W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1954, pp. 7-19, p. 7. An interesting examination of 'generations' and remembering is Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott's research: 'Generations and collective memories,' *American Sociological Review*, vol. 54, no. 3, 1989, pp. 359-381. They concluded that

identity, a 'generation' is a "population marked by a founding moment, welded together by common experience, which develops a homogenous discourse and practice,"[35] which suits Annie Kriegel's definition of a 'generation' as being founded around one or more central experiences.[36] In arguing for the interrelatedness of material, symbolic and functional elements in *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory], Pierre Nora used the example of a historic generation: a generation's demographic content is material; it is supposedly functional because of transmission of memories over time; and a generation is symbolic because it characterises a group despite the fact that not all members of that group experienced the defining criteria.[37] In other words, a 'generation' is characterised by a majority experience from which develops a single narrative - exactly what occurred during and after World War One.

For the majority of troops fighting in World War One, regardless of their country, the outbreak of war constituted an introduction to foreign politics. Knowledge of the international situation resulted in an increase in personal awareness and formed an element of common ground for the debutant soldiers.[38] Combatants were further bonded by the common experience of the appalling brutality and horrific conditions of World War One trench warfare. Participation in the Great War was hence an important factor in the formation of the combatants' personal and collective identity, that of the 'generation' of 1914.[39] Many observers, as well as veterans themselves,

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events which occur in late adolescence or early adulthood impact markedly on people's memories (p. 378).

[35] Olivier Wieviorka, 'La génération de la résistance,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 22, 'Les générations,' April-June 1989, pp. 111-116, p. 114. He also remarked that not all Resistance fighters fit into one group; different clandestine groups had different founding moments.

[36] Annie Kriegel, 'Le concept politique de génération: apogée et déclin,' *Commentaire*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1979, pp. 390-399, p. 395.

[37] Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history: *Les lieux de mémoire*,' *Representations*, vol. 26, Spring 1989, pp. 7-25, p. 19.

[38] Bergsträsser, 'Die Kriegsteilnehmergeneration,' p. 8.

[39] Kriegel, 'Le concept politique de génération,' p. 397. The formation of a group 'identity' was not unique to soldiers of France or of World War One. In writing of the American G.I. Bill, Michael J. Bennett remarked that troops returned home from World War Two with a common sense of purpose as Americans. Michael J. Bennett, *When dreams came true: The G.I. Bill and the making of modern America*, Brassey's: Washington, 1996, p. 42.

have adopted this idea and appellation,[40] demonstrating that the idea of 'unity' is central to discussion of the World War One veterans. Yet veteran claims to unity are not to be taken at face value; in fact, constant appeals for, and (paradoxically) affirmations of, unity in the veteran press underscore not only the concept's importance to veteran 'identity' and its entrenchment in veteran 'memory' but also its fabrication.

Given the plethora of *ancien combattant* associations, this thesis imposes further defining criteria on the term 'veteran' by focusing on the newspapers of four of the most prominent national groups: the Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre (A.G.M.G.), the Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (A.R.A.C.), the Union Fédérale (U.F.) and the Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.), as well as the independent *Journal des Combattants*. The publications of these organisations were all created during or in the immediate aftermath of World War One and have survived until the twenty-first century. References to northern French examples provide a regional perspective. The disparities between the associations responsible for publishing these journals make the similarity of language and theme particularly striking, supporting the idea that the development of an imagined memory of the World War One experience addressed a very real need among returned servicemen to come to terms with their trauma regardless of political, class, religious or other beliefs.

The Association Générale des Mutilés de Guerre (A.G.M.G.) was the first major *ancien combattant* organisation to develop in France during the First World War, created specifically to cater to disabled veterans. The organisation was created after Abbot Viollet witnessed the helplessness of wounded soldiers at the Maison Blanche hospital and encouraged General Malleterre, himself a *grand mutilé*[41] of

[40] Among the many historians and novelists who have used this approach in relation to soldiers of the First World War are Stephen R. Ward, Robert Wohl and the French World War One veteran Maurice Genevoix. Stephen R. Ward (ed.), *The War Generation: Veterans of the First World War*, Port Washington, N.Y.; London: Kennikat Press, 1975; Robert Wohl (ed.), *The Generation of 1914*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1980; Maurice Genevoix, *Ceux de 14*, Paris: Flammarion, 1950.
[41] '*Grand mutilé*' refers to someone who is seriously and permanently disabled.

the Marne, to chair a conference. At its closure, the decision was made to found an organisation, of which Malleterre became the first President, responsible for continuing the hospital's civic work following patient discharge. As wounded soldiers travelled across France to the Maison Blanche to obtain treatment and special prosthetic limbs, the A.G.M.G. acquired representatives in the majority of *départements*.[42] By January 1916, just months after its creation, the A.G.M.G. was publishing the monthly *Bulletin de l'Association Nationale des Mutiles de la Guerre*.

Despite the rapidity with which veterans joined the group, the solidity of its founding structures and the extent of its regional membership, the A.G.M.G. failed to unite all of France's disabled ex-servicemen. As well as the obvious administrative pressures and blunders associated with inaugurating and propagating a rapidly-expanding organisation, Antoine Prost believed that many soldiers associated the A.G.M.G. with slightly right-wing tendencies because of its professional militarism and hierarchy and were reluctant to support this conservative orientation.[43]

Nonetheless, the A.G.M.G. has been an important and prominent actor in the *ancien combattant* world.[44] In 1957, the group joined with the left-leaning Union Nationale

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[42] For soldiers who spent large amounts of time in convalescence, not only the combat experience but also hospitals and rehabilitation centres were crucial to the formation their identities. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans, the state, and the experience of disability in western societies,' p. 905.

[43] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 34. The right-wing tendencies of the A.G.M.G. were compounded firstly by the fact that a General was elected to the presidential position and secondly because it was patronised by well-known figures including the French President and representatives from the main ministries and the two Chambers. Its political orientation is evident, too, in the fact that many A.G.M.G. members have also belonged to the U.N.C., another conservative organisation. This link has been acknowledged by the associations themselves: in mourning the death of Dominique Audollent, Honourary President of the U.N.C., the President of the A.G.M.G. recognised that his association shared a "common ideal" with the U.N.C. but was also distinct from it. Jean-François Henry (Président Général), 'Sur la mort d'un Président,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 498, février 1972, p. 1.

[44] According to Fagerberg, despite their small membership figures in comparison to the U.F. and the U.N.C., the two principle disabled veterans' organisations (the A.G.M.G. and the U.N.M.R.) were able to exert political pressure by virtue of their role as mediators between the left-leaning U.F. and more conservative U.N.C. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 54.

des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (U.N.M.R.A.C.),[45] the other major World War One association for disabled veterans. This measure was designed to improve the groups' potential for advocacy and increase memberhip.[46] Under this dual leadership, the newspaper was renamed the *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre*, and was published regularly until 2004 when the group was disbanded due to declining membership and increasing costs (making it the only association of this study no longer in existence).

The *Journal des Combattants* is the independent *ancien combattant* newspaper considered in this thesis. Its first edition was published on 6 May 1916 under the title *Journal des mutilés, réformés et blessés de guerre*. By July of that same year, the monthly paper had become fortnightly, and within another few months the format had been enlarged and the editorial team had moved to bigger premises.[47] In celebration of the journal's thirtieth birthday, the regular contributor Jean Volvey recounted its success story in the style of a children's tale:

> Thirty years ago, in May 1916, a little journal - a very little journal - was born. It would not take long for it to get bigger, becoming one of France's premier weeklies.
> The very small journal had a very big ambition: TO BE A USEFUL JOURNAL.
> Has it fulfilled this ambition?
> The confidence and affectionate friendship of its considerable number of subscribers seem to answer this question.[48]

[45] The U.N.M.R. was founded in 1917, and was more left-wing than the A.G.M.G. Georges Rivollet, active in both the veteran and political realms, was the organisation's General Secretary from 1924. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' pp. 55-56.

[46] Henri Lévêque (Président Général de l'A.G.M.G.) et A. Legrand (Président Général de l'U.N.M.R.A.C.), 'Notre nouveau journal: "unir et maintenir,"' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, mars 1957, no. 337, p. 1.

[47] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 36.

[48] Jean Volvey, 'Notre journal a 30 ans,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 18, samedi 18 mai 1946, p. 1.

The paper was run by an entrepreneurial son of a newspaper editor, André Linville (whose real name was André L'Heureux). Despite rumours that Linville had spent the war as a secretary in an aviation bureau and only rarely visited the trenches, his ability to tap into the veterans' psyche was undeniable.[49]

The success of the *Journal* fulfilled its founders' aspirations: the paper was originally conceived as an enterprise which would allow its editors to live off the profit.[50] Part of the paper's success lay in its double role: an interesting read, the *Journal des Combattants* also provided ex-servicemen with much-needed advice and information. Supposedly devoid of loyalty to any specific association (although the editors did in fact favour certain organisations over others) and able to reach veterans dispersed across the country, the *Journal* was better placed than an individual organisation to establish this kind of help network. A catchy article in the first edition encouraged veterans to write to the journal's team of specialists with queries or complaints. As only members were entitled to benefit from this advice, the function ensured a large and regular readership. It also exposed the *Journal*'s editors to a huge variety of topics and attitudes which could be used when formulating articles. Most importantly, the letters allowed the editors to understand contemporary concerns and grasp public sentiment towards a subject.[51] It was this awareness of topics most pertinent to France's *réformés* that resulted in the *Journal*'s unique content. Today, 4000 copies of the *Journal des Combattants* are published monthly, the vast majority of which are distributed via subscription.[52]

The official birth of the Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants (A.R.A.C.) was on 2 November 1917, at a time when the continuing war was radicalising many of France's *mutilés*. The four founders were Georges Bruyère, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, Raymond Lefèbvre and Henri Barbusse, all survivors of the conflict. Barbusse, author of the celebrated wartime novel *Le Feu* for which he won

[49] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 36. The paper was actually founded by Georg Dyer, a Canadian engaged voluntarily in the Légion Etrangère, during his convalescence.
[50] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 36.
[51] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 36.
[52] Thanks to Eric Daniel, Director of the *Journal des Combattants*, for providing this information.

the Prix Goncourt in 1916,[53] became the association's first President and its best-known member.[54] As with the majority of *ancien combattant* associations, the A.R.A.C. was established to campaign for monetary compensation.[55] However, the organisation's other principal aims and aspirations clearly indicated its political orientation.[56] Vehemently anti-war, the A.R.A.C. preached the struggle for a democratic and peaceful society based on the republican ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, in which humans could live harmoniously in national and international unity.[57] This doctrine was heavily influenced by the ideals promoted by the Russian Revolution and the belief that World War One constituted the era's biggest crime against humanity.[58]

The association's unequivocal left-wing ideology is unusual in the French combatant community. Although certain organisations are suspected of harbouring political sympathies, they tend to avoid overtly flaunting their orientation in a manifestation of the veterans' desire for unity, an ideal absorbed into veteran 'memory' and a primary reason for the homogeneity of veteran discourse across decades and associations.[59] Nonetheless, for representatives of the A.R.A.C., its

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[53] Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu. Journal d'une escouade. Suivi du Carnet de guerre; Préface de Jean Relinger*, [n.p.]: Flammarion, 1965 [1916].

[54] Decades after Barbusse's death, the A.R.A.C. both contributes to and capitalises upon his reputation, publishing a plethora of material relating to its founder. Most notable are the *Info Barbusse* papers, which recount the association's activities and always feature one of Barbusse's short stories, and the annual *Les Cahiers Henri Barbusse*. According to the June 2009 issue, the *Cahier* provides "information and reflection on texts which allow for ever-deeper investigation into the life, action and oeuvre of Henri Barbusse." Paul Markidès (Président Exécutif), 'Editorial,' *Les Cahiers Henri Barbusse*, no. 34, juin 2009, p. 1.

[55] Henri Barbusse, *Ce que veulent les anciens combattants. Discours au Congrès national de l'A.R.A.C. à Lyon le 7 septembre 1919*, Paris: Imprimerie La Productrice, 1919, p. 11.

[56] The overt political doctrine of the A.R.A.C. accounts for its relatively low membership figures: whereas during the 1930s Prost presumed the A.G.M.G. grouped up to 100 000 men, the A.R.A.C.'s membership levels never surpassed 25 000. Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne,' p. 133.

[57] A.R.A.C., *Association républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, Paris: Presses de l'Imprimerie centrale commerciale, 1971, p. 56. This idea is reiterated on the A.R.A.C.'s website: A.R.A.C. de la Marne, <http://www.arac51.com/Les-objectifs-et-les-Services-de-l.html> accessed 10 January 2011.

[58] A.R.A.C., *Association républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, Paris: Presses de l'Imprimerie centrale commerciale, 1971, p. 54.

[59] Veterans' associations have shown themselves proud of their apolitical stance. Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' p. 272. He noted in conclusion that apolitical idealism actually constitutes one means of engaging in politics; that the refusal of 'politics' is in fact one of the "most subtle disguises" of the right-wing. (p. 290).

political orientation does not preclude a desire for unity: its motto "Do everything to unite, and nothing to divide" emphasises the unity fundamental to both socialist and veteran ideologies.[60] The willingness of the A.R.A.C.'s leadership to promote 'unity' at the expense of class struggle demonstrates the importance of this doctrine to the veteran community; believing in unity was one way of finding something positive in the war experience.

The A.R.A.C.'s journal was first published under the title *Le Combattant* in October 1919. After many title changes, the association finally settled for *Le Réveil des Combattants* in January 1931, starting a new numeration which is still in use today. At the end of 2008, the bi-monthly paper was "renovated"[61] in order to better respond to the needs of its subscribers (who are not necessarily veterans: A.R.A.C. membership is open to anyone interested in its work[62]). It now provides more information regarding the latest changes within the French veteran world for *ancien combattant* adherents, articles by actors involved in international activity for "the militants of concrete solidarity, anti-fascism, friendship amongst peoples and peace," and a section on 'Memory' for teachers.[63]

Towards the end of World War One, independent departmental disabled veterans' associations were increasingly embracing the idea of unification. Following several

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[60] Paul Vaillant-Couturier, co-founder of the A.R.A.C. and its erstwhile President, declared that the association's testament reflected Barbusse's socialist leanings. Paul Vaillant-Couturier (Président de l'A.R.A.C.), 'Onze novembre 1936: union totale de la génération du feu,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 6e année, no. 71, 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1936, p. 6.

[61] Anon., 'Un Réveil rénové,' *Le Réveil des Combattants*, octobre-novembre 2008, no. 747-748, [n.p.]. A.R.A.C. de la Marne, <http://www.arac51.com/Le-Reveil-des-Combattants-No-747.html#s> accessed 10 January 2011.

[62] Hamelin saw in the A.R.A.C.'s decision a bid to invite expertise into the association. Fabrice Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation du répertoire d'action des associations d'anciens combattants et de victimes de guerre. Des mutations pilotées par les représentants de l'Etat,' in N. Dahan and E. Grossman (eds.), *Les groupes d'intérêt au XXIe siècle: renouveau, croissance et démocratie. Colloque du Cevipof les 24 et 25 septembre 2004*, Paris: IEP Paris, 2004, p. 14. Hamelin works for I.N.R.E.T.S., Institut national de recherche sur les transports et leur sécurité.

[63] Anon., 'Un Réveil rénové,' *Le Réveil des Combattants*, octobre-novembre 2008, no. 747-748, [n.p.]. A.R.A.C. de la Marne, <http://www.arac51.com/Le-Reveil-des-Combattants-No-747.html#s> accessed 10 January 2011.

failed attempts at national unity, the February 1918 Lyon Congress grouped these associations together to form the Union Fédérale, or U.F.[64] Of the major veterans' associations, only the A.G.M.G. declined membership in the new association.[65] In contrast to the majority of major veterans' associations whose highly centralised bureaucracies descended from Paris to the provinces, the U.F. was a true 'federation' developed from a broad regional base and installed in the capital after its creation. As well as disabled veterans, the U.F. incorporated other war victims needing financial and psychological aid such as widows, orphans and descendants of the war dead, and welcomed demobilised soldiers after the Armistice. With a membership of almost one million by the 1930s, the U.F. represented approximately one third of French veterans.[66] Today, with 83 groups together representing 110 000 members,[67] the Union Fédérale remains one of two major *ancien combattant* associations in France, along with the Union Nationale des Combattant (U.N.C.).

Soon after its creation, relations soured between the U.F. and the radical Union Nationale des Mutilés et Réformés (U.N.M.R.), embittered at losing several of its regional groups to the amalgam. Linville's *Journal des Combattants* contributed to the fracture, supporting the U.N.M.R. and deliberately avoiding mentioning the U.F.'s activities. This one-sidedness no doubt contributed to the U.F.'s decision to found its own journal, *Après la bataille*.[68] As with other veterans' publications, "each issue contain[ed] articles on items of public interest: free opinions and comments on laws under discussion in the Assembly including legal, judicial, medical and scientific studies."[69] The U.F. has continued to publish throughout its

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[64] The association's full title was the Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises de Blessés, Mutilés, Réformés, Anciens Combattants de la Grande Guerre et de leurs Veuves, Orphelins et Ascendants.
[65] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 43.
[66] Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s,' p. 85.
[67] Union Fédérale, <http://www.union-federale.com/l_union_federale_ses_buts> accessed 10 January 2011.
[68] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 43. Despite the problems with the *Journal des Combattants*, the U.F. maintained constant contact with professional journalists through its relations with the veteran-writers' group the Association des Ecrivains Combattants (A.E.C.). Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 37.
[69] Le Comité de Rédaction, 'Notre programme,' *Après la bataille. Bulletin officiel hebdomadaire de l'Union Fédérale des Associations françaises de Mutilés, Réformés, Blessés et Anciens Combattants*

history, for decades even producing two papers: one for the general membership and the more academic *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale*, which devoted much space to matters of foreign policy.[70] In 1995 these two newspapers merged into the *Cahier-Journal de l'Union Fédérale*, which deals with general information on veterans' rights and news about the combatant world, and pays particular attention to associative activities and historical accounts of the century's wars written "by those who lived them."[71]

Several prominent Frenchmen have featured among the U.F.'s predominantly professional leadership.[72] Henri Pichot, four-time President of the association, was one of the most vocal *anciens combattants* of the interwar period, campaigning for improved veterans' benefits and working towards French-German reconciliation.[73] Nobel Peace Prize-winner and another U.F. President René Cassin also shared this desire, although his beliefs and methods did not always correspond with Pichot's.[74] Their internationalism was reflected in U.F. policy: the association was a loyal supporter of the League of Nations[75] and belonged to several international veterans' organisations.[76]

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de la Grande Guerre, de leurs Veuves, Orphelins et Ascendants, no. 1, dimanche 27 octobre 1918, p. 1.

[70] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 34.

[71] Union Fédérale, <http://www.union-federale.com/presse_communication> accessed 10 January 2011.

[72] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 31. Founders of the Union Fédérale include Gaston Vidal, René Cassin, Gaston Rogé and Marcel Lehmann (p. 30).

[73] For more information on Henri Pichot, particularly his campaigns for Franco-German rapprochement, see Claire Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne de 1930 à 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004 and Claire Moreau-Trichet, 'La propagande nazie à l'égard des associations françaises d'anciens combattants de 1934 à 1939,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 2002, vol. 51, no. 205, pp. 55-70. Pichot was President for the periods 1921-1922, 1923-1924, 1929-1931 and 1934-1940.

[74] One example of this divergence was the leaders' different responses to Hitler's election success in 1933. While Cassin was devoted to the idea of collective security, Pichot continued to espouse interaction with Germany. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 159. Cassin was President of the Union Fédérale between 1922 and 1923.

[75] The Union Fédérale saw in the League of Nation one of the surest means of ensuring continuing reparations payments and national security. René Cassin represented the French *anciens combattants* at the League of Nations from 1924 to 1940. The U.N.M.R. was also dedicated to the League, whereas the U.N.C. and the A.G.M.G. tended to show only "perfunctory reverence" for the organisation. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' pp. 129-145.

[76] Among these associations were the Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants (F.I.D.A.C.) founded in 1920 to group together veterans of the Allied powers (which the Union Fédérale joined in

As with most *ancien combattant* associations, the U.F. declared itself strictly apolitical. In its determination to remain immune to political bias, the U.F. alienated the left-wing A.R.A.C. and Fédération ouvrière et paysanne des Anciens Combattants (F.O.P.A.C.), which both left the association following the 1919 Orleans conference.[77] This split did not stop the U.F. sporadically supporting these associations when it believed inter-association cooperation was necessary, translating the ideal of 'unity' so often espoused in writing into practice. Regardless of its determinedly apolitical doctrine, in reality the U.F. tended towards the left due to its popular base and the autonomy allocated to its groups.[78] However, as with the right-leaning U.N.C., the associations' large numbers of adherents meant that both were forced to accept a fairly moderate path to accommodate the majority opinion.

According to François Malval, author of one of the few historical accounts devoted entirely to the U.N.C., the *Journal Officiel* of 11 December 1918 published the declaration of the group's foundation.[79] Antoine Prost and Elliott Pennell Fagerberg both questioned this date, citing instead 11 November 1918.[80] What cannot be denied is that within a couple of months of its foundation, the U.N.C.'s membership had overtaken the U.F.'s, making the newest national association numerically the most important.[81] However, due to the speed of its growth, the U.N.C.'s base was less solid and less well established in rural France than that of the U.F.

1922), and the Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés et Anciens Combattants (C.I.A.M.A.C.) founded in September 1925 which welcomed veterans from ex-enemy nations, as well.

[77] Union Fédérale, *Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre 1918-1998: 80 ans d'histoire…*, Houilles: Atelier R.V.S., 1998, p. 6.

[78] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 45.

[79] François Malval, *Onze ans d'action: histoire de l'U.N.C. 1919-1930*, Malakoff (Seine): Imprimerie Durassié et Co, La Voix du Combattant, 1930, p. 5. François Malval used the pseudonym Hubert-Aubert for many of his contributions to the *Voix du Combattant* during the 1930s.

[80] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 58; Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 41.

[81] In December 1919, the U.N.C.'s newspaper proclaimed membership had reached 300 000, and 510 000 in June 1920. The U.F. put its membership at 120 000 in May 1920. Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 59. By the mid-1920s, the Union Fédérale again had a larger membership than the U.N.C., although the membership figures of the two largest groups remained comparable throughout the interwar period. Both groups witnessed a surge in members between 1927 and 1931, with just under 1 000 000 adherents each in the early 1930s. For precise details, see Prost, *II: Sociologie*, pp. 41-43.

In part, the U.N.C.'s large membership was due to the fact that soldiers still under arms were eligible, allowing recruitment drives even before demobilisation. In addition, the U.N.C. annexed pre-existing regional organisations keen to profit from the benefits provided by a national group. Prost believed that the real reason behind the U.N.C.'s rapid growth was the pressure exerted by religious, military and governmental authorities to encourage enrolment, fearful of the revolutionary potential of the almost five million demobilised soldiers.[82] Whereas the U.F. developed from a base of autonomous and independent groups, the U.N.C. was established by several well-known political and religious personalities. These figures included Charles Bertrand, who became the first General Secretary, and Humbert Isaac, Vice-President and regular contributor to the organisation's newspaper.[83] Of the founders, Father Brottier - described as a "magnificent soul, where the ardour of the soldier and the devotion of the priest are in perfect harmony"[84] - is credited by the U.N.C. as having played the most important role. Accounts of Father Brottier's war and post-war exploits, usually produced by ardent U.N.C. members or pro-Brottier clergymen, often read like hagiography. In presenting Brottier in such a non-critical light, these documents contribute to the mythology surrounding the association's foundation.

Father Daniel Brottier joined the 26th Infantry Division as field chaplain in August 1914 and over the next four years witnessed front-line action in Flanders, the Somme and Verdun.[85] Given that Brottier was "always in the first line [and] always

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[82] Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 59. Prost reiterated this idea in his recent *Chemins de la mémoire* article. Prost, 'La naissance des associations d'anciens combattants,' p. 4.

[83] Among the U.N.C.'s other prominent founding members were Victor Beauregard, Jacques Péricard, Ernest Pezet, Hubert-Aubert (François Malval's pseudonym) and Henry Rossingol. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 42.

[84] Père Yves Pichon, *Le père Brottier*, V. Dupin: Paris, 1938, p. 99. Pichon and Brottier worked together during World War One and afterwards. According to Fagerberg, Pichon was Brottier's official biographer. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 41.

[85] For information relating to religious figures in the trenches, see Xavier Boniface, 'Au service de la nation et de l'armée: les aumôniers militaires français de 1914 à 1962,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 47, no. 187, 'Des hommes d'Églises dans la Grande Guerre,' juillet 1997, pp. 103-113 and Jacques Fontana, 'Le prêtre dans les tranchées 1914-1918,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 47, no. 187, 'Des hommes d'Églises dans la Grande Guerre,' juillet 1997, pp. 25-39. According to Fontanta, 32 699 priests were mobilised between 1914 and 1918 (p. 26).

among those sacrificed in the first wave of assault"[86] according to Paul Lotterie, one chronicler of the U.N.C.'s history, it was considered miraculous that the chaplain escaped the war without injury or gassing. The courage and commitment displayed by Brottier earned him three stars and three palms on his Croix de Guerre.[87] During the war, Brottier remained dedicated to the moral, emotional and spiritual needs of his soldiers. That he shared their trials and fears rather than preached from safety served to earn him respect and loyalty. Having experienced the hell of the battlefields and the plight of the troops firsthand, he conceived the idea of uniting ex-soldiers and pushed to see this dream fulfilled. Even though "bringing such a union to fruition [was] an immense, superhuman task, [it was] within reach of a man who [felt] himself promised for great things," enthused Lotterie.[88]

However, the fledging organisation needed financial assistance, and here another *grand homme* of World War One played his part. According to the anecdote, oft-cited in U.N.C. writings,[89] Brottier visited France's great wartime leader Georges Clemenceau with a request for funding. Upon hearing of Brottier's vision, Clemenceau is said to have declared (in highly romantic terms for a man nicknamed the 'Tiger'):

> Father, you have a magnificent idea. With two hands I approve and encourage you. But words do not suffice; we need actions. Take these hundred thousand francs given to me by a poor mother who lost her son in the war. The money is yours. I give it to you. May you use it well.[90]

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[86] Paul Lotterie, *Historique: Union nationale des anciens combattants des Ardennes U.N.C.-U.N.C.-A.F.N. 1919-1988*, Charleville-Mézières : Imprimerie Guichard, 1989, p. 21.

[87] Lotterie, *Historique*, p. 22. This information is also provided on the National Federation of Volunteer Combatants' website: P. C., 'Daniel Brottier,' Fédération Nationale des Combattants Volontaires, <http://www.fncv.com/biblio/grand_combattant/brottier-daniel.html> accessed 10 January 2011. Brottier was also an Officer of the Legion of Honour, and was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 25 November 1984.

[88] Lotterie, *Historique*, p. 22.

[89] For example Jean Rual (Vice-Président Délégué), 'La naissance de l'U.N.C.,' en supplément 'Guerre 14-18,' *La Voix du Combattant/La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1538, octobre 1988, pp. xii-xiii. The event is also described by Brottier's biographer and on the U.N.C.'s website. Pichon, *Le père Brottier*, p. 94; Union Nationale des Combattants, <http://www.unc.fr/hist.php?type=2> accessed 10 January 2011.

[90] Lotterie, *Historique*, p. 23.

These words created a mystique - a feeling intensified by the fact that no reference supports the account - which has been accepted as truth in U.N.C. annals.

Whereas many veterans were eager to form a group recruited among Catholic *anciens combattants*, Father Brottier remained adamant that the association be extra-confessional, believing that such an organisation would be of greater benefit to the country.[91] He argued that the experience of the trenches had exposed soldiers to a society based on companionship where social distinctions of religion, class and race lost their traditional importance, and wanted the U.N.C. to be a recreation of this division-free world - a union of soldiers.[92] The importance of unity to veteran 'identity' as developed through associations - and to their founding myths - is obvious in this story. (This denial of class or religious difference reflects, however, a traditional paradigm central to the French right-wing, the political orientation undeniably favoured by the U.N.C., especially during the interwar years). Other traditionalist elements of the U.N.C. include its influential leadership and its sources of financial support: its first President was General Léon Durand, and it received aid from the Catholic Church as well as commercial and governmental sources.[93] Thus it can be seen that regardless of the political affiliations of the veterans' associations under consideration in this thesis (while the overtly communist A.R.A.C. provides an exception to the apolitical stance supposedly adopted by the vast majority of groups, the A.G.M.G. and the U.N.C. are considered conservative and the Union Fédérale leans towards the left), the concept of 'union' remains central to veteran doctrine. The homogeneity of this cross-association narrative of unity obviously stems from its ability to provide some sort of emotional comfort to the *poilus*.

The U.N.C.'s organ, *La Voix des Combattants*, first appeared one day before the Victory march of 14 July 1919. With the exception of the Occupation years, this

[91] Pichon, *Le père Brottier*, p. 106.
[92] The U.N.C. continues to advocate these aims. Its website currently claims its "vocation" is "to gather together the entire combatant family, from the oldest to the youngest - without distinction of social origin, or political, philosophical or religious opinion." Union Nationale des Combattants, <http://www.unc.fr/hist.php?type=2> accessed 10 January 2011.
[93] Prost, *I: Histoire*, pp. 60-61.

paper has been published regularly throughout the ninety years since its creation. According to the association website, "it supplies information on current events, as well as special dossiers."[94] The journal contains a 'Memory' section (in which veteran-journalists write about the past, rather than on 'memory' itself), articles relating to the group's humanitarian work, information relating to recent veteran-related law, and details of the activities of regional groups.

The four national associations and one independent paper under consideration in this thesis accepted veterans of the second, third and fourth 'generations of fire.'[95] It was hoped that these recruits would continue the association's oeuvre as original members began to grow old and die,[96] although the *jeunes* [young ones] rarely took up leadership or journalist positions for the decade or so following World War Two. The delay in time between generational changes in leadership, which in Sophie Delaporte's view represented both respect for the *poilus* and an internalisation of existing structures of representation,[97] attests to the Great War veterans' pride in their heritage and reluctance to accept change, and accounts partly for the continuity of discourse: 'new' veterans were initiated into and instructed in the narrative

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[94] Union Nationale des Combattants, <http://www.unc.fr/journal.php?type=1> accessed 10 January 2011.

[95] Note, however, that certain observers believe that only World War One veterans constituted a 'generation of fire.' Jean-Pierre Rioux, who has studied World War Two veterans' associations, is one such observer, contrasting the multitude of experiences of and numerous ideological reasons for remembering World War Two with the fact that almost one in every two Great War veterans belonged to an organisation during the 1930s. Rioux, 'Associations et souvenir de la Seconde guerre mondiale,' p. 296. For a discussion of the 'generations' of World Wars One and Two and their interaction, see Lyn Gorman, 'War, defeat and occupation: French *anciens combattants* of 1914-18 and the events of 1939-40,' *The French Historian*, vol. 7, no. 1, September 1992, pp. 25-40, pp. 35-39. The findings of this thesis, namely, that many veterans of later wars adopted the imagined memory of their forebears rather than formulate a 'memory' for their own war, would tend to suggest that World War One was the only true 'generation of fire;' if a generation is defined by a single experience and the homogenous narrative which developed from that experience, then World War Two combatants, for example, cannot form a 'generation' because of their disparate experiences.

[96] Not all veterans were accepted into World War One associations, and not always immediately. P.O.W.s, for example, were not readily accepted into 1914-1918 groups as existing members contested their status as 'combatants.' Antoine Prost, 'The Algerian War in French collective memory,' in Emmanuel Sivan and Jay Winter (eds.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 161-176, pp. 172-173. In relation to the return of the prisoners, see Megan Koreman, 'A hero's homecoming: the return of the deportees to France, 1945,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 32, no. 1, January 1997, pp. 9-22.

[97] Sophie Delaporte, *Les gueules cassées: les blessés de la face de la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Editions Noêsis, 1996, p. 206.

espoused by current leaders. The different experiences of the former servicemen - and, in increasing numbers, servicewomen - of later wars who joined the A.R.A.C., the A.G.M.G., the U.F. or the U.N.C. make the continuity of veteran discourse over the ninety years since 1918 all the more significant and support the theory that the language of World War One remembrance resonated in some way with members of successive generations of fire.

As a former National Secretary of the A.R.A.C. explained in 1946 in relation to the particularities of the second global conflict, "Total war has singularly expanded the notion of 'combatant.' The magnificent spirit of our entire people rising up to throw out the invader has expanded the boundaries of the 'battlefield' much further than we were accustomed to."[98] Broadening classifications of 'combatant' affected definitions of 'former combatant,' such that after World War Two this appellation was attributed to members of the French armed forces who had participated in the 1940 military campaign,[99] French soldiers who had enrolled in allied regiments, members of General Charles de Gaulle's Free French movement, recognised Resistance fighters, and people who had engaged in acts of resistance without necessarily having joined any organisations (for example, civilians who participated

[98] A. Duchesne (Secrétaire Nationale de l'A.R.A.C.), 'Le 11 Novembre: Fête de la Paix,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, samedi 2 novembre 1946, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 41, p. 3. Note the veteran-writer's replication of immediate-post-war communist (and Gaullist) rhetoric in his allusion to the resistance of the "entire people." For Capdevila, this 'widening' of the battlefield to include the entire population was the most serious barrier to the creation of a homogenous memory of World War Two. Luc Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' *Le Temps des Savoirs*, vol. 6, 2003, pp. 69-92, p. 85.

[99] Following the 1940 Armistice, the French army was downsized from 5 million to a mere 100 000 troops charged with maintaining order in the unoccupied zone. François Broche, *L'armée française sous l'Occupation. I: La dispersion*, [n.p.]: Presses de la Cité, 2002, p. 17; Georges Verpraet, 'Un 14 juillet bien triste,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 84e année, nouvelle série, no. 2661, 15 juillet 2000, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1. Estimates range, but between one-third (Broche, *L'armée française sous l'Occupation*, p. 17) and two-thirds (Pieter Lagrou, 'Les guerres, les morts et le deuil: bilan chiffré de la Seconde guerre mondiale,' in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, Christian Ingrao *et al*. (eds.), *La violence de guerre 1914-1945. Approches comparées des deux conflits mondiaux*, Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002, pp. 313-327, p. 318) of the French army spent the war in captivity.

in the battles for Liberation).[100] To this mix were added returning deportees and other war victims, who were not necessarily *anciens combattants* in the strictest sense of the term but were catered for by veterans' societies. In other words, many fighters of World War Two became '*anciens combattants*' without having donned the French military uniform.[101]

The non-uniformity of the Second World War experience - and the ambiguous moral and ideological role France played in this conflict - complicated its remembrance.[102] This difficulty was compounded by the centrality of the World War One narrative to commemorative and associative space; as Henry Rousso, who coined the term 'Vichy syndrome,' has remarked, labelling the 1939-1945 conflict 'World War Two' (which inserted it into a continuum) disregarded the differences between the two wars.[103] Resistance memorialists, for example, struggled to underline the specificities of their action: whereas soldiers of the Great War had borne arms for a recognised and legal homeland, *Résistants* had engaged in what

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[100] For a history of the development of legislation pertaining to the *Résistants*, see Olivier Wieviorka, 'Les avatars du statut de résistant en France (1945-1992),' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 50, no. 1, 1996, pp. 55-66.

[101] Jean-Yves Boursier, 'Anciens combattants, musées et fabrique du passé,' in Gilles Vergnon and Michèle Battesti (eds.), *Les associations d'anciens résistants et la fabrique de la mémoire de la Seconde guerre mondiale. Colloque du 19 octobre 2005 à Vincennes*, Cahier no. 28, Paris: Ministère de la Défense, 2006, pp. 101-110, p. 101.

[102] Christian Bachelier, 'La guerre des commémorations,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 63-77, p. 65. One expression of this division, and the disparity of commemorative initiatives set up to address it, was the establishment of multitudinous museums of the World War Two experience. These were generally organised (in the first instance) by veterans, although local governments began to invest in these enterprises from the 1980s. As Joly noted, it was not necessary to establish museums if the veteran population could express itself through alternate means. Marie-Hélène Joly, 'War museums in France,' in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier, and Jeanine Picard (eds.), *Recollections of France: Memories, identities and heritage in contemporary France*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 33-51, pp. 35-37. She also noted later in the article that the creation of museums was, for such veterans, less a matter of "Lest we forget" than "Lest we be forgotten" (p. 41).

[103] He specifically cited the ideological dimension and the increased number of civilian casualties as differentiating 1939-1945 from 1914-1918. Henry Rousso, 'Cet obscur objet du souvenir,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 47-61, p. 47. The element of comparison between the two wars was obvious in the associations established specifically for veterans of World War Two, believed one scholar of these groups. Rioux, 'Associations et souvenir de la Seconde guerre mondiale,' p. 295. In assessing the formation of World War Two veterans' groups, Rioux concluded that while the aspirations and actions of such associations were comparable to their World War One forerunners, their force was much reduced (p. 295).

had been seen by many at the time as subversive and illegal conflict.[104] It appears that World War Two veterans were unable to put forward an alternative narrative of the war experience because of the deeply ingrained imagined memory of the Great War. Another problem facing World War Two memorialists was the fact that the Resistance and the Vichy government both attempted to appropriate the same symbols (such as the French flag and national anthem).[105] However, while Vichy's appropriation of words such as '*travail*,' '*patrie*' and '*famille*' coloured their post-war usage,[106] veterans continued to employ the terms after World War Two without consideration of their connotations - contextual particularities failed to overly affect veteran discourse. This lack of change results from their reliance on a fossilised discourse which uses language invented in and for the specific post-1918 era; aside from reflection on the term 'memory,' veterans have on the whole rarely considered shifting meaning of the vocabulary they employ.

The definition of '*ancien combattant*' was further broadened following France's participation in wars after 1945, when associations accepted soldiers who served in the colonial wars of independence across Asia and Africa. The difficulty in attributing 'meaning' to these conflicts,[107] combined with the loss of colonial

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[104] Wieviorka, 'La génération de la résistance,' p. 112. The Resistance struggle was often framed in the style of the epic, although this style of narrative ultimately failed to impose a unified 'memory' of the Resistance experience on France. Nathan Bracher, 'Remembering the French Resistance: Ethics and poetics of the epic,' *History and Memory*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2007, pp. 39-67. (Note that Namer saw the entire commemorative enterprise as an epic. Gérard Namer, 'La commémoration en 1945,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 253-266, p. 260). Establishing the 'Concours de la Résistance et de la Déportation' in 1961 was one method which the Confédération nationale des combattants volontaires de la Résistance (C.N.C.V.R.) hoped would ensure the continuing memory of this epoch by engaging schoolchildren with stories of World War Two Resistance. For information regarding the beginnings of the Concours, visit C.R.D.P. Champagne-Ardenne, <http://www.crdp-reims.fr/memoire/concours/origines.htm> accessed 10 January 2011.

[105] Daniel Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 42, April-June 1994, pp. 77-95, pp. 86-87.

[106] For certain observers, even words such as 'liberty,' 'peace' and 'union' were "contaminated" by their (mis)appropriation during World War Two. Claude Lévy and Dominique Veillon, 'L'image de la puissance française au travers des commémorations de la guerre 1939-1945: mythes et réalités,' in René Girault and Robert Frank, *La puissance française en question (1945-1949)*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1989, pp. 423-431, p. 430.

[107] As Daniel Lindenberg asked, was the Indochinese War an anti-colonial conflict of the rearguard or a "misunderstood" anti-totalitarian struggle? Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' p. 84.

territory and identity which military defeat engendered,[108] rendered them even more 'uncommemorable' than World War Two. Veterans of these wars often found it hard to fit back into French society, a difficulty reflected in the lapse of time between the cessation of warfare and its official commemoration.[109]

Of these conflicts of independence, the Algerian War proved the most problematic.[110] Authorities refused for decades to even call it a 'war;' until 1999, it

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The French fought the Viet Minh from 1946 and withdrew following the disastrous battle of Diên Biên Phu in 1954.

[108] The trauma resulting from the decline of colonialism, which positioned the soldier as superior to women and colonial subjects, accounts largely for the violent reactions of soldiers to this occurrence, believed one researcher. Martin Evans, 'The French army and the Algerian War: Crisis of identity,' in Michael Scriven and Peter Wagstaff (eds.), *War and society in twentieth century France*, New York and Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1991, pp. 147-161, pp. 148 and 153.

[109] The most prominent example of the lapse of time between war's end and its official 'acceptance' as demonstrated by official commemoration was the inhumation of an Unknown Soldier of the Indochinese conflict. Unlike the anonymous bodies inhumed soon after World Wars One and Two, ex-servicemen of Indochina needed to wait until 8 June 1980 for one of their unknown comrades to be granted the same respect, with the body being inhumed at the national necropolis of Notre-Dame-de-Lorette on that day. The delayed burial of the Unknown Soldier can be seen as representative of the generally negative opinion surrounding the conflict: many French people considered the drawn-out and bloody war a waste of life and resources, and eventual and embarrassing defeat did nothing to improve its status in the eyes of the population. One researcher believed the French people displayed an "overwhelming lack of interest" in the Indochinese War, partly because of its geographic distance from France and partly because of its poorly-defined aims. Alain Ruscio, 'French public opinion and the war in Indochina 1945-1954,' in Michael Scriven and Peter Wagstaff (eds.), *War and society in twentieth century France*, New York and Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1991, pp. 117-129, p. 117. For this reason, returned servicemen of the conflict felt particularly neglected, both by the French public and the state. In 1985, the Union Fédérale made a point of emphasising its dedication to campaigning for the rights of all *anciens combattants*, including former servicemen of Indochina: "No, you [veterans of Indochina] are not forgotten and you have never been left alone by the Union Fédérale. *Anciens* of Indochina and other T.O.E., you are not 'forgotten' and the Union Fédérale wants to remember." Anon., 'L'Union Fédérale et les anciens d'Indochine,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, des Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 354, mars 1985, pp. 8-10, p. 8.

[110] From November 1954 until March 1962, almost 3 million French soldiers were stationed in Algeria, up to 500 000 at any one time. Prost, 'The Algerian War in French collective memory,' p. 164. Of these, 35 000 died (p. 161). According to another researcher, 25 000 French soldiers died, a third of whom were killed by accident. Raphaëlle Branche, 'La dernière génération du feu? Jalons pour une étude des anciens combattants français de la guerre d'Algérie,' *Histoire@Politique: Politique, culture, société*, no. 3, novembre-décembre 2007, pp. 1-11, p. 3. Two reasons why the Algerian War was harder to explain than the Indochinese War were geography (the Indochinese War took place further away from France), and politics (the first conflict could also be explained in Cold War rhetoric). Sophie Lieberman, 'Remembering the *guerre oublié*: Some comments on the creation of the Commission pour le Memorial de la Guerre d'Algerie and French memory at the close of the twentieth century,' in Chris Dixon and Luke Auton (eds.), *War, society and culture: Approaches and issues. Selected papers from the November 2001 symposium*, N.S.W.: Research Group for War, Society and Culture, 2002, pp. 33-44, p. 35.

was officially labelled an 'event.'[111] The reason for this delay lay in legitimacy: admitting the true nature of the conflict would mean admitting that French soldiers had died for nothing.[112] The complexity of the "Algerian syndrome" (as Lindenberg has called the phenomenon, following Rousso[113]) meant that veterans, many of whom were conscripts,[114] found adjusting to civilian life difficult. For Antoine Prost, the veterans' "impossible memory" stemmed from three factors: the absence of authority (underscored by allegations of torture, illegitimate efforts to prevent independence, and comparisons with the World War Two Resistance struggle); divided veteran loyalties between the left-wing Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants d'Algérie (F.N.A.C.A.) and the U.N.C., which set up a specific branch for Algerian veterans;[115] and the war's meaninglessness.[116] These factors contributed to the A.F.N. veterans' acceptance of the *poilus*' imagined memory; the World War One narrative offered a source of legitimacy.

Despite their youth and associative enthusiasm, veterans of the decolonisation wars (especially Algeria) proved too few and too unsure of themselves and their sacrifices to match their Great War, or even World War Two, forebears.[117] Rather than asserting 'identities' individual to their generations of fire, veterans of the

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[111] A law was passed on 5 October 1999 to substitute the expression "operations in North Africa" with "Algerian War." For the official text, see Sénat, <http://www.senat.fr/basile/visio.do?id=d02109&idtable=d1961-2395_1|d02109|d066435|d075056|d02108&_c=loi+5+octobre+1999+algerie&rch=ds&de= 19991005&au=19991008&dp=1+an&radio=deau&aff=961&tri=p&off=0&afd=ppr&afd=ppl&afd=pjl&afd=cvn> accessed 10 January 2011.
[112] Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' p. 91.
[113] Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' p. 93.
[114] Maurice Vaïsse, 'Aux armes, citoyens!' *L'Histoire*, no. 207, février 1997, pp. 28-39, p. 36.
[115] The F.N.A.C.A. was left-oriented and favoured commemorating the Algerian conflict on 19 March, the anniversary of the *Ceasefire*. The U.N.C.-A.F.N., conversely, opposed this date which was seen to represent failure and betrayal, finally choosing 16 October. In 1977, a French Unknown Soldier killed in the Algerian *djebels* was inhumed at Notre-Dame-de-Lorette in the presence of Valérie Giscard d'Estaing. Lieberman, 'Remembering the *guerre oublié*,' pp. 37-39.
[116] Prost, 'The Algerian War in French collective memory,' pp. 170-171.
[117] Rioux, 'Associations et souvenir de la Seconde guerre mondiale en France,' p. 295. Note, however, that according to Sophie Delaporte's work on the *gueules cassées*, facial wounds proved a powerful link between men of different 'generations' despite the difficulties faced by veterans of Indochina and Korea. These returned servicemen also benefited from systems already in place such as retreats and organised excursions. Delaporte, *Les gueules cassées*, pp. 202-203. She did however draw attention to the lack of information surrounding veterans of the Algerian War (p. 205). Raphaëlle Branche partly attributed the lack of French interest in the Algerian War to the fact that *anciens combattants* of World Wars One and Two failed to consider the conflict in the *djebels* as a 'real' war. Branche, 'La dernière génération du feu?' p. 6.

Indochinese and Algerian Wars tended to absorb the tasks and 'personality' of established *ancien combattant* groups,[118] taking on leadership and journalistic roles from the late 1980s.[119] In recent times, soldiers volunteering for international peace-keeping missions for the United Nations, N.A.T.O. or the European Army have been eligible for membership as the 'fourth generation of fire.'[120] This final generation represents a fundamental change for veteran organisations because of France's re-adoption of a small, professional army rather than a conscript civilian force. Given the comparatively few members of this fourth generation of fire, it will prove difficult for them to assert a unique 'identity' given the stability and pervasiveness of the Great War narrative. As well, the fact that many of these latest candidates are also joining existing groups suggests these veterans, too, are consciously taking on the ideals and narrative already in place rather than seeking to distinguish their experience and qualities from their forebears'.

The chapter has delineated the heterogeneity of the French veteran movement. Yet despite being published by different associations and by combatants of different wars, the five national newspapers (and examples from northern France) display consistencies. The most obvious stylistic element of these newspapers is repetition: regardless of when articles were written or by whom, the themes and style of *ancien combattant* discourse have changed little since 1919. In this way, past examples

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[118] Delaporte, *Les gueules cassées*, p. 207.

[119] Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation,' p. 5. Serge Cours, President of the Union Fédérale, spent 26 years in the French Army, 12 of which were spent fighting in Korea, Indochina, Morocco and Algeria. President of the A.G.M.G. for the 18 years before its disbandment, Dominique Surville spent 33 years in the military piloting bombers, including more than three years in Algeria. Surville has also occupied numerous other positions within the combatant world, notably 14 years as Vice-President of the U.F.A.C., nine years as an administrator of France Mutualiste (an insurance company with a large combatant section) and four years as President and four years as administrator of the O.N.A.C. Jean-Claude Rénard, President of the U.N.C. du Nord, was a parachutist in Algeria.

[120] For information regarding the 'fourth generation of fire,' particularly in the north of France, see Mathieu Hebert, 'Article de presse sur le monde combattant de la 4ème génération du feu (Les O.P.E.X.),' <http://anciens-combattants.forumactif.com/sujet-combattant-f63/article-de-presse-sur-le-monde-combattant-de-la-4eme-generation-du-feu-les-opexpar-mathieu-hebert-de-lille-t305.htm> accessed 10 January 2011. According to a 2006 publication, the humanitarian and internationalist missions carried out by French troops today are well received by the public and have also re-legitimised the army career. Laurence Duboys Fresney, *Atlas des Français aujourd'hui: dynamiques, modes de vie et valeurs. Préface de Christian Baudelot; cartographie de Claire Levasseur*, Paris: Éditions Autrement, 2006, p. 71.

shape contemporary publications; later journalists have relied on and contributed to the persistence of pre-established patterns. This constant reiteration means that 'new' themes and language are rarely introduced. Even within the articles themselves there is much repetition, with certain words or phrases constantly reiterated. This stylistic device highlights the tendency of veteran discourse towards grandiosity, verbosity and emotive language - despite being produced for newspapers, and therefore restricted by journalistic styles and word limits, veteran articles are often lengthy.[121] In the evocative repetition of key words and phrases, many of the articles read like speeches. This element is most striking when used to chastise survivors or rouse them to action.

As a result of its reliance on previous models, veteran writing is not only repetitive, but old-fashioned and often out-dated. With only a few exceptions (the appropriation of the terminology of 'memory' being the primary example), the language and style of official veteran discourse have not progressed with the times. The inability of veteran-writers to veer away from the guidelines set in place by their predecessors - in other words, to escape the standard mould of veteran discourse - provides one justification why veterans are sometimes perceived as out-of-touch with reality and incapable of connecting with other members of society, young people in particular. An example of veteran leaders' self-depreciating recognition of their removal from the rest of society is the President of the Union Fédérale's recent observation that "popular imagery readily visualises the *ancien combattant* as a lively and voluble man, whose chest is studded with decorations and who often has a beret glued to his head."[122] There is an inherent tension, therefore, between the veterans' fossilised discourse and the constantly-developing world in which it is espoused.

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[121] Note that Henri Meschonnic believed that language in the twentieth century has become increasingly speech-like. Henri Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, Lagrasse: Verdier, 1999, p. 16.

[122] Serge Cours, (Président de l'Union fédérale des anciens combattants), 'Le rôle des associations d'anciens combattants dans notre société: la communication après des anciens combattants qui "s'ignorent" et leurs motivations à intégrer le mouvement associatif,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 666, juillet-août-septembre 2002, pp. 8-9, p. 8.

Clearly demonstrated in this thesis is the fact that veteran leaders and journalists write with a very definite agenda: all the newspapers demonstrate a concern for keeping their readership informed of the latest legal and financial developments as regards the *ancien combattant* community, details of regional activity, and an adoption of the terminology and theory of the in-vogue concept of 'memory.' That individual veterans are inspired to put pen to paper to promote or defend a cherished cause means that apart from dry, detail-heavy accounts of ceremony proceedings, very few articles relating to Armistice Day contain no distinguishable personal voice. Rarer still are the instances in which the author refrains from airing his/her opinions; even anecdotes of wartime experiences almost always illustrate some moral. The most obvious instance of this moral motivation can be seen in veteran mobilisation of the war dead: the fallen are always called up in support of particular causes. The fact that *ancien combattant* articles are written from such obvious personal viewpoints (and, in some cases, bias) partly explains the veterans' colourful use of language: repeating powerful terminology, themes and stereotypes in an oratorical style is likely to illustrate an argument and illicit a response from the reader. Indirectly, then, these journals have been used by the veteran community to exert pressure on the government by appealing to public opinion;[123] more immediately, these publications have served to initially construct then propagate a homogenous narrative of the war experience.

Foremost among the recurrent themes are the dead, who have remained a powerful and influential 'absent presence' in veteran discourse, regardless of organisation or author, throughout the ninety years since 1918.[124] The reason is simple: veterans' associations exist in order to memorialise war, and because it is almost impossible to detach war from its victims, the fallen are fundamental to this memory (whether real, imagined or mythologised). In other words, indelible links exist between veterans' associations, remembrance of war, and the war dead, with each component

[123] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 266.
[124] René Rémond also suggested that the dead were "inseparable" from veteran associations. Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' p. 269.

influencing and being influenced by the others in a continual process.[125] This reciprocal relationship means that the fallen are fundamental to the *ancien combattant* identity, both imposed identity (because veterans are defined as such through their associations) and self-identity (because the veterans choose to join such groups and thus accept the identity which adherence prescribes).[126]

It is precisely because the fallen are so central to the veteran 'identity' that *ancien combattant* representatives are able to mobilise their erstwhile companions-at-arms on Armistice Day. The relationship is inimitable; veteran testimony demonstrates that non-combatants cannot aspire to or replicate the relationship shared between soldiers at war because the particular circumstances of wartime living create an environment outside normal experience. While this sentiment was explicitly stated by the *poilus*, it is not only French veterans of World War One who have recognised the uniqueness of the war experience. In concluding his three-volume study on the *anciens combattants*, Antoine Prost, a historian but also a veteran of the Algerian War, underscored the fact that the veterans' experience really has no parallel.[127] According to many veteran-propagandists, the power of the bonds between survivors and victims traverses the boundary between life and death, with *anciens combattants* continuing to empathise - and even communicate - with their deceased friends until they themselves die. One example, which also underscores the generational element in veteran relations, reads: "Comrades, fallen half a century ago: to us who have grown old, you still seem young. You were our brothers; now you are our sons. People do not forget their sons. People carry their memory close

[125] It has been noted that "privileged links" exist between veterans' associations and the dead. Hardier and Jagielski, *Combattre et mourir pendant la Grande guerre*, p. 325.
[126] The special relationship between soldiers and their fallen comrades can in some instances prove detrimental. In her investigation into P.T.S.D. as an "involuntary commemoration" of war, Jo Stanley noted that the need to remember the dead can impact negatively on survivors who are unable to leave the past behind them. Jo Stanley, 'Involuntary commemorations: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and its relationship to war commemoration,' in Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (eds.), *The politics of memory: Commemorating war*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000, pp. 240-259, pp. 240 and 245.
[127] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française. III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 221.

within them."[128] The dead 'live on' in the real and imagined memories of their erstwhile comrades - and eventually, in the mythologised memory of men and women who did not know them personally but 'know' them through story.

Related to the idea of 'mobilising the dead' is the veterans' belief that they are uniquely placed to comment on notions of life and death.[129] While arguably the majority of society views the phenomenon as abstract, distant and theoretical, the soldier's wartime experiences render death accessible and familiar to him in a way which civilians cannot comprehend. The omnipresence of death in battle - the loss of comrades and the ever-present threat to one's own life - removes it from the realm of the hypothetical and simultaneously encourages soldiers to more wholly appreciate life. The situation was explained in a speech entitled 'Respecting life means respecting the memory of the dead,' published in 1990 in the *Voix du Combattant*:

> If you love life, then you respect it. And I would also say that if you love life, you respect the memory of the dead.
> Because those who do not respect the dead cannot respect life.
> Veterans, you love life because you have particularly suffered; life was taken from many comrades at your sides. You know what respect for the dead means. You know what meditation before the *monument aux morts*[130] means, and you know the price of life and respect for life.[131]

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[128] P. F., 'Cimetière,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 188, juillet-août 1966, p. 45.

[129] Leed has described the front line as a division between life and death, and that death was often used in soldiers' writings as a metaphor to divide civilian life from life at the front. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 21.

[130] '*Monument aux morts*' translates into English as 'war memorial.' Further information is available in Chapter Six, 'Of ceremonies and cemeteries: Mobilising the war dead through space.'

[131] Bruno Gabellieri (Président de Soldats de France), 'Respecter la vie, c'est respecter la mémoire des morts!' lu par Dominique Lambert à l'Assemblée Générale, in *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, juin-juillet 1990, no. 1556, p. 14. Soldats de France is a branch of the U.N.C. created in 1976 to encourage younger soldiers to join. President Bruno Gabellieri described its members as "heirs" to the soldiers of 1914-1918, 1939-1945, Indochina, Korea and Algeria, attesting to the fact that *anciens combattants* claim legitimacy by inserting themselves into a historical continuum. Bruno Gabellieri, 'Editorial,' *SdeF Info*, p. i, in *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flemme*, décembre 1990, no. 1560.

Implicit in this speech is criticism of people who do not respect the dead. ccording to the author, veterans are excluded from this group because their intimate knowledge of death automatically renders them more inclined to value life; the wider population, conversely, need encouragement and instruction to attain similar levels of understanding. In fact, veterans, by virtue of having undergone the same trials and survived, are bound to "respect" the memory of the dead and encourage others to do the same - one of the many duties considered fundamental to the veteran 'identity.' Such themes have been central to *ancien combattant* discourse over the decades; the author, Bruno Gabellieri of the U.N.C.'s Soldats de France, was drawing on the memories put in place by his forebears.

Central to veteran conceptions of life and death is the belief that the fallen are in reality still alive.[132] The proliferation of veteran articles addressing this theme throughout the 1920s and 30s suggests that this theory held particular sway in the *ancien combattant* community - and indeed, in the French population at large - in the aftermath of the Great War when the need to reconcile the past with the present was particularly intense.[133] During this period, "the Dead remain[ed] close to us because their wives, children, mothers, fathers and brothers [were] all still here. As well, their brothers of the slaughter, who saw them fall but who do not - and will

[132] This notion finds many echoes in Christianity; for example Isaiah 26:19 reads "Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise" and the Apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus 44:14 espouses that "Their name liveth forevermore."

[133] Yves Pourcher, 'La fouille des champs d'honneur,' *Terrain. Revue de l'ethnologie de l'Europe*, no. 20, 1993, pp. 37-56, p. 15 [online version]. One tangible expression of this claim is the fixation of many mourners on spiritualism during this era. This phenomenon has been identified, among others, by Jay Winter, David Cannadine, Stephen Garton and Adrian Gregory. Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: The Great War in European cultural history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, Ch. 3 'Spiritualism and mourning;' David Cannadine, 'War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain,' in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of mortality: Studies in the social history of death*, London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1981, pp. 187-242, pp. 227-231; Stephen Garton, *The cost of war: Australians return*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996, pp. 69-71; Adrian Gregory, *The silence of memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946*, Oxford; Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994, pp. 184-185. For information regarding the resurrection of the war dead in post-World War One German culture, see George L. Mosse, 'National cemeteries and national revival: The cult of the fallen soldiers in Germany,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 14, no. 1, January 1979, pp. 1-20.

never - know why they survived, [were] also still here."[134] In other words, the dead survived through their relatives and friends; living France manifested her lost sons.

In the traumatic post-World War One era, the myth of the 'living dead' helped survivors come to terms with the loss of so many young men.[135] Learning to accept such death was in some ways especially necessary for the men who had fought alongside and faced the same dangers as the fallen. As the devoutly Catholic, conservative and highly prominent interwar veteran personality Lieutenant Jacques Péricard affirmed, believing in the "immortality of sacrifice" and "duty" was one means of transcending the horrific finality of death:

> Yes, the dead live; yes, the dead are immortal.
> This we believe with all our hearts. […] If we had not had faith in the immortality of the dead - that is to say, in the immortality of duty and in the immortality of sacrifice - would we have so enthusiastically risked our lives one thousand times during the war? Would we have risked losing our families, our friends, our pleasures, our work, our ambitions and our dreams for an earthly *Patrie* or a mortal *Patrie*?
> […]
> Our dead live.[136] My comrades, at the front did we not understand that our dead lived, that they had not ceased fighting with us? It was this conviction alone which pushed us over the top into no-man's land to search for bodies left behind after the last attack, despite the menacing machinegun-fire.
> Our dead live. Maybe we forget this basic truth a little too often in the preoccupations of the post-war period. Caught up in the whirlwind of life, we now throw only intermittent and distracted glances into the cemetery which each man carries in his heart.
> However, the Dead alone know the secret of life. Only they can be our councillors and our guides.
> Let us meditate… Ask them… Listen to their answer… What do they say to us? They tell us to "Be proud and love each other."

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[134] Henri Pichot, 'Les Morts, c'est eux, les Saveurs et les Victorieux,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 158, 10 janvier 1939, p. 3.

[135] Stefan Goebel has masterfully described how in Germany, and to a lesser extent in Britain, the idea of the 'sleeping' dead aided not only transcendence but also revenge. Stefan Goebel, 'Remembered and re-mobilized: The "Sleeping Dead" in interwar Germany and Britain,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2004, pp. 487-501.

[136] The use of the possessive 'our' to refer to the fallen was already common in the writing of soldiers during the Great War. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at war 1914-1918: National sentiment and trench journalism in France during the First World War*, trans. Helen McPhail, Oxford: Berg, 1992, p. 82.

> […]
> So let us love each other through our pride; let us love each other through our dead.[137]

Through their role as the disembodied voice of compassion and reason, the war dead are distinct from the survivors. Yet, simultaneously, the two groups are bonded so strongly through their wartime experience that their relationship rises above death. "Sacrifice" and "duty," and the belief in ever-lasting life, were all concepts appropriated by veteran-memorialists to make some sense of the war experience.

Péricard's conviction in the immortality of the dead stemmed from personal experience (and presumably his Christian faith). During a particularly vicious battle at Bois Brûlé on 8 April 1915, in which German troops were fast descending on his battalion, Péricard is reported to have cried out, "*Debout les morts!*" ["Rise up, dead soldiers!"] Amazingly, the fallen Frenchmen apparently answered his call, providing moral and practical aid to the struggling troops (Péricard swore that twice a full sack of grenades materialised at their feet when they had run out).[138] This moving account formed part of the lieutenant's war memoirs and was well-publicised. While the fantastical element of Péricard's storytelling led the respected veteran-writer Jean-Norton Cru to disregard his experience, noting also that countless military men - himself included - had for years been screaming these words at recruits deaf to the morning bugle,[139] popular culture embraced the tale

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[137] Jacques Péricard, 'Ce que disent les Morts,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 6e année, no. 275, samedi 8 novembre 1924, p. 1.

[138] For an eloquent retelling of the adventure, see Maurice Barrès, '"Debout les morts!" Préface,' in Lieutenant Jacques P. Péricard, *Face à face: souvenirs et impressions d'un soldat de la Grande Guerre. Avec une préface de M. Maurice Barrès de l'Académie française et 35 dessins de la plume de M. Paul Thiriat*, Paris: Libraire Payot et Cie., 1916, pp. 9-18. The right-winger Barrès interviewed Péricard and wrote the preface to the lieutenant's war recollections.

[139] Norton Cru labelled Péricard's work "a collection of fantastical anecdotes whose imaginary character is underlined by the author's style and humouristic tone" before debating the likelihood of Péricard's tale. Jean-Norton Cru, *Témoins: essai d'analyse et de critique des souvenirs de combattants édités en français de 1915 à 1928*, Nancy: Presses universitaires de Nancy/Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, pp. 378-383. For an excellent analysis of Norton Cru's œuvre, and in particular the author's quest for 'authentic' war memoirs, see Christophe Prochasson, 'Les mots pour le dire: Jean-Norton Cru, du témoignage à l'histoire,' *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, vol. 48, no. 4, 2001, pp. 160-189.

(myth?) of the living dead,[140] no doubt in response to the hope it offered grieving relatives and friends.

Another fantastical account of raising the dead is Abel Gance's black-and-white movie *J'accuse*, in which the war dead rise from their graves. In the first version, started in 1918 and completed after the war's termination, dead soldiers return to chastise the living. The film's 1938 re-make again had a specific agenda: the veteran Jean Diaz evokes the dead, summoning the dead in defence of peace as the international situation worsens. Standing amid the thousands of wooden crosses of Douaumont cemetery marking the graves of French and German soldiers, he cries to the rushing wind: "Your sacrifices were in vain! I who am your spirit and your will on earth, I shall not yield to war. […] I call you! Dead of Verdun! Arise! I call you!"[141] Diaz positions himself as spokesperson for the fallen, enacting their wishes within the corporeal realm.[142]

Building on such legends were commemorative orations. Annette Becker has noted that orators implied that the war dead continued to operate within pre-war personal and public space as well as inhabiting specifically-selected spaces for communal memorialisation.[143] Such activity imbued sites of particular resonance - especially war memorials, constructed in their thousands across France during the 1920s as physical representations of the 'living dead' - with sacredness. In this way, popular and veteran representations of the living war dead were replicated in official discourse, which in turn influenced veteran and popular 'memory' of war.

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[140] Barrès, '"Debout les morts!"' p. 9. In support of Péricard's tale, Barrès cited two of the lieutenant's confessions: his recognition of the "holes in his memory" and his admission of fear (which negated the idea of 'hero'). pp. 15-17.

[141] Abel Gance, *J'accuse* [*That they may live*], trans. Pierre van Paassen, video recording, Mad Phat Enterprises Inc., Bakersfield, C.A., [1938].

[142] In his analysis of the two *J'accuse* movies, Hurcombe described Jean Diaz as a "vessel" and a "conduit" for the dead. Martin Hurcombe, 'Raising the dead: Visual representations of the combatant's body in interwar France,' *Journal of War and Culture Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2008, pp. 159-174, pp. 163 and 171.

[143] Annette Becker, 'Les monuments aux morts: des œuvres d'art au service du souvenir,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 144, novembre 2004, pp. 7-10, p. 8.

Of these innumerable memorials, the most significant visible testament to France's World War One experience is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, constructed under the Arc de Triomphe. The combatant's body symbolically amalgamated all the individual fallen soldiers into one entity, representing the entirety of the war dead but most specifically the Missing - the hundreds of thousands of soldiers only 'Known Unto God.'[144] *Ancien combattant* reactions to the Unknown Soldier reveal much about how they relate to the war dead as a whole.

While observers can argue that the Soldier's anonymity "twice dehumanises the dead,"[145] analysis of veteran journals reveals the emotional connection which French *anciens combattants* felt and continue to feel with the Unknown Soldier who serves as a focus for the affection which veterans feel for their fallen comrades.[146] The following excerpt summarises the veterans' point of view: "The solitary dead man who sleeps his final slumber at the end of the triumphal avenue is such a poignant presence! It is an exceptional homage, paid by the *Patrie* to the nameless Hero who represents the 1 500 000 soldiers who fell for her during the Great War."[147] Indicating the veterans' deeply ingrained affection for the Soldier is the fact that they more commonly refer to him as "sleeping" than admit the finality of his death,[148] and that they address him as "brother" or "comrade," using the *tu* form

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[144] These three words, penned by Rudyard Kipling for the Imperial War Graves Commission after World War One, were inscribed on the tombs of England's unidentified soldiers. According to Avner Ben-Amos, the concept of an Unknown Soldier could only find resonance following modern warfare, which democratised the war experience but in its brutality also disfigured soldiers beyond recognition. Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory in modern France 1789-1996*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 215.

[145] Marilène Patten Henry, *Monumental accusations: The* monuments aux morts *as expressions of popular resentment*, New York: Peter Lang, 1996, p. 115.

[146] In contrast, Adrian Gregory's research into Armistice Day in Britain has pointed to the general indifference of British veterans to the Unknown Warrior inhumed at Westminster Abbey. To explain this phenomenon, Gregory suggested that the ex-soldiers' knowledge of mass death made them immune to the power of the Warrior, namely, that he might be *your* missing loved one. Gregory, *The silence of memory*, p. 27.

[147] M. Labrousse, 'XXXe anniversaire de la Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants, Victimes des deux Guerres et Groupes de Jeunes (Région Parisienne)*, 6e année, no. 24, décembre 1953, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.

[148] For example Anon., 'Il y a 10 ans que le Soldat Inconnu dort sous l'Arc de Triomphe,' *Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 11e année, no. 590, 11 novembre 1930, p. 5; Labrousse, 'XXXe anniversaire de la Flamme;' P. Beauvilliers, 'La célébration du 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides,*

when speaking to him directly as they would have done in the trenches. Such language attests to - and prolongs - the relationships formed at war. In this way, the language is itself testimony to the veterans' desire to honour the memory of the dead, but also highlights their reluctance to separate past from present, and thus face the reality and finality of death.

In a 1937 article considering the Unknown Soldiers of various countries, Georges Pineau of the A.E.C. perceptively labelled these anonymous corpses "ambassadors of the dead."[149] This designation attests not only to their symbolic potency but also to their dual role as representatives of the fallen and - most importantly - mediators between the living and the dead.[150] The French veterans capitalise upon both these roles when considering their Unknown Solider. On the one hand, as delegate for the community of the dead, the Soldier provides a concrete focus for veteran musings on their fallen comrades. On the other hand, his ability to 'communicate' with communities both alive and lifeless leads the *anciens combattants* to draw on the Soldier to support the causes for which they mobilise the dead.

Besides writing to him and of him, veterans also consult the Unknown Soldier for guidance, both for themselves personally and for the nation. It is in this respect that

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blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers, 34e année, nouvelle série, samedi 22 octobre 1949, no. 187, p. 1. Northern French newspapers reveal the same language: the Soldier "sleeps his final slumber within his Flag" according to P. Desorbaix. P. Desorbaix, 'Le Toussaint, le Jour des Morts et la Fête de l'Armistice,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1. Historians have also remarked on the pervasiveness of references to 'sleeping' soldiers in war memorialisation: Goebel, 'Re-membered and re-mobilized;' John Stephens, 'Remembrance and commemoration through honour avenues and groves in Western Australia,' *Landscape Research*, vol. 34, no.1, 2009, pp. 125-141, p. 135.

[149] Georges Pineau, 'Les Soldats Inconnus: Ambassadeurs des Morts,' *Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses*, 3e année, no. 24, décembre 1937, p. 5.

[150] With the death of France's *dernier poilu* imminent, Nicolas Offenstadt analysed an anecdote from the 1938 *Almanach du Combattant* which imagined the death of the final World War One soldier. According to the tale, in 2001 the last surviving soldier, Perrin, expresses a desire to visit the Arc de Triomphe. Upon reaching the site, he miraculously jumps from his wheelchair, curses, then falls dead upon the Unknown Soldier's Tomb. For Offenstadt, the symbolic link between the Soldier and the last *poilu* is not surprising given the role attributed to the Soldier as guardian of memory. Nicolas Offenstadt, '"Le Vieux": une anticipation du dernier poilu en 1938,' Collectif de Recherche International et de Débat sur la guerre de 1914-1918. C.R.I.D. 14-18, <http://www.crid1418.org/ actualites/dernier_poilu_LeVieux.html> accessed 10 January 2011.

the Soldier is primarily 'mobilised' on Armistice Day. One of the most striking examples of veteran rhetoric directed to the Unknown Soldier is Henri Lévèque's article from the *Intransigeant* newspaper, reprinted in the *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G.*[151] While watching the *11 novembre* parade in 1938, Lévèque reflected on the twenty years since the Armistice and concluded that the nation had been severely abused. In an impassioned plea for forgiveness, he begged the Unknown Soldier to "pardon" and "support" the French people for having let their country slip into the quagmire of another looming war.[152] Although the uneasy domestic and international context of 1938 lent poignancy and immediacy to Lévèque's plea, the writer's use of the Unknown Soldier demonstrates much about veteran interaction with the dead combatant. In projecting his fears about France in such a way, Lévèque endowed the Unknown Soldier with a dual role: to provide the reason why such behaviour is unacceptable, and the focus for future aspiration and improvement. This second responsibility highlights the veterans' desire to translate war's lessons into a positive message for the future.

Just as the Unknown Soldier is linked to the past, present and future, veteran writing makes it clear that his fate is also inextricably bound to that of his nation and the people he represents:

> We pledge that, as long as a breathe of life lifts our chests and those of our children, on every day of the year and especially on 11 November, we will piously honour your memory so that even the shadow of time will not dim it - because you are, and will remain for us, the present and living symbol of true French grandeur.[153]

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[151] Henri Lévèque, 'Soldat Inconnu, pardonne-nous, soutiens-nous!' *Intransigeant*, 13 novembre 1938, in *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 23e année, no. 253, décembre 1938, pp. 300-302. *Intransigeant* was a Parisian evening paper and Lévèque was a long-serving President of the A.G.M.G.

[152] Lévèque, 'Soldat Inconnu, pardonne-nous, soutiens-nous!'

[153] Maurice De Barral (Secrétaire Général de l'U.F.A.C.), 'La prescription d'une victoire,' 'Le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 42, samedi 9 novembre 1946, p. 1. The idea of 'pledge' is important in the discourse of responsibility. As Paul Connerton noted, oaths presuppose certain attitudes, including loyalty. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 58. The oath constituted the "founding act" of

As with Lévèque's article, context played a role here. Written just before 11 November 1946, the influence of the recently-terminated Second World War is obvious both in the author's choice of vocabulary and the themes which he addresses. Just as Lévèque, swayed by the threat of another war, appealed for the Soldier's pardon for having allowed France to stray from her rightful path (a path naturally designated by the Soldier as symbol of his generation of fire), with World War Two over the later piece reiterated the importance of remembering the Soldier and all that he represents for precisely the same reasons. For this author, constant attention to the "cult of [his] memory" should serve to remind the population of the nation's greatness and simultaneously prevent France from slipping into a situation similar to 1939. Regardless of their association or generation of fire, veterans are duty-bound to memorialise the Unknown Soldier and all the men he embodies in order to achieve this desire.

The reverence which the veterans reserve for the Soldier (and the compulsory capitalisation of his title) introduces the concept of sacredness.[154] There are many instances in which *ancien combattant* commentary either deliberately or unconsciously compares the Soldier to Christ. The similarities are striking: the Soldier provides the focus for - and physically embodies - war remembrance; he is portrayed time and time again as the redeemer (of the nation, during times of war but also of peace); he is described as immortal;[155] and the veterans ask for his

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revolutionary festivals (Alfred Simon, *Les signes et les songes: essai sur le théâtre et la fête*, Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1976, p. 216) and was so important because it contrasted individual sovereignty with monarchial authority (Lynn A. Hunt, *Politics, culture and class in the French Revolution*, Berkley: University of California Press, 1984, p. 21). This same notions of adherence to a certain belief system are implied in de Barral's employment of pledge: the veterans are honour-bound to uphold a way of life dictated by the dead.

[154] Some scholars have remarked upon the religiosity of the Unknown Soldier. In an article entitled 'The sacred cadaver: The case of the Unknown Soldier,' Claude Javeau has described the Soldier as "the martyr *par excellence* of the nation, herself martyred by war." Claude Javeau, 'La cadavre sacré: le cas du Soldat inconnu,' *Frontières*, vol. 19, no. 1, automne 2006, pp. 21-24, p. 24.

[155] One anonymous veteran-writer referred to the Soldier as the "Immortal Unknown One" (unconsciously drawing a parallel between himself as an unnamed journalist and the Soldier). Anon., 'Les célébrations du 11 Novembre dans la région parisienne: les cérémonies des Flambeaux,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades,*

pardon and pledge their undying faith in him and in the ideals for which he stands. Perhaps most importantly, the Soldier died for France and to preserve a particular way of life, a sacrifice comparable to Christ's. Having undergone immense suffering in life, in selflessly dying for others the Soldier transcended mortal boundaries, was resurrected, and attained a higher purpose and honour.[156] This belief functions much as it does in Christianity: to lessen the grief and finality of death.

The Unknown Soldier represents the 1.4 million French soldiers who perished during the Great War, and has come to represent the fallen of all France's wars; for this reason, the veterans' affection and devotion to him regardless of associative or generational affiliation illustrate at a micro level their response to the many other victims of war throughout the century. With the Soldier positioned as Christ, the war dead are treated as martyrs or saints of a secular religion.[157] As John Horne has posited, the notion of 'martyrdom' is infused with promise that suffering can be overcome;[158] positioning the fallen as martyrs thus constitutes one way in which survivors have attempted to come to terms with their trauma. The veterans display a love for and a duty towards their companions which is translated into post-war discourse via mobilisation of the dead, illustrating the findings of Ken Inglis that the wisdom, admonishments and comfort provided by returning war dead can be equated to a civic religion.[159]

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veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 189, samedi 5 novembre 1949, p. 1.

[156] Such thoughts were made more real by the many Stations of the Cross present across the physical landscape of northern France and Belgium. Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, p. 118; George L. Mosse, *The Jews and the German war experience 1914-1918*, The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, vol. 21, New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1977, p. 10.

[157] Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire 1914-1930*, Paris: Armand Colin Éditeur, 1994, p. 104; Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' p. 74. Attributing martyr-like qualities to soldiers was by no means a new phenomenon after World War One; Yves Pourcher outlined the preferential treatment reserved for the fallen in ancient Greece. Pourcher, 'La fouille des champs d'honneur,' p. 6 [online version].

[158] John Horne, 'Corps, lieux et nation: la France et l'invasion de 1914,' *Annales*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, pp. 73-109, p. 107.

[159] K. S. Inglis, 'War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167, 'Les monuments aux morts de la Première guerre mondiale,' 1992, pp. 5-21, p. 18.

The veteran-war dead relationship is such that the fallen are central to the veterans' very 'identity.' This identity is represented in this thesis via the discourse of the *Journal des Combattants*, northern French veterans' newspapers, and the publications of the A.G.M.G., the A.R.A.C., the Union Fédérale and the U.N.C. Despite the differences between these associations and the leaders and writers who publish in their press, as well as the disparate experiences of the different generations of fire which have taken on headship roles within these groups, veteran discourse as regards mobilising the war dead on Armistice Day has remained comparable throughout the ninety years since 1918. One primary element of this discourse is the claim to understand and represent the war dead. This assertion is reinforced by *anciens combattants* of differing wars, generations, political affiliations, ages and associations, making the bond between the living and the dead one homogenous element within the disparities of the veteran world.

Part I - Contexts and Concepts

Chapter Three

Guarding 'France' in body and mind: Veterans, the war dead and memory

> "We are not allowed to forget them."
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> - Roland Dorgelès, *Almanach du Combattant*, 1922 in Anon., 'Souvenons-nous!' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1.

This second chapter in the Contexts and Concepts section looks at the interrelationship of veterans, the fallen and memory. It firstly extensively details the reasons for the current "memory boom"[1] as it has been occurring across the world and in France particularly. This background is vital because the current fixation on 'memory' has shaped both this thesis (which is a product of its cultural and intellectual context) and *ancien combattant* discourse (which, in adopting the themes and language of 'memory,' has undergone one of very few developments in ninety years). Despite the accentuation of a preoccupation with 'memory' in contemporary *ancien combattant* discourse, however, the chapter demonstrates that memorialising war and its victims has been central to veterans' agendas since World War One, partly because this action constitutes a tangible means of coming to terms with the death and trauma of conflict. In this respect, while veteran-intellectuals have only recently begun to employ the term 'memory' as a category of analysis, they have long espoused it as practice.[2]

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[1] Jay Winter, *Remembering war: The Great War between memory and history in the twentieth century*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, p. 1.

[2] This idea stems from Brubaker and Cooper's comments regarding other terms employed in the social sciences such as 'identity,' 'race,' 'citizenship,' 'ethnicity' and 'class.' Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, 'Beyond "identity,"' *Theory and society*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2000, pp. 1-47, p. 4.

The chapter then cites examples of *ancien combattant* writing on 'memory' in order to demonstrate how veteran interpretation of the subject is essentially concerned with the current situation of French national memory, the position of war within this memory, and their *devoir de mémoire* [duty of memory] to promote and propagate memory of war.[3] Veterans enact this duty for reasons of catharsis: memorialising the conflict allows them to mobilise the dead and thus contribute to the betterment of society. In other words, in *memorialising* conflict (which implies conscious, public action, in comparison to *remembering* which can be private and

[3] In his investigation into the origins of the term '*devoir de mémoire*,' Olivier Lalieu attributed its first employment to Serge Barcellini, then Director of the Commission à l'Information historique pour la paix, in 1986. The term was progressively introduced into mainstream language after the 1995 publication of *Le devoir de mémoire* (the title attributed posthumously to an interview with Primo Levi). Lalieu remarked that the term's widespread employment in France today has rendered it banal. Olivier Lalieu, 'L'invention du "devoir de mémoire,"' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 69, janvier-mars 2001, pp. 83-94, pp. 83-84. It is not just the *anciens combattants* who espouse a *devoir de mémoire*; Lalieu's article concentrates on Holocaust survivor memory, and the French state also preaches this ideal (see, for example, Jacques Baudot, *Le Défi de la mémoire: rapport sur la politique de la mémoire menée par le Ministre des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, Les Rapports du Sénat no. 6, Commission des Finances, 1997-1998). Nathan Bracher, in considering the sixtieth anniversaries of key Second World War dates, wondered if the *devoir de mémoire* "fatally opposed" the social harmony of French republicanism. Nathan Bracher, 'Soixante ans après: pour un état des lieux de mémoire,' *French Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 25, no. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 49-69, p. 64. For members of the extreme right-wing, the *devoir de mémoire* constitutes an attempt to undermine their ideology, and they have responded by attempting to relavitise actions of the right and attack actions of the left. Christopher Flood, 'The politics of counter-memory on the French extreme right,' *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2005, pp. 221-236, pp. 231-232. For memory historian Jean-Philippe Mathy, with no suggestions on how to deal with the current crisis of national political culture, France's 'duty of memory' is urgent. Jean-Philippe Mathy, 'Transmission problems: Memory, community and the republican idea in contemporary France,' *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 35, June 2005, pp. 237-245, p. 244. The term is particularly prevalent in commemoration, as the space for (re-)enactment of memory. According to Michael Martin, who wrote his doctoral thesis on World War Two commemoration under Mitterrand, by the 1990s the idea of commemorating for a reason - for a *devoir* - was solidly entrenched in the French memorial landscape. Martin asserted that the years 1992 and 1993 were the high point of French *devoir de mémoire*, more so than 1994 which heralded the fiftieth anniversaries of the Liberation. The reason for the earlier peak lies in the term '*devoir*' - Martin believed that remembering and commemorating the nationally-acclamated Liberation came more naturally than the more disturbing elements of World War Two remembrance such as the fiftieth anniversaries of the Vél d'hiv' round-up and first deportations, the creation of the *milice* and the torture and murder of Jean Moulin. The 'Rafle du Vél d'hiv' refers to the events of 16 July 1942, when thousands of Parisian Jews were rounded up by police and sent to the Vélodrome d'Hiver in the XV *arrondissement*, where they spent five days without food before being transported to various extermination camps. Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, pp. 185 and 188.

unconscious[4]) veterans put their past trauma towards improving the present and the future. The other area of memory studies which fascinates the *anciens combattants* is definitions; considering their forays into this realm leads the chapter, finally, into a discussion of 'layers' of memory, which chiefly explain the inflexibility of veteran discourse.[5] The chapter interrogates veterans' justifications for using the war dead as they do, arguing that the notion of a *devoir de mémoire* indeed legitimises their activity to a large degree. This legitimisation is, however, undermined by the veterans' failure to recognise the myth-making inherent in different layers of memory.

From the 1970s, traditional social groupings and mores around the world have been challenged by developments in the realms of technology, migration and politics, leaving some individuals and societies with a sense of identity displacement.[6] For many, the past provides a space for (mostly imagined) collective cohesion. It thus appears that in recent decades remembering has become progressively more important to both individuals and societies. On a personal level, people seem increasingly obsessed with genealogy and the idea of familial and communal

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[4] Duncan S. A. Bell described 'remembrance' as organic. Duncan S. A. Bell, 'Mythscapes: memory, mythology, and national identity,' *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 54, no. 1, 2003, pp. 63-81, p. 75.

[5] There are several 'types' of memory mentioned in this thesis, which warrant clarification. While the concepts are elucidated later in the chapter, a brief explanation is in order now. 1. An individual possesses 'real' memory. 2. A group possesses 'imagined' or 'mythologised' memory in the vernacular of this thesis; these two phenomena are more often grouped into the term 'collective' memory. 3. 'Veteran' memory refers to all layers of memory (real, imagined and mythologised) experienced by the *anciens combattants*. 4. The state produces 'official' memory, which is expressed in speeches and ceremony. 5. 'National' memory is created by amalgamating official memory with the memories of influential social groups. 6. Alternatively, 'popular' memory refers to the antithesis of 'official' memory. 7. 'Public' memory can incorporate 'imagined,' 'official' or 'national' memory, or any combination thereof. Alon Confino has recognised the shortcomings of such definitions of 'official,' 'popular' and 'public' memory, citing the German tradition of the *Stammtisch* - social gatherings in local bars among regular clients - which take place in public and yet are exclusive. Alon Confino, 'Traveling as a culture of remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960,' *History and Memory*, vol. 12, no. 2, Fall 2000, pp. 92-121, p. 100.

[6] In 1991, Maurice Crubellier wrote that "French people today seem worried about losing their collective identity along with their memory." Maurice Crubellier, *La mémoire des Français: recherches d'histoire culturelle*, Paris: Henri Veyrier et Kronos, 1991, p. 5. Jedlowski highlighted the paradox of modern times: the ever-changing world of today has devalued traditions, yet the exteriorisation of memory through technology constantly improves humankind's ability to recall information. Pablo Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology: Themes and issues,' *Time and Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2001, pp. 29-44, p. 29.

'roots.'[7] For the first time in history, the majority of individuals in moneyed societies possess the finance, time and education to pursue and create their own memories.[8] This interiorised and private phenomenon is reflected on a wider scale by the resurgence of interest in heritage, an experience which is public and shared.[9] The memorial revival took place in the public conscience but was also reflected in how academia embraced the idea of 'memory' which had received little prior attention.[10]

This preoccupation with memory is not necessarily unusual or unexpected; recognising the combination of dislocation and nostalgia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one hypothesis states that crises are intensified by the watershed of a *fin-de-siècle*.[11] Jay Winter has argued that this period, in which the Great War transformed but did not create interest in remembering,

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[7] Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history: *Les lieux de mémoire*,' *Representations*, vol. 26, Spring 1989, pp. 7-25, p. 15. One telling indictment of the pervasiveness of 'memory' in the private sphere is the plethora of recent publications dedicated to do-it-yourself genealogy. The 'For Dummies' series alone has brought out several books on the theme, including: Dr. Nick Barratt, Sarah Newbery *et. al.*, *Researching your family history online for dummies*, Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2009; Matthew L. Helm and April Leigh Helm, *Family tree maker for dummies*, Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1999; Matthew L. Helm and April Leigh Helm, *Genealogy online for dummies*, 5th ed., Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2008 [1999].

[8] John R. Gillis, 'Remembering memory: A challenge for public historians in a post-national era,' *The Public Historian*, vol. 14, no. 4, Fall 1992, pp. 91-101, p. 99; Dan Todman, 'The ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme,' in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds.), *War memory and popular culture: Essays on modes of remembrance and commemoration*, Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland and Co. Inc. Pub., 2009, pp. 23-40, p. 29; Winter, *Remembering war*, pp. 36-40.

[9] The increase in 'memory' concerns over the last couple of decades is a standard observation. A few of the many theoreticians who have noted this increasing interest in consideration of the past include Siân Reynolds, 'Recalling the past and recreating it: Museums actual and possible,' in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demoissier and Jeanine Picard (eds.), *Recollections of France. Memories, Identities and Heritage in Contemporary France*, Oxford: Berghahn, 2000, pp. 22-30; Mathy, 'Transmission problems;' Bell, 'Mythscapes;' Gillis, 'Remembering memory;' Pierre Nora (ed.) *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984-1992; Jay Winter, 'The generation of memory: Reflections on the "memory boom" in contemporary historical studies,' *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, no. 27, 2000, pp. 69-92.

[10] For a concise introduction to the theme of 'memory' in French academia, see Marie-Claire Lavabre, 'Usages et mésusages de la notion de mémoire,' *Critique internationale*, no. 7, avril 2000, pp. 48-57, pp. 48-49, Ceri-Sciencespo, <http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/publica/critique/article/ci07p48-57.pdf> accessed 10 January 2011.

[11] Kay Chadwick and Timothy Unwin, 'Introduction,' in Kay Chadwick and Timothy Unwin (eds.), *New perspectives on the* fin-de-siècle *in nineteenth- and twentieth century France*, Lampeter and New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000, pp. 1-18, p. 2.

constituted the first "generation of memory,"[12] an appellation which reflects the designation of a 'generation of fire' as a group of individuals bound together by the experience of war. While interest in 'memory' has occurred before, however, certain historical phenomena unique to the contemporary era have contributed to changing attitudes towards 'the past' and the resurgence of interest in memory around the globe.

Firstly, films and the internet mean that history can today be experienced within the home; it is no longer necessary to visit museums and battlefields or attend rallies and parades to connect with the past.[13] In addition, through these same technologies, as well as trans-national migration, economic and social globalisation and rapid communications networks, individuals are increasingly exposed to foreign experiences which alter their sense of self.[14] These traits of modern life lead people to compulsively grasp and preserve their identities and memories. Concurrently, in a world where "people shop for memories as they shop for anything else,"[15] memory has become a marketable product. Museums and other memorial institutions increasingly organise the content of their exhibitions to attract the biggest crowds. Increased access to archives since the 1970s has also contributed to professional interest in World War One.[16]

Secondly, major reappraisals in international and domestic politics over the last few decades have also provided contextual particularities conducive to increased memorial concern. Especially pertinent to the revival of memory is the gradually increasing inclination of minority groups to vocalise their specific experiences and

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[12] Winter, *Remembering war*, p. 1.

[13] Todman, 'The ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme,' p. 37. Despite this truism, the museum industry is benefiting from increasing interest in memory, as is the trend for collecting at a personal level. Chris Healy, 'Histories and collecting: Museums, objects and memories,' in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (eds.), *Memory and history in twentieth century Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 33-51, pp. 35 and 47.

[14] Although these devices of transnational sharing have increased *accessibility* to the past, people can still not directly access *memory* of the past. Bell, 'Mythscapes,' p. 79.

[15] Gillis, 'Remembering memory,' p. 98.

[16] Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *Penser la Grande Guerre: un essai d'historiographie*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004, p. 246.

memories. Pierre Nora, undeniably the doyen of memory studies among contemporary French historians,[17] categorised this awakening of marginalised memories into three types of 'decolonisation': international, domestic and ideological.[18] The first classification relates to the changes occurring in international relations. Foremost among these mutations is the disappearance of the demarcation between 'Eastern' and 'Western' blocs, heralded by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ensuing dissolution of the Soviet Union. Without the overarching ideological division of 'capitalist' versus 'communist,' space has been created for other avenues of identification.[19]

Nora's second categorisation, domestic decolonisation, results from the strengthening voices of minority groups. For these marginalised social, religious, sexual and regional collectivities, affirmation of their memory reinforces their identity within a society which once denied them the right to self expression. Ideological decolonialisation, the third type of change, is defined as the force which unites groups whose memories have been manipulated or removed by totalitarian regimes. National and community groups once assimilated into the Soviet Union's multinational amalgam, for example, are today finally able to express and record their experiences. Changes occurring outside Europe, such as the decline of colonialisation in Asia and Africa,[20] the fall of many of South America's military dictatorships and the collapse of apartheid in South Africa have also cleared space

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[17] Editor of the seminal multi-tome analysis of French cultural memory, *Les lieux de mémoire*, Nora has also examined the relationship between history and memory in a number of articles including: Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history;' Pierre Nora, 'Entre mémoire et histoire,' in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire. I: La République*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984, pp. xv-xlii; Pierre Nora, 'Les lieux de mémoire,' in Jean-Claude Ruano-Borbalan (ed.), *L'histoire aujourd'hui: nouveaux objets de recherche, courants et débats, le métier d'historien*, Auxerre: Sciences Humaines Editions, 1999, pp. 343-348.

[18] Pierre Nora, 'The tidal wave of memory,' [n.p.], Project Syndicate and Institute for Human Sciences, June 2001. Project Syndicate, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/nora1> accessed 10 January 2011.

[19] Visible manifestations of the rewriting of the past in such countries included: rehabilitation of individuals convicted under the previous regimes, renaming public places, replacing school textbooks and tearing down and erecting new statues. Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology,' p. 35.

[20] For an excellent recent account of the decolonisation period, see Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and its impact: A comparative approach to the end of the colonial empires*, Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

for confronting the past and recording oppressed memories.[21] Resulting from these modes of 'decolonisation,' previously accepted ideological constructions and state-sponsored and -produced 'official' memories are increasingly challenged and criticised. Repressed memories have been brought to the forefront of public consciousness in an effort to re-visit and re-examine the legitimacy of official discourse; memory has been 'democratised.' In the "age of the witness" (as Jay Winter has termed the contemporary era), individual voices can be heard.[22]

In his *Remembering war*, Winter provided another compelling reason for the current interest in memory: the need to acknowledge war victims.[23] This argument took stock of the ongoing legacy of World War One and the recognition that survivor testimonies need to be collected before the opportunity disappears.[24] Kerwin Lee Klein, too, posited past trauma as one reason why academics are today so compelled to speak of 'memory,' as contemporary times have been shaped by the unparalleled violence of the twentieth century.[25] For the actors themselves, the combination of increased interest in family history and more leisure time and wealth has allowed them to revisit the memories - and the physical sites - in which their trauma was played out.[26] These arguments are supported by the findings of this thesis: as the ranks of the World War One and Two generations have thinned, appeals for memorialising the wartime endeavour have become increasingly urgent. War, it seems, is central to the current revival of 'memory.'

As one of the first nations to participate in the memory phenomenon, France provides fertile ground for discussion of memorial revival. According to Jean-

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[21] Nora, 'The tidal wave of memory,' [n.p.]
[22] Winter, *Remembering war*, p. 27.
[23] Winter, *Remembering war*, p. 1.
[24] Particularly the gradual disappearance of Holocaust survivors has prompted this re-appraisal of memory of war victims. Winter, *Remembering war*, p. 19.
[25] Kerwin Lee Klein, 'On the emergence of memory in historical discourse,' *Representations*, no. 69, 'Grounds for remembering,' Winter 2000, pp. 127-150, p. 138.
[26] Jo Stanley, 'Involuntary commemorations: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and its relationship to war commemoration,' in Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and Michael Roper (eds.), *The politics of memory: Commemorating war*, New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2000, pp. 240-259, p. 252.

Philippe Mathy, a student of French memorial issues, the country's forerunner status is due to its uneasy and problematic relationship with its past which has induced people to query and challenge the official version of events.[27] Pierre Nora identified three events in this decade as primarily responsible for kick-starting France's study of memory: the after-effects of economic hardship, the general shift away from Gaullism, and the demise of the revolutionary idea.[28]

With financial aid provided under the Marshall Plan, post-World War Two France developed into an industrial nation with a majority urban population. In addition, public utilities and certain private enterprises were nationalised, bringing industry under state control. When the thirty years of accelerating economic advance, improving living standards and increasing wages known as the '*Trentes glorieuses*' came to an end with the substantial hikes in global oil prices in 1973, traditional identifiers such as community, landscape and customs had disappeared, and been replaced by individualism and consumerism. The reversal of fortunes led to a reappraisal of the benefits of progress, pessimism and nostalgia for a seemingly stable rural society.[29]

A second factor which contributed to the increase in memorialisation was the change in political and social climate brought about by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's ascension to the Presidency in 1974. In its sixteen-year life, the Fifth Republic had only seen two Presidents: its charismatic creator Charles de Gaulle and his successor Georges Pompidou, whose term ended prematurely with his death from cancer. Hence for many observers the Giscard presidency represented a change of

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[27] Mathy, 'Transmission problems,' p. 237.

[28] Pierre Nora, 'The reasons for the current upsurge in memory,' *Tr@nsit online (Transit: Europäische Revue)*, no. 22, 2002, Eurozine, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2002-04-19-nora-en.html> accessed 10 January 2011. Daniel Lindenberg believed France's interest in memory began before the 1970s with the student protest of May 1968. Daniel Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, Paris, no. 42, April-June 1994, pp. 77-95, p. 87.

[29] Philippe Barrière, *Histoire et mémoires de la Seconde guerre mondiale: Grenoble en ses après-guerre 1944-1964*, Grenoble: Presses universitaires Grenoble, 2004, p. 23. In his work on nostalgia, Peter Fritzsche believed a "nostalgia wave" occurred in the 1970s. Peter Fritzsche, 'How nostalgia narrates modernity,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 62-85, p. 64.

generation in French politics.[30] This amendment was primarily visible in the government's attempts to address some of the problems identified in May 1968, when massive student protests and workers' strikes paralysed the country in an expression of the post-war generation's general *malaise*. Ambitious reforms under Giscard intended to liberalise society in response to the students' discontent.[31]

Giscard d'Estaing's policies and de Gaulle's death in 1970 together marked the end of classical Gaullism in France, and with it fragmentation of the state's long-accepted official memory.[32] Particularly the myth of almost-universal resistance to the Vichy government, imposed by de Gaulle and his supporters from the moment of France's liberation, was challenged.[33] One cultural expression of this reappraisal of the past was Marcel Orphüs' film *La chagrin et la pitié* which challenged assumptions about the era.[34] Space was opened for further debate after the publication of Robert Paxton's study of the Vichy years, which among other contentions asserted that rather than being a victim of circumstances, the Vichy government had actively sought collaboration with the Nazis to enact its own vision

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[30] For information relating to both the continuities and the changes of Giscard's Presidency in the cultural sphere, see Gérard Namer, *La commémoration en France de 1945 à nos jours*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987. Public disillusionment with politics during the 1970s and 80s paralleled increasing introspection regarding French 'national identity;' whereas the consolidation of political and religious structures under de Gaulle helped stabilise French self-perception, the process was reversed following 1968. Brian Jenkins, 'Reconstructing the past: In search of new "national identities"?' in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier, Jeanine Picard (eds.), *Recollections of France: Memories, identities and heritage in contemporary France*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 13-21, p. 16.

[31] Reforms targeted areas such as women's rights including facilitation of divorce, contraception and abortion, as well as secondary education, the voting age and media monopolies. Julian Crandall Hollick, 'France under Giscard d'Estaing - A retrospect,' *The World Today*, vol. 37, no. 6, June 1981, pp. 204-210, p. 204.

[32] Winter, *Remembering war*, p. 29.

[33] Nora, 'The tidal wave of memory,' [n.p.]. The Resistance had been "made sacred" during the 1950s and 60s, according to one historian. Pieter Lagrou, 'La Résistance et les conceptions de l'Europe 1945-1965: le monde associatif international d'anciens résistants et victimes de la persécution devant la Guerre froide, le problème allemand et l'intégration européenne,' in Antoine Fleury and Robert Frank (eds.), *Le rôle des guerres dans la mémoire des Européens: leur effet sur la conscience d'être européen*, Bern: Peter Lang, 1997, pp. 137-181, p. 139.

[34] Marcel Orphüls, *The sorrow and the pity: Chronicle of a French city under the Occupation* [*La chagrin et la pitié: chronique d'une ville française sous l'Occupation*]**,** videorecording, Harrington Park, N.J.: Milestone Film and Video; Chatsworth, C.A.: Image Entertainment, 2000 [1971].

of internal regeneration.[35] The liberalisation of the media from the 1980s also brought official versions of the past into doubt, with journalists broaching new subjects and asking awkward questions of memorial actors.[36]

The demise of Gaullism also dissolved the idea of French 'exceptionality' in the international political arena.[37] This notion assumed an element of political and especially moral superiority which seemed outdated in an increasingly internationalist world where France no longer held any real military or colonial power.[38] Additionally, France's participation in several horrific and ultimately pointless wars brought the ideal of the nation-state itself into question. Mitterrand's Presidency from 1981, with its focus on human rights and pluralism rather than national sovereignty, as well as the numerous Second World War fiftieth anniversaries during this period, further opened space for memorial debate.[39]

Another key factor which engendered memorial revival in 1970s France was the reappraisal of revolutionary mythology - once integral to the national "political script"[40] - prompted by metamorphoses in the national political culture. Particularly the decrease in Gaullist sentiment inadvertently affected understandings of the Revolution, as the resistance myth was so reliant upon the ideals and legacies of 1789. The decline of the revolutionary idea had profound consequences for France, whose national identity had been inextricably bound to the Revolution. During the

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[35] Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old guard and new order 1940-1944*, New York: Knopf, 1972. The French edition was published the following year: Robert O. Paxton, *La France de Vichy, 1940-1944*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973.
[36] Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 229.
[37] This idea presented France as different to other nations, particularly in terms of its role as an exemplary and universal civilising force. Brian Jenkins, 'French political culture: Homogenous or fragmented?' in William Kidd and Siân Reynolds (eds.), *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 111-125, p. 112.
[38] Mathy, 'Transmission problems,' p. 238.
[39] For an excellent account of how the French state dealt with questions of memorialising World War Two from 1981 to 1995, see Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation.' In her study of war museums in France, Marie-Hélène Joly remarked on the plethora of museums established to coincide with the 1984 and 1994 anniversaries. Marie-Hélène Joly, 'War museums in France,' in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier, and Jeanine Picard (eds.), *Recollections of France: Memories, identities and heritage in contemporary France*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 33-51, p. 36.
[40] Eugen Weber, 'The nineteenth century fallout,' in Geoffrey Best (ed.), *The permanent Revolution: The French Revolution and its legacy 1789-1989*, London: Fontana Press, 1988, pp. 155-181, p. 156.

1970s, the revolutionary interpretation of time fell into disrepute, and with it the idea of rupture and historical discontinuity inherent in the definition of 'revolution' (the Revolution proposed the future as a space for new experience rather than a continuation of past experience[41]). Nora claimed that this "freeing" of historical time was fundamentally responsible for the "meteoric rise" of memory and national heritage as people turned to another system of identification.[42]

The 1970s, then, was a watershed in terms of readdressing the past. More recently, several other important reasons have also contributed to France's memorial revival. The country is at this stage undergoing a process of decentralisation - in direct opposition to the Jacobin ideal of a centralised state - as minority and regional memories are asserted. These inward-looking forces need to be balanced with Europeanism and internationalism which aim to incorporate ever greater numbers of people into the collectivity. Individual countries are today faced with the task of conserving and promoting their national heritage whilst considering a 'European' future.[43] The veteran Claude Le Barillier of the Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.) made clear this tension, exclaiming in mid-2000: "Before the century changes and we enter the third millennium, with the inescapable construction of Europe and the growth of globalisation, it is important - vital - for our country not to forget!"[44] Additionally, as elsewhere around the world, technology is transforming

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[41] Peter Fritzsche, 'How nostalgia narrates modernity,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 62-85, p. 67. The idea of the French Revolution as a beginning is summed up in the image of the 'new man.' Mona Ozouf, 'La Révolution française et l'idée de l'homme nouveau,' in Colin Lucas (ed.), *The French Revolution and the creation of modern political culture. II: The political culture of the French Revolution*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987, pp. 213-232. Interestingly, traces of the idea of 'new man' can be found in World War One veterans' attempts to preserve the image of the soldier as a man beyond normal social classification. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 25.

[42] Nora, 'The reasons for the current upsurge in memory,' [n.p.].

[43] John Gillis labelled the phenomenon of reconciling cosmopolitan and local memories the "European challenge." Gillis, 'Remembering memory,' p. 100. Jean-Philippe Mathy also recognised the importance of the issue, seeing in the demand for 'history' a conflict between a national past and a European future. Mathy, 'Transmission Problems,' p. 238.

[44] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'La mémoire: mémoire vivante, mémoire collective,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 21-22, p. 21. Claude Le Barillier sadly died in late 2009.

the traditional relationship between France and her national memory. With the perceived failing of the French public school system to promote republican ideology and memory, this separation constitutes the phenomenon labelled "transmission problems" by Jean-Philippe Mathy.[45]

One expression of this re-evaluation of the past is the increasing preoccupation with 'memory' and memorialisation in government policy.[46] The 1990s witnessed the establishment of various institutions catering to the transmission of 'national memory,' including the Direction de la Mémoire, du Patrimoine et des Archives (D.M.P.A.) responsible for publicising information relating to French wartime participation (of which the monthly *Les Chemins de la Mémoire* magazine is one result). A 1997-1998 government report declared the "legitimacy" of the Veterans' Minister dependant upon the quality of his memory politics.[47] The intervention of the state into this realm - after decades of relative non-involvement[48] - has changed

[45] Mathy, 'Transmission problems,' pp. 237-245.

[46] According to Karine Gueritat's work on the O.N.A.C., it was only with the institution of the Commissions Départementales de l'Information historique pour la Paix (C.D.I.H.P.) in 1983 (which were given responsibility of preserving sites of war memory, arranging information sessions, and organising ceremonies of remembrance) that a real "*politique du mémoire*" was instigated in relation to the veterans. The importance of this policy was made evident when in 1991 the O.N.A.C. adopted as its slogan 'Memory and Solidarity.' Karine Gueritat, 'La politique de mémoire de l'Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre (O.N.A.C.): à travers l'exemple de la Commission Départementale de l'Information historique pour la Paix (C.D.I.H.P.) du Loiret (1983-1996),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 52, no. 205, janvier-mars 2002, pp. 85-95, p. 88. The O.N.A.C. had four main missions when Gueritat was writing in 2002: statuary, social, administrative and memorial (p. 87); according to the website, however, there are now six missions. O.N.A.C., <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/onac/missions> accessed 10 January 2011.

[47] Baudot, *Le Défi de la mémoire*, p. 27.

[48] Barcellini went to great lengths to highlight the government's non-intervention in commemorative issues: Serge Barcellini, 'Un demi-siècle d'action commémorative,' in Gérard Canini (ed.), *Mémoire de la Grande Guerre: témoins et témoignages. Actes du Colloque de Verdun 12-14 juin 1986 à Nancy*, Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1989, pp. 17-30. Whereas Barcellini concluded his article on French state commemoration between 1920 and 1969 with the words, "the state privileged financial, medical and moral rights to the detriment of memorial rights," (p. 30) Hamelin has pointed out that today the O.N.A.C. stresses first solidarity and memory (its motto), then veterans' compensation. Fabrice Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation du répertoire d'action des associations d'anciens combattants et de victimes de guerre. Des mutations pilotées par les représentants de l'Etat,' in N. Dahan and E. Grossman (eds.), *Les groupes d'intérêt au XXIe siècle: renouveau, croissance et démocratie. Colloque du Cevipof les 24 et 25 septembre 2004*, Paris: IEP Paris, 2004, p. 18.

the commemorative landscape of France and impacted upon the *anciens combattants*' relationship with commemorating.[49]

The construction of a 'past' is necessary for any political power to legitimise its system and provide space for the construction of individual and group identities.[50] Every regime thus manipulates and constructs its own version of the past, which is then promoted as official state memory through orthodox avenues of public discourse.[51] Hence, the past - and memory - are continually mobilised to rally the population to adhere to certain political or ideological programmes.[52] However, as Avner Ben-Amos has noted, while *official* memory can be easily identified through state discourse, *national* memory is more difficult to determine,[53] although state memorialists aim to equate national to official memory. The revival of separate minority counter-memories in contemporary society has offset the distinct 'national memory' once produced by state-employed professionals to such an extent that the term is perhaps now obsolete.[54]

The idea of 'nation-state,' made sacred in France by the 1789 revolutionaries, was enshrined in reality through the revolutionary wars and in ideological space through

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[49] Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation,' p. 17.

[50] Particularly memories of trauma aid in the construction of identities, believed Paul Lerner. Paul Lerner, 'An economy of memory: Psychiatrists, veterans, and traumatic narratives in Weimar Germany,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 173-195, p. 174.

[51] State memory is transmitted to the population through discourse and apparatus such as education, public monuments and commemoration, with these last two acting as visible constructions of the politics of memory. During the French Third Republic, civic schooling and military service were primarily responsible for creating the idea of a 'nation;' for turning "peasants into Frenchmen" according to Eugen Weber's celebrated study. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*: *The modernisation of rural France, 1870-1914*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976.

[52] Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, 'Introduction,' in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, *Memory and history in twentieth century Australia*, Melbourne, 1994, pp. 1-6, p. 2.

[53] Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory in modern France 1789-1996*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 5.

[54] John Gillis recognised that while the dissolution of national memory gives us the distance to better appreciate the phenomenon, it implies the end of national memory as an active political force. Gillis, 'Remembering memory,' p. 93.

imagery and festivity.[55] Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the theoretical construction gained in importance, as did 'national memory.' Governments "invented traditions"[56] to indoctrinate the people in the liturgy of the nation and to promote a sense of community through stressing common values and experiences. The decline of a French 'national memory' - one of the foundations of republicanism - stems largely from the pervasiveness of memory across the country.[57] However, although in 1990 Alain Touraine could legitimately ask if "a French society still exists"[58] in relation to a national community and Nora could claim that French national memory today is in fact the transformation of historic memory to include group memories,[59] the idea of 'national memory' was and remains of immense political importance.

The concept of a 'national memory' resonates, among other groups, with the *anciens combattants*: despite paying little attention to the reasons for the upsurge in memory, they seriously debate its current meaning and their role in its propagation.

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[55] Patrick H. Hutton, 'The role of memory in the historiography of the French Revolution,' *History and Theory*, vol. 30, no. 1, February 1991, pp. 56-69, p. 57. Although, while the revolutionaries undoubtedly enshrined the idea, historians are divided as to whether France constituted a 'nation' before 1789 or not. For details on this debate, see David Bell, 'Recent works on early modern French national identity,' *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 68, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 84-113. Bell posited towards the end of his article that attention should be focused more on the question of how different groups defined their relationship to the national community, rather than on whether a 'national identity' existed. (p. 108). As has been recognised elsewhere, while *nationalism* developed after the French Revolution, a national consciousness which comprised loyalty to the monarchy and the nation existed earlier. K. Steven Vincent, 'National consciousness, nationalism and exclusion: Reflections on the French case,' *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, vol. 19, no. 3, Fall 1993, pp. 433-449, pp. 434-435; Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Nationalism and the French Revolution,' in Geoffrey Best (ed.), *The permanent Revolution: The French Revolution and its legacy 1789-1989*, London: Fontana Press, 1988, pp. 17-48, p. 17. For Nora, the most important connection between the *Ancien Régime* and the post-revoluntionary era was the desire for unity; the monarchy was a powerfully unifying symbol. Pierre Nora, 'Nation,' in François Furet and Mona Ozouf (eds.), *A critical dictionary of the French Revolution*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Cambridge, M.A.; London: Harvard University Press, 1989, pp. 742-753, p. 746.

[56] Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing traditions: Europe 1870-1914,' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 263-307, p. 270.

[57] Daniel Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, Paris, no. 42, April-June 1994, pp. 77-95, p. 94.

[58] Alain Touraine, 'Existe-t-il encore une société française?' *The Tocqueville Review*, vol. 11, 1990, pp. 143-171. The findings of Michael Martin regarding commemoration under Mitterrand also suggest the decline of French national identity in favour of other differences. Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 7.

[59] Nora, 'The reasons for the current upsurge in memory,' [n.p.].

Epitomising the veterans' belief in memory's centrality to national identification, Hughes Dalleau, President of the U.N.C., used the simile of a disinherited child: "A nation without a memory is without a past; it is like a child abandoned at the hospice who is ignorant of his roots and does not really know who he is."[60] The veterans consider memory from within their framework of experience; namely, from the perspective of erstwhile combatants for their country.[61] Of all potential subjects, therefore, the *anciens combattants* are particularly concerned with memorialising the conflicts in which they participated.

As an event which often causes dramatic social, political and economic change, war provides a highly-charged and important subject for memorialisation and commemoration.[62] Remembering war is central to understanding a society's past - and therefore its 'memory' and 'identity' - and has become particularly important in the last century as war has increasingly strayed into the sphere of the home front.[63] For war historians Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Olivier Forcade, memory of a conflict is primarily official property, as war is state business.[64] Other commentators have also described the war/peace dichotomy as an extension of the realm of politics.[65] Yet another historian of war culture, Pierrick Hervé, proposed that memory of war is a communal interpretation of the experience, moulded by official

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[60] Hugues Dalleau, 'Editorial: Commémorations obligent,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1597, août-septembre 1994, p. 2.

[61] This maxim led one historian to claim that veteran associations were by their vocation "privileged actors" of memory. Philippe Barrière, '"Au nom de la mémoire": Les associations grenobloises d'anciens combattants et victimes de guerre à la Libération (1944-1947),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 52, no. 205, 2002, pp. 35-53, p. 37.

[62] Luc Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' *Le Temps des Savoirs*, vol. 6, 2003, pp. 69-92, p. 72. As Olivier Faron astutely remarked, war involves different populations: combatants and civilians, but also populations of today and of the future. Olivier Faron, 'Guerre(s) et démographie historique,' *Annales de démographie historique*, vol. 1, 2002, pp. 5-9, p. 8.

[63] Thus in the conflict-riddled twentieth century, terms such as 'pre-war,' 'interwar' and 'post-war' define not only specific temporalities but also periods of distinct social, political and economic identity. Darian-Smith and Hamilton, 'Introduction,' p. 5.

[64] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Olivier Forcade, 'La société, la guerre, la paix: nouvelles problématiques, nouveaux objets,' *Histoire, économie et société*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2004, pp. 165-172, p. 167.

[65] Marilène Patten Henry, *Monumental accusations: The* monuments aux morts *as expressions of popular resentment*, New York: Peter Lang, 1996, p. 102; Donald W. Shriver Jr., 'Is there forgiveness in politics? Germany, Vietnam and America,' in Robert D. Enright and Joanna North (eds.), *Exploring Forgiveness*, Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, pp. 131-149, p. 131.

propaganda but purportedly based upon majority experience.[66] To this general understanding of war is added the memory guarded by individuals or groups within the national community (including the veterans' real and imagined memories).

In France, popular memory of war originated with the revolutionary wars of 1792-1802, when citizens were called upon to defend the Republic and its ideals.[67] Whereas under the *Ancien Régime* soldiers were isolated from the political motivations for war, the concept of 'nation' rallied men to fight from a sense of personal conviction.[68] State propaganda, including festivals in which the army featured prominently, challenged traditional anti-soldier opinion by extolling volunteers as the physical and moral embodiment of the nation.[69] The patriotic soldier-citizen and the republican ideal of the armed civilian nation were particularly celebrated in public festivals during the Third Republic, a regime which excelled in didactic myth-making.[70] Changing attitudes to soldiering, combined

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[66] Pierrick Hervé, 'La mémoire communale de la Grande Guerre: l'exemple du département de la Vienne,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 48, no. 192, 'Souvenir de la Grande Guerre,' décembre 1998, pp. 45-59, p. 45.

[67] Namer, *La commémoration en France*, p. 56. The revolutionary wars and German Wars of Liberation against Napoleon in 1813-1814 provided pre-World War One examples of how the state consciously constructed collective memory of war. Mosse believed these wars were particularly important in the development of the Myth of the War Experience because the army was composed of soldier-citizens. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 9.

[68] Omer Bartov, '"The Nation in Arms": Germany and France, 1789-1939,' *History Today*, vol. 44, no. 9, 1994, pp. 27-33, p. 28; John Horne, 'Corps, lieux et nation: la France et l'invasion de 1914,' *Annales*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, pp. 73-109, p. 73.

[69] Soldiers were traditionally regarded as anti-social, but, as Isser Woloch noted, this attitude could not prevail past 1792 when the Republic called up its citizens to fight. Isser Woloch, '"A sacred debt": Veterans and the state in revolutionary and Napoleonic France,' in David A. Gerber (ed.), *Disabled Veterans in History*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 145-162, p. 157. The French public had been accustomed to the presence and participation of the military in public festivals since the French Revolution. The 1790 Fête de la Fédération set the precedent, with the newly-formed National Guard swearing allegiance to the new regime and parading around the Champ de Mars. Richard Cobb and Colin Jones (eds.), *The French Revolution: Voices from a momentous epoch 1789-1795*, London: Simon and Schuster, 1988, p. 107. The elements of discipline, spectacle, music and uniforms are most played upon to enhance the role of soldiers in festivals. Auguste Rivet, 'L'armée et les fêtes en France depuis 1800,' *Annales de l'Université des Sciences sociales de Toulouse*, vol. 25, 'Le système militaire français. Colloques, Toulouse 1975-1976,' 1977, pp. 207-217; André Thiéblemont, 'Les paraîtres symboliques et rituels des militaires en public,' in André Thiéblemont (ed.), *Cultures et logiques militaires*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1999, pp. 163-210.

[70] Rémi Dalisson, 'Champs de bataille et mémoire de guerre. L'exemplarité de la célébration de la victoire de la Marne de 1916 à 1939,' *Revue du Nord*, vol. 82, no. 337, 2000, pp. 763-787, p. 763. In

with the participation of greater numbers of men based upon the ideal of the 'soldier-citizen,' introduced the previously 'military-only' memory of war into the public arena.

War was particularly prominent in French national conscience following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 which resulted in the German annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. The 'dismemberment' of France, coupled with the humiliating defeat at the hands of Bismarck's conscript armies, remained prominent themes in the *fin-de-siècle* national conscience and influenced France's future participation in World War One.[71] It was the unprecedented slaughter of this first 'global' conflict which produced a definite state-influenced, public-oriented memory of war. To this official memory of the war experience were added the memories of individuals and groups, including the veterans.

For the *anciens combattants*, remembering and memorialising war, the dead and the survivors is imperative because carrying out this specific 'duty' helps them come to terms with their suffering by translating it into something positive. One reason why perpetuating memory of conflict is vital to France's wellbeing is its centrality to national identity. In 1978 the U.N.C.'s Jean-Maurice Martin powerfully appropriated the analogy of death and dying in order to advocate preservation of

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another article, Dalisson noted that patriotic ceremonies in honour of the military multiplied in the decade preceding World War One. Rémi Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre ou l'enjeu de la mémoire combattante dans l'entre-deux-guerres 1918-1939,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 48, no. 192, 1998, pp. 5-23, p. 7.

[71] France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the ensuing loss of Alsace-Lorraine created a *fin-de-siècle* nationalism which was popular, authoritarian, demagogic and quasi-socialist, to paraphrase Zeev Sternhell. For discussion about this *revanchisme*, see Zeev Sternhell, 'Paul Déroulède and the origins of modern French nationalism,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 6, no. 4, 1971, pp. 46-70. Surveying 'public opinion' to the key moments of the declaration of war and mobilisation, Jean-Jacques Becker has demonstrated that the French public was in fact largely divided in its response to war. Jean-Jacques Becker, 'L'opinion publique française et les débuts de la guerre de 1914 (printemps-automne 1914),' *Le mouvement social*, vol. 104, July-September 1978, pp. 63-73, p. 71. The return of Alsace-Lorraine to 'la mère France' was a common theme of immediate post-War Armistice Day discourse. One A.G.M.G. example reads: "France cannot forget this memorable date. That day was victory, the return of Alsace and Lorraine to the homeland. That day, the hope of Peace hung over the world." Anon., 'L'anniversaire du 11 Novembre 1918,' *Bulletin de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre. Office de renseignements et d'entraide*, no. 80, octobre 1922, p. 312.

French national memory. He claimed that, "a nation winds up dead when it forgets those who died to build and defend it."[72] Astounding resemblances are obvious in André Lamandé's article published fifty-one years earlier in the northern French veterans' journal *Le Mutilé du Hainaut*:

> He who dies for the *Patrie* lives forever, said old Garnier in *Porcie*.[73] The poet was right. For heroes, death is not the final ending; but when, through misfortune, their memory disappears from the hearts of the living, the whole Nation dies with them.[74]

The long timeframe between the two articles attests to the veterans' ongoing concern with the necessity of remembering and memorialising war, and especially the war dead.[75] However, despite this long-time devotion to the practices of remembering and memorialising, only in the last few decades have veterans begun to consider 'memory' as a concept. Resulting from this increasing sophistication, (a select few) veteran-intellectuals have begun to debate the term's meaning, and especially, consider their role in the memorialising enterprise.[76]

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[72] Jean-Maurice Martin (Président-Délégué de l'U.N.C.), '60 ans après: 11 novembre 1978: du passé à l'histoire,' *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1440, décembre 1978, p. 4.

[73] *Porcie* is a five-act tragedy written by the French playwright and poet Robert Garnier recounting the death of Porcie, Brutus' wife, during the Roman civil wars. The quote to which the veteran-writer referred is in Act II, when Porcie and her nurse are discussing death. The nurse suggests that "He who dies for his country lives eternally," to which Porcie replies, "He who dies for ingrates dies unnecessarily." Robert Garnier, *Les Tragédies*, Paris: Mamert Patisson Imprimeur du Roy, chez Robert Etienne, 1585, p. 34. Reprinted by BiblioLife and accessible online.

[74] André Lamandé, 'L'Appel des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut*, no. 27, novembre 1927, p. 1.

[75] Veteran discourse has called for public and state remembrance of World War One - and above all for its victims - since the formation of the earliest Great War associations. 'Honour our dead!' proclaimed an article published by a northern French veterans' association, attesting to the force behind *ancien combattant* remembrance of war's victims. O. Hanicotte (Vice-Président), 'Honorons nos morts!' *Le Front. Journal de l'Union des mutilés et anciens combattants de la région du Nord. Journal mensuel réservé aux membres de l'Union*, 4e année, nos. 37 et 38, janvier-février 1934, p. 1. The veterans' immediate engagement with remembering can be seen in the abundant usage of the word 'memory' in Seine-Maritime associations. Philippe Manneville, 'Les associations d'anciens combattants en Seine-Maritime: témoins de la population,' 'Les associations d'anciens combattants en Seine-Maritime: témoins de la population,' *Les Normands et l'Armée. Revue de la Manche*, vol. 38, nos. 150-151, 1996, pp. 189-206 and Philippe Manneville, 'Anciens combattants et mutilés, trois guerres, trois types de vie associative. L'exemple de la Seine-Maritime,' *Société havraise d'études diverses*, Le Havre, 1996, pp. 59-75. Associations founded during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 also aimed to perpetuate the memory of the fallen. The Souvenir français is the best known of these groups.

[76] The same few *ancien combattant* authors are cited repeatedly in this chapter. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the majority of veterans have yet to engage with the themes and language of

Having experienced the unique ordeal of warfare, the veterans believe themselves well placed - in fact, better placed than other French citizens - to comment on the theme of memory. According to General Dominique Surville of the A.G.M.G., "Memory is a vast concept. We do not claim to protect it exclusively, but our duty is to make our position known because we were actors. It matters that we continue our action as much as we are able."[77] The U.N.C.'s Claude Le Barillier expanded on this idea, referring to his comrades as examples of 'living memory' (which was juxtaposed with 'dead memory' and constituted the linchpin of the association's 2000 Conference).[78] For Le Barillier, the honour of embodying 'living memory' in France was specific to ex-servicemen, whom he deemed agents of:

> - a preciously-conserved past, made of traditions and sacrifices in service of the Nation and of others;
> - a past which leans on a plinth of values such as sense of duty, courage, honour, solidarity, defence of liberties;
> - a past which is always present, from which we must draw lessons for the future and allow collective awareness of the rights and duties entailed in citizenship.[79]

As conflict survivors, veterans believe themselves burdened with certain responsibilities, particularly the need to perpetuate memory of war.[80] The purpose

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'memory;' and secondly, most of the theorists who have delved into the subject have been obviously intrigued by it. General Dominique Surville, for example, often devoted his A.G.M.G. presidential Editorial to discussion of 'memory,' and Claude Le Barillier headed the U.N.C.'s Commission Nationale d'Action Civique. Writing on the subject has tended to increase in the last couple of decades, with a particular interest expressed around the turn of the century (partly because the U.N.C. dedicated its 2000 Conference to the theme). Earlier examples of veteran attention to the subject exist, but are rare.

[77] D. Surville, 'La mémoire,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 642, octobre-décembre 1997, pp. 17-18, p. 18.

[78] C. Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président de la C.N.A.C.), 'Mémoire et commémorations,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1651, janvier 2000, p. 11. Note that while no information about the meaning of 'dead memory' is provided, its placement in opposition to the exceptionally positive phenomenon that is 'living memory' suggests it either embodies the evils of not remembering or, alternatively, remembering without taking any conscious effort or action to perpetuate the past.

[79] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'La mémoire: mémoire vivante, mémoire collective,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 21-22, p. 21.

of this duty, however, is twofold: on a social level, veterans perpetuate 'memory' of war in order to remind people of its trials; on a personal level, this action serves to alleviate some of the trauma of the war experience.

"Memory is a duty!" exclaimed Le Barillier[81]: propagating 'living memory,' he asserted, was "one of the reasons for the U.N.C.'s existence, if not its vocation."[82] This view is shared by other veterans' associations: "That is our role; that is our mission,"[83] declared Surville in describing the transmission of memory at the A.G.M.G. Five decades earlier, Paul Michel of the *Journal des Combattants* had already stated as much: "It is necessary to glorify the heroism of the Combatants of 1914 because the most sacred task of our associations' militants is to maintain the cult of the heroes who saved the *patrie*."[84] In writing of "our associations" in an independent paper free from specific organisational loyalties, Michel included the entire veteran community in the obligation. Such inclusive writing almost presupposes the *ancien combattant* solidarity so strongly stressed in veteran discourse. Besides the triumphalist language, noteworthy in Michel's comment is the obvious omission of the word 'memory;' the journalist aimed to incite his colleagues to action and was not concerned with terminological discussion as were Le Barillier and Surville, writing within the memory-obsessed world of today. The adoption of 'memory studies' vocabulary is one of very few variants in an otherwise standard veteran discourse.

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[80] Hardier and Jagielski described veteran associations as above all "conservers of memory." Thierry Hardier and Jean-François Jagielski, *Combattre et mourir pendant la Grande guerre 1914-1925*, Paris: Imago, 2001, p. 325.

[81] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'Mémoire et histoire: thème du Congrès 2000,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1652, février 2000, p. 12.

[82] C. Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président de la C.N.A.C.), 'Mémoire et commémorations,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1651, janvier 2000, p. 11. Philippe Barrière characterised *ancien combattant* groups in Grenoble as "privileged actors of memory" by vocation. Philippe Barrière, *Histoire et mémoires de la Seconde guerre mondiale: Grenoble en ses après-guerre 1944-1964*, Grenoble: Presses universitaires Grenoble, 2004, p. 129.

[83] D. Surville, 'La mémoire,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 642, octobre-décembre 1997, pp. 17-18, p. 18.

[84] Paul Michel, 'L'anniversaire de la bataille de la Marne ne doit pas être oublié,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 32e année, nouvelle série, no. 84, samedi 4 octobre 1947, p. 1.

The veterans thus believe they have a specific function to carry out within the social environment of France: to "fight"[85] the temptation to forget with the moral obligation to not just remember, but actively *memorialise* warfare. Veterans cannot afford to be complacent; this responsibility is imperative. Exemplifying this attitude is the U.F.A.C.'s Manifesto for 11 November 1966, in which then President Paul Manet reproached his colleagues' detachment:

> But we have not got the right, my dear comrades, to reduce ourselves to this contemplative attitude and be content living for this past so dear to us.
> Let us not forget that those who rest in the ossuaries and cemeteries were convinced that their sacrifice would not be in vain.[86]

The *anciens combattants*' realisation of this duty - which has been incessantly cited in their newspapers since 1918 (and in the last couple of decades has been attributed the in-vogue label of *devoir de mémoire*[87]) - recognises notions of responsibility inherent in remembering.[88] This responsibility, carried out in honour of those who died, is fundamental to veteran 'identity' and dictates veteran behaviour - and their

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[85] Serge Barcellini, then Minister for Veterans' Affairs and involved with the O.N.A.C., emphasised this role and duty in quite aggressive terms to the audience at the U.N.C.'s 2000 Conference: "Hence, the fight to keep memory alive which the *monde combattant* and the U.N.C. undertake is an entirely legitimate fight, but it is also an entirely difficult fight. Legitimate, ladies and gentlemen, because there are no social connections without a base of values. In today's world, it is social cohesion which allows us to live; only social cohesion allows the existence of a true society and there cannot be social cohesion without a base of values. Memory is the bearer of these values, as you just said. Legitimate, hence, but difficult." By appropriating the terminology of the battlefield (he later also referred to the "necessary combat" of memory), Barcellini situated the veterans' "fight" for the survival of memory within the context of their experience. Serge Barcellini (Directeur Général de l'O.N.A.C.), 'Intervention de Serge Barcellini, Directeur de l'O.N.A.C.,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 26 et 50, pp. 26 et 50.

[86] Paul Manet (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste du 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 50e année, nouvelle série, no. 1043, samedi 5 novembre 1966, p. 1. The U.F.A.C. is unique in that it did not develop from a voluntary action; rather, it was created by a decree of 14 May 1945 to group veterans' organisations together. At the end of World War Two, the U.F.A.C. comprised of 56 national associations and more than 2.5 million adherents. Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation,' p. 4. The U.N.C.-A.F.N. left the association in 1977, and the Fédération André Maginot in the mid-1990s.

[87] The veterans' relatively recent appropriation of '*devoir de mémoire*' suits Lalieu's findings that the term has only really taken hold since the mid-1990s. Lalieu, 'L'invention du "devoir de mémoire,"' p. 83.

[88] Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, 'Introduction,' *Representations*, no. 26, 'Memory and Counter-Memory,' Spring 1989, pp. 1-6, p. 4.

discourse. Despite the great obligation which faces the veterans as self-proclaimed guardians of memory, Pierre Chanlaine claimed on behalf of his contemporaries that they "do not wish to be free" of it.[89] The constant reiteration of and adherence to a belief in veteran responsibility to perpetuate memory of war allows veterans to come to terms with the experience by putting war's lessons to a constructive end.

Undoubtedly, the most important reason for remembering war, according to the *anciens combattants*, is to memorialise the fallen. The importance of the war dead to veteran acts of remembrance cannot be over-stated: the fallen are the motivation behind almost any mention of the war experience. P. Desorbaix of the northern French *Mutilé du Hainaut* expressed the opinion of many of his fellows when he stated that "the Homage to the Dead is one of the demonstrations of the love we owe them."[90] Following this reasoning, remembering and memorialising the fallen constitute a tangible expression of adoration offered by survivors to the dead - almost as compensation for their demise. Remembering the dead is here posited as even more than a duty - it is a debt, a way in which the living can 'repay' the dead for their sacrifice and to a degree acquit themselves of the guilt engendered by survival.

The veterans' *devoir de mémoire* is multi-faceted: they believe themselves obliged to not only remember and memorialise, but also act on behalf of their fallen comrades. As one veteran noted soon after World World Two, "right up until their last breath, they [veterans and war victims] have a sacred mission to accomplish: to represent the thoughts of the millions who, whether in 1914-1918 or 1939-1945, did not return."[91] For the *anciens combattants*, this double duty to both maintain

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[89] Pierre Chanlaine, 'Le 11 novembre jour férié,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 37e année, nouvelle série, no. 337, samedi 18 octobre 1952, p. 1.

[90] P. Desorbaix, 'La Toussaint, le Jour des Morts et la Fête de l'Armistice,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1.

[91] Maurice De Barral, 'Malgré 1918 et 1945 l'Allemagne ne change pas,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves,*

memory of the dead and act as their vessel in the corporeal world legitimises - in fact, *necessitates* - mobilisation of the fallen.

In order to fulfil their obligation, veterans either write *of* the fallen or, more unusually, *for* them. In so doing, veteran-writers actually position themselves as spokesmen for the deceased, with their pens loyally relaying the feelings of their ethereal comrades to the living world. The writing of former A.G.M.G. Vice-President Gabriel Lepeme provides one example:

> "They [the war dead] have rights over us" - and among others they impose on us the urgent task of never forgetting the suffering and sacrifices they freely gave for our liberty and for France. From above they dictate to us the mission to perpetuate their memory and to pray for them on this day of 11 November 1979.[92]

Through the veterans, the war dead can thus possess a voice. If circumstances permit, they can "dictate" appropriate behaviour, both to their erstwhile comrades and to French society at large. This privilege stems from the fact that, by virtue of their sacrifice, the war dead "have rights over" the living, in the words of the veteran-writer.[93] The author's employment of this phrase is interesting: Lepeme has taken Georges Clemenceau's famous comment regarding the material rights of *survivors* out of context and applied it to the dead, indicating that the fallen should be placed even above the veterans.[94] In this instance, the dead speak to their

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orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers, 37e année, nouvelle série, no. 340, samedi 8 novembre 1952, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

[92] Gabriel Lepeme (Vice Président National), '11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (A.G.M.G.-U.N.M.R.A.C. et A.F.N.)*, no. 543, décembre 1979, p. 1.

[93] Lepeme, '11 novembre,' p. 1.

[94] Georges Clemenceau delivered his famous line "They have rights over us" to Parliament in 1917. Georges Clemenceau, 'Intervention de M. Georges Clemenceau, Président du Conseil des ministres, ministre de la guerre pour une déclaration du Gouvernement, à l'occasion de son investiture,' 20 novembre 1917. Available online: Extraits des Annales de la Chambre des Députés, <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/clemenceau/clem3.asp> accessed 10 January 2011. This quote has been cited again and again in the veteran press, seeking to remind the population and the state of their erstwhile indispensability. In this way, veteran-activists aspire to claim moral superiority or secure better monetary compensation. One example of many is the booklet published recently by the Union Nationale des Combattants outlining its history and aims, which introduces its

compatriots "from above" - presumably heaven. More commonly, however, the voices of the dead "rise from the little tombs at the front;"[95] signalling the role of place in connecting the living and the dead. Allusions to cemeteries and battlefields, as well as war memorials, are particularly powerful given their association with war and wartime death.

Moral behaviour imposed by the dead onto the living need not necessarily reference remembrance of war or its victims, but rather post-war life in general. This northern French example from the immediate post-World War One era well illustrates this point:

> And what do the dead tell us? What advice do they give us? Let us listen to their authorised voice: "Comrades," they say, "do not seek pleasure but duty. Remember that together we survived hunger and thirst, hot and cold, marches and insomnia; we waded under machine gun fire through the horrible mud of the trenches; we rushed towards the enemy with our bayonets during furious assaults; we were bold and daring until the end, until death. That was Duty! Comrades, love Duty passionately no matter what, and if necessary know to say 'Duty is worth my life!'"[96]

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readers to veterans' legislation with the words: "'They have rights over us' proclaimed Clemenceau, co-founder of the U.N.C." Hughes Dalleau (Directeur de publication), 'U.N.C.: Union Nationale des Combattants,' Impression Numérique: Paris, [n.d.], p. 9. A more forceful example comes from the Union Fédérale, which in 1932 vehemently reminded people of the veterans' wartime suffering to explain their contemporary right to advocate peace: "THE VETERANS HAVE RIGHTS OVER THE NATION. When France was invaded, no one thought to challenge this truth and no one would have dared to. This truth remains complete. Neither forgetfulness nor ingratitude can do anything against it. The passing years will not lessen its validity or decrease its consequences. The rights of someone who has defended the country with his skin and blood, at the price of his life, are of prime importance whatever they are." Anon., '11 novembre 1932: Quatorzième anniversaire de la victoire et de la paix. Manifeste de l'Union Fédérale,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants et de Victimes de la Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, 2e année, no. 23, 15 novembre 1932, p. 5.

[95] Edouard Hannecart, 'La Voix des Tombes,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 1e année, no. 17, dimanche 5 novembre 1919, p. 1. As resting places of the dead, cemeteries are particularly obvious spaces for the dead to rise. George L. Mosse, *The Jews and the German war experience 1914-1918*, The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, vol. 21, New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1977, p. 9.

[96] G. L., 'La Fête de la Victoire à Steenvoorde,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 558, dimanche 13 novembre 1921, pp. 1-2, p. 1.

In this poignant piece of writing, the dead remind their comrades that during the Great War all soldiers carried out their tasks despite the difficulties. Combatants shared the weather, mud and fighting; everyone did their "Duty" (with a capital 'D'). What was needed in 1921, according to the author, was recognition that some causes are worth paying the ultimate price for; some duties are worth dying for. Veterans have a responsibility to reference war and mobilise the dead in order to show the French public how life should be lived. In such responsibility veterans can find some higher purpose to their suffering; it is for this reason that duty is so imperative to *ancien combattant* 'identity' and 'memory' across the different associations and generations of fire.

However, veterans consider the spokesman role as more than an obligation; it is also their right. There is a duality inherent in 'mobilising the dead,' therefore, a conflict between mobilisation as *duty* and mobilisation as *right*. Does mobilising the war dead - which constitutes the only means by which veterans can perpetuate the memory of the fallen and carry out a responsibility considered intrinsic to their very identity - automatically render this activity a veteran's right? In other words, if "to every human right there is an express or implicit correlative human duty owed"[97] - a reciprocity which has been recognised by certain veterans who have sought to point out that "we must not forget that, if we have rights, we also have duties"[98] - is there a corresponding right to every duty? The duality poses two predicaments.

The first issue is this: veterans believe themselves entitled to mobilise the dead because of the unique and powerful bonds that join former combatants, whether living or dead. Yet, while this claim may sanction calling upon the men whom a

[97] In his *Handbook of international human rights terminology*, H. Victor Condé defined the term 'Duty (vs. Right) (Clause)' as: "The obligation owed by individuals and groups to the community (state), local society, family and other individuals to act in a way that promotes the interests of the totality of the social and political context in which one lives and acts. Duties are obligatory tasks, conduct, service, or functions that arise as one's position as a citizen or legal resident of a society. To every human right there is an express or implicit correlative human duty owed." H. Victor Condé, *A handbook of international human rights terminology*, 2nd ed., United States of America: University of Nebraska Press, 2004 [1999], p. 73.

[98] F. Koehler (ancien combattant 1914-1918), 'Le présent et l'avenir,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants*, no. 103, 1e trimestre 1974, p. 1.

veteran knew personally, memorialists almost always incite '*les morts*' en masse. Naming the local dead on *11 novembre* is actually the only element of *ancien combattant* discourse and practice which explicitly individualises the fallen; otherwise, veterans treat the dead as a single entity. The only other instance which could be perceived as mobilising an individual is when veterans enlist the support of, or project their feelings onto, the Unknown Soldier. This action, however, also amounts to mobilising the entirety of the war dead - firstly because the Soldier's symbolic strength comes from his very position as representative of the fallen, and secondly because the veteran-activist has no more personal connection to the Soldier than to the war dead as a mass.

In grouping men together, veterans do not remember soldiers, or even dead soldiers, but a constructed *idea* of soldiers. They create an "imagined community"[99] of war dead, an extension of the imagined community of the nation for which they fought and died. This propensity for honouring the collective over the personal resulted from the unique circumstances of the first industrial war. Firstly, the participation and death of so many civilians 'democratised' both the fighting experience and its remembrance: one consequence of the conflict, for example, was the omission of rank from tombstones. Secondly, the communal aspect of war remembrance was not only driven by ideology: the brutal and immobile nature of trench warfare rendered many bodies unidentifiable and thus made unavoidable the 'collective' commemoration of ossuaries and nameless graves. Thirdly, French victory was attributed to the soldiering body, and the population at large, via the nation-at-arms ideal. In comparison, commemoration of World War Two often focused on the exploits of key figures in the Resistance world,[100] and veterans of the decolonisation conflicts found commemoration (of any subject) difficult. The continued designation of the 'war dead' as a mass throughout the decades and across generations of fire, despite the diverse types of remembrance organised for

[99] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983.
[100] Michael Martin has astutely remarked that World War One was commemorated as a collective act, whereas the next global conflict was associated primarily with individuals, whether heroes or villains. Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 6.

survivors of different conflicts, attests to the power of the veteran-war dead bonds, to the persistence of a distinct veteran discourse and 'memory,' and an ongoing need to validate lives lost at war.

While speaking for the 'war dead' as a bloc is immensely powerful because of the vast number of victims incorporated in the appellation,[101] the practice both distances veterans from those they mobilise, and ironically 'anonymises' and de-humanises once-living soldiers. Does this 'collectivisation' of the fallen impact upon the veteran's right and ability to call upon them? This question is particularly imperative in the case of veterans of World War Two and later who, in mobilising the 'war dead' as a homogeneous entity, call up soldiers who did not perish in 'their' war.

The second problem inherent in the duty/right duality is that veteran-intellectuals have not thought to question their mobilisation of the dead. This lack of recognition or interest is unfortunate, because the veterans' self-appointed role as spokesmen for the dead allows them to use - and potentially abuse - this powerful and evocative symbol to promote their projects for post-war life. As Daniel Lindenberg commented, "partisans of memory" need to recognise the danger that certain people could unjustifiably profit from the past.[102] A direct and strongly-worded passage in the *Journal des Combattants* also recognises this danger, condemning (mis)use of the war dead on commemorative dates: "The living, whoever they are, should never

[101] The progression from reviving fallen friends to reviving 'the war dead' as a collective can be seen in the 1938 rendition of the movie *J'accuse*. The protagonist Jean Diaz originally speaks to and acts on behalf of the members of his company who died whilst on patrol with him during the night of 10 November 1918. As the film evolves, however, and the situation becomes increasingly dire, Jean begins to rely more on the non-personal, mass appellation of 'the dead,' before finally calling upon all the fallen of the Great War, whatever their nationality, to come and prevent another conflict. In this non-veteran-produced, fictional representation of mobilising the war dead, Jean discovered that the *concept* of the dead proved more powerful than the reality of fallen individuals. Abel Gance, *J'accuse [That they may live]*, trans. Pierre van Paassen, video recording, Mad Phat Enterprises Inc., Bakersfield, C.A., [1938].

[102] Daniel Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 42, April-June 1994, pp. 77-95, p. 94. "Memory is a political weapon" declared Lalieu. Lalieu, 'L'invention du "devoir de mémoire,"' p. 85. In her consideration of war museums in France, Marie-Hélène Joly also recognised the potential for economic profit in promoting the past. Joly, 'War museums in France,' p. 42.

make use of ceremonies to put forward pretexts or arguments for any battle other than that of the dead. This is another way of forgetting them."[103] Implicit in this comment is a paradox. Penned with the express purpose of chastising people who seek to appropriate commemoration to further their own agendas, the author (no doubt unintentionally) implicated himself and his fellow veterans in this reprimand. Yet, veterans unashamedly disregard such warnings and incessantly employ the fallen to empower their personal arguments and causes in the name of carrying out their *devoir de mémoire* towards the dead. This quote is telling, therefore, as it highlights a flaw inherent in veteran appropriation of the fallen. Believing themselves entitled to mobilise the dead because of their personal connection with war and its victims, veteran-intellectuals nonetheless fail to explain why they consider themselves incapable of exploiting the dead, when for other social actors such misuse is deemed inevitable.

However, it is precisely the veterans' unawareness or disinterest in the duty/right issue which illustrates their unequivocal belief in their right to speak of and for the fallen. Understood in this way, veteran-leaders and -writers who mobilise the dead carry out an extension of their right to act on behalf of members of their associations, and the veteran community in general. The fact that such roles not only allow but actually *oblige* activists to represent the veteran body reveals that, for the *anciens combattants*, right and duty cannot be separated when it comes to mobilising the dead. In fact, the unbreakable bonds which connect the veterans to the war dead, and their construction of a community of war dead reminiscent of their construction of a veteran community, tend to suggest that the fallen actually form part of the *veteran* community despite their physical absence. If such a reading is correct, then veteran mobilisation of the war dead is no different to veteran mobilisation of the living veteran population; veteran-leaders undertake campaigns on behalf of the dead in the same way they crusade for benefits for their members.

[103] Anon., 'Maintenir l'union des générations du feu, garder le souvenir des nos morts: tels sont les devoirs impérieux des Anciens Combattants,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 45e année, nouvelle série, no. 726, samedi 2 juillet 1960, p. 1.

Both these forms of mobilisation transform wartime torment into tangible, constructive benefits for the present.

As well as considering the current situation of 'memory' and their role in the memorialising endeavour, veteran-intellectuals are particularly interested in definitions of 'memory' and its associated concepts. (Interestingly, given the veterans' long-term interest in memorialisation and their recent forays into the realm of memory theory, none has as yet investigated the formation or existence of a 'veteran memory'). Remarkable firstly is the selectivity of memorialisation. Especially when forming communal memories, decisions - whether conscious or not - are taken to deliberately retain or abandon certain events and experiences. In his 1882 Sorbonne address 'What is a nation?' Ernest Renan highlighted the fact that "forgetting - I would even say historic error - is an essential factor in the creation of a nation."[104] The element of forgetting inherent in remembering highlights the facts that the past acts upon the present, and that the present holds the power to use the past for its needs. In a particularly astute piece of writing, Olivier Largeault of the A.G.M.G. also considered the role of forgetting in society:

> Two words appear to oppose each other! Forgetting - whether voluntary or not - removes gestures, words and acts from our thoughts; gestures, words and acts which throughout our existence had some influence over our feelings and actions.
> Remembering, on the other hand, wants our fragile memory to conserve the knowledge of certain events - be they harmful or happy - whose renewal could cause fear or rejoicing.
> I do not intend to research the advantages of forgetting or remembering for a well-organised society. Placing myself solely in the *ancien combattant* context, I want to ask two questions about the phenomena:
> 1. What should we remember?

[104] Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce que c'est une nation? Conférence en Sorbonne le 11 mars 1882,' *Oeuvres complètes de Ernest Renan. I: Edition définitive établie par Henriette Psichari*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy Editeurs, 1947, pp. 887-906. Note that Rousso believed that Halbwachs equated memory with the organisation of forgetting. Henry Rousso, 'Pour une histoire de la mémoire collective l'après Vichy,' *Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire du temps présent*, no. 18, 1991, pp. 163-176, p. 170.

2. What do we need to forget?[105]

Both Renan and Largeault displayed great perception regarding the selective nature of remembering. The traditional forgetting/remembering dichotomy they espoused has, however, been countered by a more subtle terminological comparison put forward by Tzvetan Todorov. His definition reads: "Memory is in no way opposed to forgetting. The two contrasting terms are wiping out (forgetting) and conservation; memory is, always and necessarily, an interaction of the two."[106] This explanation makes greater reference to the role of the unconscious in formulating memory than either Renan or Largeault.

As Renan, Largeault and Todorov recognised, ignoring certain moments in history ironically forms an inseparable part of group memory, as refusing to transmit troubling experiences is sometimes deemed vital for a society to move forward. This is exactly what occurred in the aftermath of World War One: a veteran 'memory' developed which omitted elements of the war experience which proved divisive or disturbing (the reason for the formulation of an imagined memory was, after all, to aid survivors in coming to terms with the past). Scholarly studies of the World War One experience have illuminated elements which have been ignored in the soldiers' 'memory.' For example, while death is a common theme in veteran discourse, killing is rarely mentioned.[107] Another element missing from the overarching narrative is the enjoyment some soldiers experienced while at war. Joanna Bourke is one historian to have recognised this response, devoting an entire chapter to 'The pleasures of war.' The activities she described ranged from harmless acts such as taking home souvenirs as mementos/proof of combat, to the emphasis placed on 'beauty' in war, to the pleasures some soldiers elicited from physically harming

[105] O. Largeault (Président Général Adjoint), 'Se souvenir et oublier,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 455, novembre 1967, p. 1.
[106] Tzvetan Todorov, *Les abus de la mémoire*, Paris: Arléa, 1995, p. 14.
[107] Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' pp. 83-84; Antoine Prost, 'Les limites de la brutalisation. Tuer sur le front occidental 1914-1918,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 81, janvier-mars 2004, pp. 5-20.

others.[108] Particularly striking in terms of the focus of this thesis on mobilising the dead is the absence of discussion regarding French soldiers killed by their own authorities for participation in the 1917 mutinies or for desertion throughout the war.[109] These men have been 'forgotten' or 'wiped out' from veteran discourse relating to the war dead.

The deliberate negation of traumatic past events is characteristic to every society; however, the title of a colloquium organised in Paris in 1994 - "Forgetting our crimes. National amnesia: a French specificity"[110] - suggests the widespread role of this phenomenon in France and its centrality to the formation of French identity. According to the project's organisers, the aim was "not to destroy a wonderful national unity or to give French people a guilty conscience, but to propose a new representation of France - no longer monolithic but plural and significant - where republican mythology will make room for republican memory."[111] The myth/memory dichotomy constitutes the largest problem for would-be *ancien*

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[108] Joanna Bourke, *An intimate history of killing: Face to face killing in twentieth century warfare*, Great Britain: Granta Books, 1999, esp. pp. 27-31. In some cases, veterans themselves have admitted the attraction of the war environment, especially when compared to the perceived 'monotony' of civilian life. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 11. Glenn J. Gray, a philosopher who served in the American army during World War Two as an intelligence officer, was one such veteran. Glenn J. Gray, *The warriors: Reflections on men in battle. With an Introduction by Hannah Arendt*, New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1970 [1959], esp. Ch. 2 'The enduring appeals of battle.'

[109] On the French army's use of the death penalty, see for example Vincent Suard, 'La justice militaire française et la peine de mort au début de la Première guerre mondiale,' *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine*, vol. 41e, no. 1, janvier-mars 1994, pp. 136-153.

[110] The papers are published in Dimitri Nicolaïdis (ed.), *Oublier nos crimes. L'amnésie nationale: une spécificité française*, Paris: Editions Autrement, 1994.

[111] Dimitri Nicolaïdis, 'La nation, les crimes et la mémoire,' in Dimitri Nicolaïdis (ed.), *Oublier nos crimes. L'amnésie nationale: une spécificité française*, Paris: Editions Autrement, 1994, pp. 4-25, p. 25. In attempting to replace myth with 'real' memory, the opening paper tackles France's relationship with the memory of Vichy. The Gaullist pretence that only a very small, unpatriotic percentage of French were pro-Nazi collaborationists is a prime example of how a government actively discarded a historical legacy to keep an embarrassing truth from the nation's collective memory. Propagated from the days of the Liberation and disseminated through official channels for decades, the myth of a unanimously resistant French people was eventually challenged by new collective memories. Nicolaïdis, 'La nation, les crimes et la mémoire.' In his doctoral thesis considering commemoration of the Second World War under President François Mitterrand, Michael Martin noted that forgetting during this period was "conceived of as a danger to humanity." Despite the President himself declaring his preference for moving on in the interests of national unity and "civil peace," journalists, the public and some government bodies pushed for investigation into the Vichy years. Martin's observation points to the fluctuating fortunes of "wiping out" and "conservation;" the realities of different eras require different approaches to the dichotomy of memorialising. Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' pp. 5 and 262-263.

combattant theorists of memory, who have so far failed to grasp the complexities of the issue.

Veterans have noticed the rise of 'memory' discussion in recent times. In 2000, for example, General Surville remarked that the word 'memory' was "very often used in the French language" (in his opinion, most often in reference to the Second World War and the 'dark days' of French history),[112] a comment which reflected scholarly conclusions that the term had entered mainstream vocabulary.[113] However, the veterans have thus far failed to realise that the paradoxical consequence of the term's increasing employment and rhetorical force is its decline in meaning:[114] in 1989, Pierre Nora rather cynically explained that "we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left."[115] With such overuse, the original meaning attributed to 'memory' - Maurice Halbwachs posited that it is a social construct, consciously and continuously re-structured by collective identities in order to suit contemporary contexts[116] - has been obscured.

The major reason for the over-employment of the word 'memory' is its incorporation of both personal and group remembering. Although in one respect,

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[112] Général D. Surville, 'Editorial,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 656, août-septembre 2000, p. 3.

[113] Nora, 'The tidal wave of memory,' [n.p.]; Bell, 'Mythscapes,' p. 71. Marie-Claire Lavabre believed that the term 'memory' is today overused in academic and popular discourse. Lavabre, 'Usages et mésusages de la notion de mémoire,' p. 52.

[114] John R. Gillis, 'Introduction. Memory and identity: The history of a relationship,' in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The politics of national identity*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 3-26, p. 3. According to one theoretician, the term 'memory' is today used to describe folk, popular, oral and public history, and myth. Klein, 'On the emergence of memory in historical discourse,' p. 128.

[115] Nora, 'Between memory and history,' p. 7. Nora expanded on this comment later in the article, writing that "when memory is no longer everywhere, it will not be anywhere unless one takes the responsibility to recapture it through individual means." (p. 16).

[116] The term 'collective memory' was first employed by the Durkheimian sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in his 1925 *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* and developed in his *On Collective Memory*, published posthumously in 1950. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1925; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser (ed.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1950].

memory is "the affair of the individual,"[117] once private memories are related to others they become public knowledge - or, 'collective memory.' Nora characterised this concept as "the memory or collection of memories, conscious or unconscious, of an experience lived and/or mythified by a living group for which the past constitutes an integral part of its identity."[118] This very broad definition constructs multiple 'private/real memor*ies*' (which are unique to each individual because they reference actual lived experience) in opposition to 'collective/imagined memor*y*' in the singular (which is generated when members of a community claim to share and 'remember' an experience, although they did not all partake directly in the 'remembered' event). In recognition of the term's ambiguity, Duncan S. A. Bell's illuminating article 'Mythscapes: Memory, mythology, and national identity' suggests replacing 'collective memory' with 'myth.'[119] This thesis, too, circumvents the multiple meanings of collective memory by referring to 'real memory,' 'imagined memory' and 'mythologised memory.'

Despite Le Barillier's identification of 'memory' as "in fact [constituting] the collection of memories of a community,"[120] the veterans have on the whole failed to acknowledge the innate memory/myth double meaning of collective memory, and the problems which this duality engenders. The following passage by General Surville is an example of veteran writing which acknowledges certain aspects of collective memory but remains ignorant of others. Referring specifically to the veterans' experience of war, Surville wrote that:

> [Collective] memory arranges history to reflect reality. Of course every person has his own truth - or more correctly, his own interpretation. Nevertheless, facts need to remain facts, and we [the

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[117] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'Mémoire et histoire: thème du Congrès 2000,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1652, février 2000, p. 12.
[118] Pierre Nora, 'Mémoire collective,' in Jacques Le Goff (ed.), *La nouvelle histoire*, Paris: Retz, 1978, pp. 398-400, p. 398.
[119] Bell, 'Mythscapes.' Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan recommended the term 'collective remembrance' as it implies agency. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the framework,' in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 6-39, p. 9.
[120] C. Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président de la C.N.A.C.), 'Mémoire et commémorations,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1651, janvier 2000, p. 11.

> veterans] will not tolerate any attempt to compromise, soften or negate the truth. We were witnesses. Our evidence matters and we need to make it known. We did not see everything, but it is necessary to say what each individual saw. When these reports are considered together, reality can be created.[121]

The General well illustrated how personal accounts shape collective memory. What his articulate explanation fails to recognise, however, are the convolutions and contradictions inherent in the collective memory he described.

Surville alluded here to the dangers of inaccurate remembering. He outlined how integrating many different statements can create a complete and unified account of the past. With a fair amount of chauvinism on behalf of his fellow veterans, Le Barillier echoed his colleague's attitude regarding the importance of individual veteran memories, declaring that "each combatant is an artisan of memory. His pertinent account is irreplaceable given that it is not altered by time or the intoxication of deforming narcissism. He gives that touch of authenticity to collective Memory."[122] Ironically, however, the quest for truth which Surville and Le Barillier celebrated is ultimately invalidated, because attempting to homogenise an experience through combining disparate memories disregards its complexities and nuances. This realisation calls the credibility of Surville's "reality" and Le Barillier's "authenticity" into question; what is created through merging different real memories is an imagined or constructed entity, a myth. With a deeper understanding of the distinction between 'real' versus 'imagined' memory, both men might have realised the limitations of their argument.

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[121] D. Surville, 'La mémoire,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 642, octobre-décembre 1997, pp. 17-18, p. 18.

[122] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'La mémoire: mémoire vivante, mémoire collective,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 21-22, p. 21. Le Barillier's capitalisation of 'Memory' is interesting in light of Kerwin Lee Klein's fear that its current proliferation means that memory "threatens to become Memory with a capital *M*." Klein, 'On the emergence of memory in historical discourse,' p. 135.

Surville, on behalf of other veterans, advocated a distinct historical reality; he did not advocate constructing a myth.[123] Nonetheless, unintentional myth-making has characterised the veterans' movement since its inception. In the aftermath of World War One, *ancien combattant* discourse was an extension of the survivors' desire to remember and come to terms with the trauma and deaths of their brothers-in-arms. As Roland Dorgelès, a well-known left-wing writer and once-President of the Association des Ecrivains Combattants (A.E.C.) instructed his colleagues in the 1922 *Almanach du Combattant*:

> We are not allowed to forget them. Simply saying their name defends them, saves them. Comrades: when your regiments meet up, speak of the dead. Speak of them freely and without sadness. Speak of them as if they were still alive, and as if you will see their smiles at the barn entrance for the evening's rest. They will not die as long as we love them.
> Lots of them do not have a tomb; may they at least have our hearts.[124]

Dorgelès' words allude to the importance of associations for the veterans. As Prost has pointed out, in France veterans are defined primarily through the groups which organise them,[125] structuration which means that veteran experiences of war were translated from individuals into *ancien combattant* associations (the process of changing real to imagined memory). This relationship also worked in the other direction: the associations exercised considerable influence over their members. In

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[123] In Bell's terms, myth "flattens complexity, nuance and performative contradictions of history in favour of a simplistic and often uni-vocal story." Bell, 'Mythscapes,' p. 75. This process occurs when accounts are amalgamated, as Surville advocated. In his invesitagtion into war narratives, Samuel Hynes decided that personal accounts simultaneously create and preserve the overarching myth because while many accounts are written, the accounts which are publicised and read tend to promote the same narrative. Samuel Hynes, 'Personal narratives and commemoration,' in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 205-220, p. 207. He believed the creation of a myth of war to be "sifting, […] gradual and probably not conscious" (p. 220).

[124] Roland Dorgelès, *Almanach du Combattant*, 1922, in Anon., 'Souvenons-nous!' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1. The *Almanach du Combattant* was published between 1922 and 1993, printing 100 000 copies during the 1920s. Nicolas Offenstadt, 'Une mémoire à distances. Les anciens combattants de la Grande Guerre et le souvenir des mutineries de 1917,' *Temporalités. Revue de sciences sociales et humaines*, vol. 5, 'Mémoire et histoire,' 2006, pp. 2-11, p. 5.

[125] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 1.

this way, through exchange of memories, associations were therefore able to formulate and perpetuate one specific 'memory' of the war experience.

The French veterans present a fascinating case study in terms of memory, with at least three 'layers' of memory visible over the ninety years since the Great War. Immediately after 1918, veterans enacted and relived their unique, personal stories of the wartime ordeal - their real memory - through association-sponsored publications and reunions, as Dorgelès advocated.[126] In this way, veterans shared - and officialised - their recollections and ideas about the war, largely as a means of coming to terms with the trauma of the experience.[127] Relatively quickly, their multitudinous and multifaceted accounts were amalgamated into, or omitted from,[128] a homogenous narrative of the front line experience, because the more a

[126] Veterans' gatherings were listed by Nora as constituting a *lieu de mémoire*, but only because the activity is the object of a ritual. Nora, 'Between memory and history,' p. 19. For veterans of World War Two, whose experience was not as unified as their predecessors', one means of expressing their "personal, lived experience" in the words of museum historian Marie-Hélène Joly was through the establishment of museums. Joly, 'War museums in France,' p. 37. While this drive resulted from a desire to put their views on display as World War One veterans had at reunions and through publications (in other words, enact and swap 'real' memories), this thesis suggests that the creation of a museum, even with the most honourable intentions, necessarily homogenises the multi-faceted past and therefore presents a visible, tangible representation of 'imagined' memory.

[127] Paul Lerner, 'An economy of memory: Psychiatrists, veterans, and traumatic narratives in Weimar Germany,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 173-195, p. 175. A study of twenty-five Second World War veterans determined unequivocally that the most effective means of dealing with traumatic memory was to develop a story or narrative about the event. Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, 'Telling stories of the war: Ageing veterans coping with their memories through narrative,' *Oral History*, vol. 26, no. 2, Autumn 1998, pp. 57-64, pp. 62-63. This story-telling also took place among families seeking to accept the war experience. Jay Winter, 'Forms of kinship and remembrance in the aftermath of the Great War,' in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds.), *War and remembrance in the twentieth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 40-60, p. 43.

[128] It has been recognised that some veterans never talk of their war experiences because they do not fit the official narrative. Peter G. Coleman, Airi Hautamaki and Andrei Podolskij, 'Trauma, reconciliation and generativity: The stories told by European war veterans,' in Jeffrey Dean Webster and Barbara K. Haight (eds.), *Critical advances in reminiscence work: From theory to application*, New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2002, pp. 218-232, p. 223; Stanley, 'Involuntary commemorations,' p. 250. For example, in his consideration of Australian World War One troops Alistair Thompson argued that faced with the widely-propagated and accepted official myth of the A.N.Z.A.C. [Australian and New Zealand Army Corps], some soldiers were reluctant to reveal their own experiences which differed from the 'norm.' Alistair Thompson, 'Embattled Manhood: Gender, memory and the Anzac legend,' in Kate Darian-Smith Kate and Paula Hamilton (eds.), *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 158-173.

story is told, the more it is shaped by its audience.[129] This discourse was then absorbed by the associations responsible for the memory exchanges, deriving part of its sacredness from its function as a founding myth (both of the separate groups and of the veterans' 'movement' as a whole). It was this particular, singular 'imagined memory' which was relayed to the population and through conscious repetition enforced as 'true.'[130] Following this process, veteran-journalists continued to write about the Great War from a personal perspective, but their views were coloured by the overarching narrative espoused by their associations.[131]

The final layer of memory - what is termed 'mythologised memory' in this thesis in line with Bell's discussion of terminology - exists among veterans of later wars, who, in adopting the language, themes and duties formulated by their forebears, have kept the Great War alive without having participated in it. That such a process was able to occur relied on three factors. Firstly, the Great War veteran 'memory' was so all-pervasive that veterans of later wars would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to formulate a 'new' narrative.[132] Secondly, without the claim to authenticity afforded by participation in the 1914-1918 war, any attempt to re-work the 'memory' of this conflict would have been devoid of authority. Thirdly, and most importantly, the Great War narrative provided veterans of later wars with 'safety.' The discourse and practice of trauma healing developed for World War

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[129] Todman, 'The ninetieth anniversary of the Battle of the Somme,' p. 25.

[130] Bruce Scates hinted at this division when he described soldiers' testimonies as lying between personal and collective memories. Bruce C. Scates, 'Manufacturing memory at Gallipoli,' in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds.), *War memory and popular culture: Essays on modes of remembrance and commemoration*, Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland and Co. Inc. Pub., 2009, pp. 57-75, p. 58. Samuel Hynes, too, recognised this phenomenon, believing that war narratives both confirm and shape the memories of other soldiers. Hynes, 'Personal narratives and commemoration,' p. 207. Through a series of interviews conducted in the 1980s with Australian soldiers of the Great War - for whom public rhetoric of battlefield glory was particularly difficult to challenge as it both praised their exploits and was fundamental to the nation's emerging 'identity' - Alistair Thomson has shown that veterans could actually absorb official narratives as their own. Alistair Thomson, *Anzac memories: Living with the legend*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994.

[131] As well, it is probable that non-combatants' stories were also silenced after World War One precisely because they had not borne arms and thus did not fit the dominant narrative. Annette Becker, 'Memory gaps: Maurice Halbwachs, memory and the Great War,' *Journal of European Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2005, pp. 102-113, p. 104.

[132] The historian Luc Capdevila believed troops of 1939 were "haunted" by the experience of their fathers' generation because this experience was so ingrained in French consciousness. Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' p. 84.

One resonated with their own experiences, and also provided them with a means of legitimising their often poorly-received and -understood experiences. The emphasis placed on the opinions and stories of World War One participants, the undoubted success of their discourse in addressing wartime trauma, the pervasiveness of this discourse in associative space and the legitimacy it provides give justification for the fact that veterans of later wars have continued to dwell on the experiences of that conflict and employ its themes and languages in coping with their own pasts. Even ninety years after the 11 November 1918 *Ceasefire*, World War One is still the central reference point for the *ancien combattant* community.

Memory 'transferral' has been recognised by scholars. A body of literature is devoted to the notion of "multidirectional memory," to use Michael Rothberg's term, most usually in relation to the Holocaust. Such scholars have noted that groups with no connection to either the people who carried out the genocide or its victims can still 'remember' and memorialise the experience.[133] Bell has recognised that memory can "transmigrate" not only spatially but also temporally across generations and distinct historical contexts.[134] In fact, this transmission of heritage is essential for societies to survive.[135] The case of the *anciens combattants* suits this paradigm, but also presents an additional element for consideration; the veterans transmit memory not just between *generations*, but between *generations of fire*.

Accepting their forebears' 'memory' is for veterans of later wars at once more personal and more distant than transferral of memory between generations. On the one hand, veterans are not necessarily connected to ex-combatants of preceding

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[133] For example Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the age of decolonization*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009; Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, 'Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the formation of cosmopolitan memory,' *European Journal of Social Theory*, no. 5, vol. 1, 2002, pp. 87-106.

[134] Bell, 'Mythscapes,' p. 70. For a personal account of the transmission of war memory across generations, read Bill Garner, 'Not going: Generations of guilt and the delayed action of memory,' in Martin Crotty (ed.), *When the Soldiers Return. November 2007 Conference proceedings*, Brisbane: School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, University of Queensland, 2009, pp. 137-143.

[135] Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology,' p. 33; Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. ix; Coleman, Hautamaki and Podolskij, 'Trauma, reconciliation and generativity,' p. 222.

wars in a familial way; on the other hand, despite the lack of ancestral ties, as participants in war they have shared something unique and arguably more bonding than regular relationships. These bonds, affirmed time and again in veteran publications and in appeals for unity, can exist not only between men who actually knew each other during wartime, but also between members of a 'generation of fire' - and between multiple generations of fire. One example published less than a year after the termination of the Second World War reads, "The commemoration of *11 novembre* must hence dramatically demonstrate the Union of the two generations of fire, the generation of fathers and the generation of sons, who took communion in the same patriotic and republican ideal."[136] The veterans' transmission of 'memory,' which this thesis demonstrates is both horizontal (across a single generation) and vertical (across multiple generations), thus constitutes a unique facet of memory studies.

As a result of the "memory boom" taking place, many of the dominant narratives of French national identity have been challenged in the last few decades as individuals and groups assert their identities. Veteran discourse, alternatively, has remained essentially constant. Veterans of Algeria, for example, while willing to fight for legal and financial compensation and moral recognition, have been reluctant - or unable - to voice their own imagined memory of war, let alone attempt to query the 'memory' of their World War One forebears. The reason for this reliance on past models is twofold: firstly, the Great War 'memory' is so well ingrained in veteran associative space that an alternative narrative would prove difficult to implement; secondly, given the 'safety' which the 1914-1918 'memory' provides, both in terms of emotional support and as a means of shielding veterans of later wars from the awkward questions being posed of other erstwhile historical 'actors,' it seems unlikely that many veterans (at least those who join official organisations) want to develop another reading of war.

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[136] L'Union Française des Associations de Combattants, Combattants de la Libération et Victimes des deux guerres, 'Onze Novembre: manifeste de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 30e année, nouvelle série, no. 2, novembre 1945, p. 1.

A lucid example of the juxtaposition of attempted self-assertion in the realm of politics but dependence on a pre-existing discourse was when, on 10 November 1990, tens of thousands of *anciens combattants* of the North African conflicts demonstrated at the Arc de Triomphe. At a time when the Algerian War appeared to be slowly entering public consciousness, its veterans still considered themselves largely ignored by official discourse. Central to their "rising discontent" were inequitable conditions for the attribution of combatant cards and the proposed retirement agenda.[137] In a potent symbolic gesture directly invoking the idea of 'sacrifice,' 450 veterans donated blood in an operation organised by the National Centre of Blood Transfusion. In underlining the fact that veterans gave blood "as they were once called to do for France," the tract distributed on-site did not fail to insert the action into the framework of 'blood debt' rhetoric. A letter appealing to the State Secretary for Veterans' Affairs to standardise veterans' benefits also emphasised the metaphor.[138] Referring back to wartime sacrifice in order to secure benefits was a technique employed by the *anciens combattants* of 1914-1918 and ingrained in the imagined memory and discourse of these men; in framing their protest in terms of the blood debt, the veterans of North Africa drew on this established pattern to campaign for their own privileges. Thus, endeavouring to assert (and perhaps even formulate) an identity specific to their generation of fire,

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[137] M. Georges Chavanez à M. le Secrétaire d'Etat aux anciens combattants et victimes de guerre, *Journal Officiel de la République française: Débats parlementaires: Assemblée nationale: Questions écrites remises à la présidence de l'Assemblée nationale et les réponses des ministres*, Paris: Imprimerie des Journaux Officiels, année 1990, no. 51 A.N. (Q), lundi 24 décembre 1990, no. 37385 p. 5281. Assemblée Nationale, <http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/9/qst/9-qst-1990-12-24.pdf> accessed 10 January 2011. A later edition of National Assembly correspondence also contained letters regarding the situation of ex-soldiers of the A.F.N.: M. François Fillon à M. le Secrétaire d'Etat aux anciens combattants et victimes de guerre, *Journal Officiel de la République française: Débats parlementaires: Assemblée nationale: Questions écrites remises à la présidence de l'Assemblée nationale et les réponses des ministres*, Paris: Imprimerie des Journaux Officiels, année 1991, no. 10 A.N. (Q), 11 mars 1991, no. 40113, p. 893. Assemblée Nationale, <http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/9/qst/9-qst-1991-03-11.pdf> accessed 10 January 2011.

[138] M. Jacques Godfrain à M. le Secrétaire d'Etat aux anciens combattants et victimes de guerre, *Journal Officiel de la République française: Débats parlementaires: Assemblée nationale: Questions écrites remises à la présidence de l'Assemblée nationale et les réponses des ministres*, Paris: Imprimerie des Journaux Officiels, année 1990, no. 51 A.N. (Q), lundi 24 décembre 1990, no. 37503, p. 5281. Assemblée Nationale, <http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/9/qst/9-qst-1990-12-24.pdf> accessed 10 January 2011.

these protestors mobilised the discourse - and 'memory' - into which they had been indoctrinated by identifying as 'veterans.'

Enacting mythologised memory is today unavoidable in the absence of any living World War One veterans.[139] The impossibility of accessing either real or imagined memory of the Great War experience leads to another element of the veterans' 'memory': even if veterans of later wars were inclined to query or manipulate certain aspects of the war narrative, would this be possible without any genuine reference to the conflict being memorialised? If it were to be undertaken, would this enterprise be morally permissible given the continued centrality of the Great War to constructions of war and its continuing legacy? Given the fossilisation of veteran discourse, these questions are unlikely to surface in the near future.

There is another issue raised in the idea of multiple layers of memory: this theory problematises veteran claims of a *devoir de mémoire*, and by extension, undermines veteran mobilisation of the fallen. *Anciens combattants* believe it is their duty to remember World War One and especially its victims, but only veterans writing until the 1950s or 60s (when World War Two combatants began to take on leadership roles and publish in the associative press) were actually able to fulfil this obligation. Since then, what has been occurring is perhaps better described as a '*devoir de mythologisation*' as veterans of later wars have perpetuated the experience of the Great War despite having never lived in the trenches, heard the 11 November 1918 *Ceasefire* or known the men who perished.[140] They recount events which they only 'know' (or claim to 'remember') through narrative. There are two problems with this myth-making: one, the veterans' lack of acknowledgment of this process means that their commentary is still positioned as 'truth;' and two, mythologising but not actually remembering the dead problematises the concepts of veteran duty and

[139] Following the death of the last *poilu* Lazare Ponticelli on 12 March 2008, 'real' memory of the French World War One experience no longer exists. Now, history texts and commemoration constitute the only means through which present and future citizens can access this past.
[140] The idea of 'trenches' was particularly readily absorbed into myth. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 36.

entitlement to remembering - ideas upon which veterans legitimise mobilising the fallen.

Certainly, the veterans' duty of memory is not restricted to the fallen of the Great War, and Armistice Day has increasingly been promoted as a date to commemorate all the fallen of all the wars in which France has participated in parallel with trends towards commemorative inclusion; however, mobilising the dead of all the wars necessitates inclusion of the 1914-1918 victims (as well as those of Iéna, Waterloo, the pre-Revolution conflicts, and so on). The difficulty is thus: mobilising the war dead assumes an intimate knowledge of the will and desire of the fallen, but do ex-servicemen and -women who have no connection to the Great War possess the right to speak of - and particularly for - the dead of that conflict? Since veterans have not recognised the problem, their opinion cannot be ascertained. Most likely, however, they would reply in the affirmative, probably citing the *devoir de mémoire* which obliges veterans (of any war) to maintain the memory of the dead. Using the concept of a 'duty of memory' to defend their right to resurrect the dead is problematical, however. The inherent duality of the concept means that since the 1920s veterans have not actually been 'remembering' but rather 'imagining' World War One, and veterans since the 1950s or 60s have been 'mythologising' this same conflict. Despite their powerful claim to memory and their identity-forming duty to remember and memorialise war's victims, the veterans cannot wholly legitimise mobilising all the fallen of all the wars.

The theme of 'memory' has taken on unprecedented importance in recent veteran discourse, partly in response to fundamental changes occurring across the globe. Despite this recent preoccupation, veterans have long recognised and espoused the importance of remembering warfare and its victims. This memorialisation of the dead is interpreted in veteran doctrine as both a right and a duty to represent their erstwhile companions-at-arms. While the veterans' failure to distinguish between these two concepts need not de-legitimise their claims to mobilise the fallen, this is not true of their lack of recognition of 'layers' of memory. Their failure to recognise

the discrepancy between real, imagined and mythologised memory considerably undermines the idea of a *devoir de mémoire*, and with it, the legitimacy of veteran claims to mobilise the fallen.

Part I - Contexts and Concepts

Chapter Four

Mourning and meaning: Veterans, the war dead and commemoration

> "One only need read the inscriptions on village monuments to realise that every family was touched by the 1 400 000 dead."
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> - General D. Surville (Président National), 'Editorial: 8 mai et 11 novembre,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no 615, septembre-octobre 1992, p. 3.

The previous two chapters have demonstrated that veterans mobilise the dead because these deceased men and women are integral to their identity as veterans, and because in their view, this inimitable relationship both obliges and allows them to speak of and for their dead comrades. Despite its inherent problems, the concept of a specific veteran *devoir de mémoire* - which obliges the veterans to both remember and memorialise the war dead and translate their will into the contemporary world - legitimises this mobilisation to a degree. For veteran resurrection of the dead to hold any meaning, however, it needs an arena and an audience. The commemoration of Armistice Day supplies both these essentials.

This final Contexts and Concepts chapter is thus concerned with highlighting the veteran-war dead relationship through the lens of commemoration. It commences by detailing two means by which the French state endeavoured to help people come to terms with the trauma of World War One: the notion of 'sacrifice' which served to

justify the deaths, and remembrance services which aided mourners in exteriorising their grief. The chapter then traces the institutionalisation of *11 novembre* as a means of officially recognising and remembering the Great War experience. While the date combines many different and disparate elements for commemoration, it is the dead who receive primary attention. Yet, although the dead are the event's *raison d'être*, encouraging living people to physically attend - and ideally, emotionally connect with - ceremonies is imperative in order to disseminate its messages. This 'mobilisation of the living' is considered in the final part of the chapter. The chapter argues that veterans, the fallen, remembering and commemorating are so intertwined because of the underlying need to assign 'meaning' to the trauma of war. Armistice Day has remained the war commemoration *par excellence*, and the discourse developed around it has changed very little, precisely because it functions as a means of alleviating some of the ordeal of the combatant experience, regardless of the conflict.

Veterans require space in which to mobilise the fallen, because in order for memories to make sense in terms of identity, they need some form of narrative or structure.[1] One method which has been used as a political tool of 'identity' and 'memory' creation, stabilisation and transmission since the days of the French Revolution is commemoration.[2] The act of commemorating involves the selection

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[1] Andrew Jones, 'Technologies of remembrance: Memory, materiality and identity in Early Bronze Age Scotland,' in Howard Williams (ed.), *Archaeologies of remembrance: Death and memory in past societies*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003, pp. 65-88, p. 70. Memory is disseminated through many different channels. Private modes of transmission such as oral story-telling and personal possessions are legitimate ways in which to pass on memory within the family or community spheres. Formal and official channels of memory transmission are governed by groups with influence over a greater sector of the local or national population. Traditional methods include museums, text books and pilgrimages, accompanied in contemporary society by modern techniques like the international movie industry and the internet. As commemoration is entwined with notions of memory and social identity, it too is currently taking on unprecedented importance. One observer described the current trend in France as 'commemorationitis.' François Bédarida, 'The rule of memory and the historian's craft in contemporary France,' trans. Martyn Cornick and Ceri Crossley, in Martyn Cornick and Ceri Crossley (eds.), *Problems in French History*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, pp. 285-295, p. 289. Gérard Namer saw in the need to commemorate a need for identity. Gérard Namer, 'La confiscation sociopolitique du besoin de commémorer,' in Christian Coq (ed.), *Travail de mémoire 1914-1998. Une nécessité dans un siècle de violence*, Paris: Editions Autrement, 1999, pp. 175-179, p. 175.

[2] Alfred Simon, *Les signes et les songes: essai sur le théâtre et la fête*, Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1976, p. 214. While commemoration is used to structure memory, Gérard Namer concluded his study of

and simplification of events or figures of symbolic significance and influence (offering, therefore, neither a "totalising" nor an "integrated" account of history[3]), in order to render a certain version of the past accessible to a particular community. In this way, commemoration is not "rediscovery" of an idyllic past, but rather its "invention" or "construction."[4] This 'past' is stored in rituals and codes, which also lend commemoration its sociability and pedagogic force.

Commemoration plays an important social role, providing a unique space in which members of a group can meet and communicate regardless of their personal views and preferences. Describing the sociality inherent in festivity, the famous French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote, "Plant a picket crowned with flowers in the middle of a square, gather the people, and you will have a fête."[5] Although spectators may adhere to different belief systems, they partake in a public display of adherence to the community through their participation in symbolically-charged ceremonial rituals. This celebration of community is one reason why veterans, so concerned with notions of 'unity,' avidly espouse the memorialising endeavour.

As well as the unique spatiality of commemoration, remembering the past also provides a specific temporality in which societies can seek unity and identity. The veteran Claude Le Barillier noted that

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commemoration in 1945 by positing that collective forgetting was stronger than collective remembering. Gérard Namer, 'La commémoration en 1945,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 253-266, p. 265. For information regarding the revolutionaries' use of festival to spread the dogma of democracy, see Mona Ozouf's magisterial work, *La fête révolutionnaire*. Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire 1789-1799*, Paris: Gallimard, 1976. Richard Etlin interpreted how the revolutionaries transformed and adapted festive space to suit their political agendas during the 1790 Fête de la Fédération, the first anniversary of *14 juillet*. Richard A. Etlin, 'L'architecture et la Fête de la Fédération Paris 1790,' in Jean Ehrard and Paul Viallaneix (eds.), *Les fêtes de la Révolution*, Paris: Société des Études Robespierristes, 1977, pp. 131-154.

[3] Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, 'Introduction,' in Kate Darian-Smith Kate and Paula Hamilton (eds.), *Memory and history in twentieth century Australia*, Melbourne, 1994, pp. 1-6, p. 2.

[4] Patrick Garcia, 'Commémorations: les enjeux d'une pratique sociale,' *Raison présente*, no. 128, 'Mémoire et histoire: un procès réciproque,' 1998, pp. 25-45, p. 34.

[5] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles. Texte revu d'après les anciennes éditions avec une introduction et des notes par M. Léon Fontaine*, Paris: Garnier, 1889 [1758], p. 268.

> the power which the effect of commemoration produces on the citizen's conscience is asserted either on the individual in a group or on a group of individuals, and imposes the power to think about history and to memorise it. Without this imposition, it is impossible to construct the space which allows us to think about the present and to project it onto the future…[6]

In illustrating society's continuity from the past to the present, commemorative narratives seek to create a new form of sociability and are used to explain, justify, celebrate and protect contemporary and future beliefs and actions.[7] As a veteran of the A.R.A.C. recognised, "for us, celebrating anniversaries is not a simple homage to the past, but a way of lighting the future through the lessons of what has already happened, because the present is full of the past but luckily does not repeat it."[8] This recognition of the continuing role of history is also one reason for producing journals: the A.R.A.C.'s newspaper, *Le Réveil des Combattants*, "studies the past to clearly see the future."[9] A veteran of the U.N.C. also identified the specific temporality of commemoration, noting that "the day of Remembrance [*11 novembre*] is the day of the *patrie*. It unites past and future in the same thought and the same momentum."[10] It is this unique temporality - this 'time outside of time' in which all the members of a particular group are invited to participate in celebration of their heritage as equals - which gives commemoration such potency as an instrument of social politics.

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[6] C. Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président de la C.N.A.C.), 'Mémoire et commémorations,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1651, janvier 2000, p. 11. The interrelationship of the themes of 'identity,' 'memory' and 'commemoration' mean that many of the veteran-intellectuals whose work was cited in Chapter Three 'Veterans, the war dead and memory' are also cited in this chapter.

[7] Jean Duvignaud, 'La fête: essai et sociologie,' *Cultures*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1976, pp. 13-25, p. 15.

[8] Pierre Paraf, 'Le message de l'été,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 237, juillet 1965, p. 12.

[9] André Fillère, '11 novembre… Plus de cinquante ans après, que sont-ils devenus?' *Les Nouvelles du Réveil. Supplément au Réveil des Combattants*, no. 324, octobre 1972, p. 1.

[10] Jean-Maurice Martin (Président-Adjoint de l'U.N.C.), 'Le 11 novembre, comme chaque année…,' *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, novembre 1979, no. 1449, p. 2.

Commemoration of the First World War began before its end.[11] Celebrations, publications and monuments praised the unprecedented enthusiasm provoked by the August 1914 call to arms,[12] creating a myth which continues to pervade the liturgies of many erstwhile belligerent states.[13] The survival of this myth in France can be detected, amongst other places, in the *ancien combattant* press. Reflecting in 1971 on the war's commencement, one veteran wrote that "more than fifty years ago, very young soldiers went to the front singing, persuaded that they would break their adversary's offensive within days."[14] The call to arms is remembered as an experience outside ordinary social codes, echoing the theory that war itself is a

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[11] Rémi Dalisson considered World War One the first conflict to be commemorated before the cessation of hostilities. Rémi Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre ou l'enjeu de la mémoire combattante dans l'entre-deux-guerres 1918-1939,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 48, no. 192, 1998, pp. 5-23, p. 8. Part of this memorialisation of war was the trend for collecting war-related objects, which today can be found in museums along the old battle lines. For example, the village of Fromelles, 15 kilometres from Lille in northern France, has a World War One museum housed in the attic above the local primary school. Post-war visitors also sought relics of the battlefields. Bruce C. Scates, 'Manufacturing memory at Gallipoli,' in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds.), *War memory and popular culture: Essays on modes of remembrance and commemoration*, Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland and Co. Inc. Pub., 2009, pp. 57-75, p. 60. The trend for collecting and displaying objects was already prevalent in France around the *fin-de-siècle*. Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the past: The Medieval revival in* fin-de-siècle *France*, Great Britain: Ashgate, 2003, p. 3.

[12] Jay Winter, 'Facets of commemoration during and after the Great War,' *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, janvier-juin 1998, nos. 49-50, pp. 65-68, p. 65. Modris Eksteins astutely wondered if a wet and cold summer would have produced the same public response to war. Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the birth of the Modern Age*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989, p. 56.

[13] The story of Käthe Kollwitz is fascinating in respect to the call to arms. In August 1914, she was swept up in war fever along with countless other Germans; less than two months later, however, upon realising the brutal reality of war and especially after the death of her son Peter on 22 October, her views had changed dramatically. Her art came to depict her personal trauma and anti-war stance. For a complete account of her experience, read Regina Schulte, 'Käthe Kollwitz's Sacrifice,' trans. Pamela Selwyn, *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 41, 1996, pp. 193-221. In conscription-free countries such as Australia, remembering war could serve to encourage recruitment (pp. 106-111) or chastise individuals who did not volunteer. Kenneth S. Inglis, *Sacred places: War memorials in the Australian landscape*, Carlton: Miegunyah Press at Melbourne University Press, 1998, pp. 182-184; Tracy Bradford, 'Commemoration, exhortation and mourning: Honor Rolls and the Great War,' in Chris Dixon and Luke Auton (eds.), *War, society and culture: Approaches and issues. Selected papers from the November 2001 symposium*, N.S.W.: Research Group for War, Society and Culture, 2002, pp. 118-138, pp. 118-119.

[14] Lucien Begouin, 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 56e année, nouvelle série, no. 1290, samedi 6 novembre 1971, p. 1.

festival: the exceptionality of both events provides escape from the monotony of the mundane and everyday.[15]

Another potent commemorative subject was the soldiers themselves. The Allies' official propaganda presented the Great War as a campaign against an enemy who did not respect basic individual rights, a dialogue which slotted the war into a historical continuum starting with the French Revolution when citizens took up arms to defend democratic ideologies. The *poilus* of the trenches were compared with the legendary soldiers of Valmy: two generations of French republicans who heroically defended the *Patrie en danger*. Yet as the war continued and the death toll mounted, the focus of commemoration shifted to the victims.[16]

The memorial transferral from glorification to mourning reflected not only the scale of death but also the survivors' need to understand - and pay tribute to - the horror and loss.[17] While mourning natural death is often unbearably difficult for those left behind, additional elements complicate the bereavement process for soldiers killed in battle. Firstly, these victims are often lost "in the spring of their life"[18] in comparison to the more accepted death of old age or even sickness. Secondly, absent at the time of death, families may never know the fate which befell their loved one, adding a supplementary intensity to conventional grief.[19] Most

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[15] George L. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 4, October 1986, pp. 491-513, p. 493.

[16] According to Rémi Dalisson, the mood at festivals was sombre from as early as October 1914. Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' p. 8.

[17] Recognition that habitual rites of death, for example wearing specific clothing during the bereavement period, were beginning to change around the World War One period prompted Capdevila and Voldman to wonder if the mass death of the Great War was partly responsible for this social transformation. Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, 'Rituels funéraires de sociétés en guerre 1914-1945,' in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, Christian Ingrao *et al*. (eds.), *La violence de guerre 1914-1945. Approches comparées des deux conflits mondiaux*, Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002, pp. 289-311, p. 300. See also David Cannadine, 'War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain,' in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of mortality: Studies in the social history of death*, London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1981, pp. 187-242, p. 218.

[18] Paul Manet (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 54e année, nouvelle série, no. 1190, samedi 1er novembre 1969, p. 1.

[19] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, 'Corps perdus, corps retrouvés: trois exemples de deuils de guerre,' *Annales*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, pp. 47-71, p. 47. Conversely, as Fussell has noted, separation from the home sphere meant that a common theme among soldiers was lack of civilian realisation of the

importantly for memorial and commemorative purposes, individual death in war, while still affecting family and friends on a personal level, takes on symbolic and communal relevance, rendering the notion of 'the war dead' more political than personal.[20] While the symbolism of the war dead forms the basis for understanding society's war experience, it is nonetheless pertinent to ask, as Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman have done: why mourn the dead when war is about killing?[21]

The mass death of World War One led people to invent new ways of coping with conflict, developing into the phenomenon which Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker have labelled the 'culture of war.'[22] This thesis is concerned with two elements intrinsic to this modelling: the propagation of the notion of 'sacrifice,' and the implementation of rituals of mourning, both of which attempted to provide some comfort to survivors by firstly designating meaning to the trauma, and secondly, providing an opportunity for people to share their grief. Becker has, however, highlighted the shortfall of such reactions, wondering "how can people commemorate the 'uncommemorable' known as hunger, cold, forced labour, rape…?"[23]

In the aftermath of World War One, promoting national unity was paramount in all belligerent states. Governments strove for solidarity in order to counter the

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horrific front line death. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 86. In his study of death, Robert Pogue Harrison stressed the difficulty in coming to terms with the deaths of missing people because of the importance of a physical body (or remains) in customs of burial and grieving. Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 147.

[20] As soldiers died for the nation, their death had to be given a national meaning. Meira Weiss, 'Bereavement, commemoration, and collective identity in contemporary Israeli society,' *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 2, April 1997, pp. 91-101, p. 91. The public element of soldier death is particularly foreign in modern times; death is becoming increasingly interiorised and private, acknowledged one observer. Raymond Lemieux, 'Du banal au sublime: célébrer la mort,' *Frontières*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2006, pp. 8-15, p. 11.

[21] Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 10.

[22] Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, 'Introduction au dossier "Le corps dans la Première Guerre mondiale,"' *Annales*, no. 1, janvier-février 2000, pp. 43-45, pp. 43-44.

[23] Becker's comment refers specifically to the experience of northern French civilians, who lived through German military occupation in World Wars One and Two. Annette Becker, 'D'une guerre à l'autre: mémoire de l'Occupation et de la Résistance 1914-1940,' *Le Nord-Pas-de-Calais, région résistante. Revue du Nord*, vol. 76, no. 306, 1994, pp. 453-465, p. 455.

"destabilising consequences"[24] and trauma of the war and consolidate their rule. One key way in which the French state sought to assuage people's sense of loss after World War One was by promoting the belief that life (and by extension, death) had some higher meaning.[25] A major component of this (re-)authorisation was providing justification of the carnage, which was addressed via the phenomenon which George Mosse has labelled the 'Myth of the War Experience.'[26]

Ideally, soldiers' and veterans' memories of war formed the basis of the Myth. As with all myths, its content was subjectively selected: in seeking to legitimise the Great War and help heal its traumas, memorialists tended to adopt its positive elements while downplaying the atrocities and horrors.[27] In reality, most of the mythmaking was in fact carried out by older men who lauded soldiering and the front line experience without having lived it themselves.[28] In this way, the Myth of the War Experience constructed official memory in contrast to personal understandings of the conflict, although these conflicting 'memories' necessarily fed off and informed each other. Included in the Myth was the enthusiasm of August 1914, the portrayal of war as an initiation rite into manhood, the notion of wartime camaraderie, and the cult of the fallen soldier, all elements relaying a 'positive' view of the war.[29] Paying tribute to the war dead was particularly imperative: nationalising and absorbing wartime death was vital to the legitimisation of post-war states during and after World War One, as the process strove to balance the pain

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[24] Pierre Vélon (Président de l'Union Fédérale), '11 novembre,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, des Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 404, septembre-octobre 1992, p. 1.

[25] Mosse has noted how the horrors of conflict convinced civilians, soldiers, veterans and politicians to seek greater meaning in the seeming futility. George L. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 4, October 1986, pp. 491-513, p. 492. Without a doubt, this pattern also prevailed in other wars; believing that soldiers died for a valid and valuable reason made losing them a little more tolerable for the loved ones left behind.

[26] George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 6; Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience.' Traces of this Myth were evident long before World War One in the Revolutionary Wars of 1792-1799 and the 1813-1814 German Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, when the state had constructed an official memory of war to sustain the regime. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 9. Mythmakers of World War One simply moulded the pre-existing model to suit the elements introduced by modern war.

[27] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 6.

[28] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 68.

[29] Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' p. 492.

of loss with a feeling of patriotic pride.[30] As Daniel Sherman pointed out, choosing to remember the dead as heroes or victims was fundamental to how communities interpreted the war experience in general.[31]

Central to this process of coming to terms with trauma was the propagation of 'sacrifice' and 'dying for [a cause];'[32] as Reinhart Koselleck noted in his work on war memorials, the significance of sacrifice was established by survivors to legitimise the loss of life.[33] While the notion of noble death is ancient, it took on a more universal and political dimension in response to the number of World War One fatalities. In France, tangible proof of the concept's politicisation and diffusion was the state's invention and implementation of the classification '*Mort pour la France*.' The category was initially created to honour the two kinds of French military personnel (members of the professional army and civilian conscripts) and civilians who were killed while performing certain duties. The definitional guidelines were later expanded to include civilians killed behind the front line, originally considered a separate category.[34] The concept of 'dying for France' - defending the nation's population and ideals with one's life - was promoted by the state and popular myth as the ultimate sacrificial act, and was absorbed into imagined veteran memory then transmitted to veterans of later generations of fire

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[30] Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 172. The treatment of soldiers' bodies was not only political and symbolic, for some, it was also an economy. Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire 1914-1930*, Paris: Armand Colin Éditeur, 1994, p. 107.

[31] Daniel Sherman, 'The nation: In what community? The politics of commemoration in postwar France,' in Lisa B. Miller and Michael J. Smith (eds.), *Ideas and ideals: Essays on politics in honour of Stanley Hoffmann*, Boulder, C.O.: Westview Press, 1993, pp. 277-295, p. 280.

[32] Olivier Dumoulin, 'Des morts pour vivre,' *Autour des morts: mémoire et identité. Actes du Ve colloque international sur la sociabilité. Rouen, 19-21 novembre 1998*, Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 2001, pp. 437-444, p. 439.

[33] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftung der Überlebenden,' in Odo Marquardt und Karlheinz Stierle (eds.), *Poetik und Hermeneutik Bd. 8*, München: Fink, 1979, pp. 255-276, p. 257.

[34] In relation to the wartime death of civilians, the law of 2 July 1915 determined that only hostages and civilians killed by reason of or while carrying out their duty would be classified as *mort pour la France*. This definition was amended on 28 February 1922 to "any civilian who succumbed following actions committed by the enemy," which included victims of deportation or bombings. Capdevila and Voldman, 'Rituels funéraires de sociétés en guerre 1914-1945,' p. 290. On 2 November 1945, the law was adapted to suit the circumstances of World War Two. Claude Petit, *Guide social des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre 1914-1918, 1939-1945, T.O.E., Indochine, Algérie, Tunisie, Maroc*, Paris: Editions Lavauzelle, 1977, p. 405.

Recognising and paying tribute to the soldiers' deaths through promotion of certain worthy causes was one means by which the state attempted to lessen the emotional devastation experienced by so many people.

While the concept was developed in response to the mass death of World War One, soldiers of later wars were also inserted into the legacy of glorified death in service of the nation. Veteran Minister Philippe Mestre's Armistice Day 1993 oration well illustrates this continuity. Addressing veterans of other wars, he proclaimed:

> You did not for one moment doubt the rightness of our combat any more than your elders of the First World War - and you were right. You knew that certain causes are worth dying for. You knew that giving one's life for one's country and to defend liberty is worth all the sacrifice. On this *11 novembre*, let us again seal the promise we made to our dead, let us show through our actions that we understand why they gave their lives, let us unite our forces to be with them and not abandon them.[35]

Mestre's speech highlights the fact that it was not only the state which promoted the idea of 'dying for,' and not only the population who absorbed its messages: veterans were simultaneously targets and proponents of this reasoning. In other words, veterans both accepted and promoted the idea of 'sacrifice.' They accepted the notion because seeing some greater meaning in the death of their companions partially eased the pain and guilt of survival;[36] they promoted it because highlighting the causes for which servicemen and -women died fulfilled their *devoir de mémoire*. Yet despite the undoubted healing power of believing that certain ideals transcend individual life, in acknowledging and publicising this notion

[35] Philippe Mestre, 'Allocution de M. Philippe Mestre, ministre des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre pour la réception du 11 novembre 1993 à l'Institution Nationale des invalides,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 622, octobre-novembre-décembre 1993, pp. 11-12, p. 12.

[36] The experience of World War One veterans has been termed a "critical example" of a search for meaning. Peter G. Coleman, Airi Hautamaki and Andrei Podolskij, 'Trauma, reconciliation and generativity: The stories told by European war veterans,' in Jeffrey Dean Webster and Barbara K. Haight (eds.), *Critical advances in reminiscence work: From theory to application*, New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2002, pp. 218-232, p. 220.

veterans (probably unwittingly) helped justify the deaths of the Great War - the discourse of 'sacrifice' was invented for this very reason.

The idea of 'sacrifice' has remained a powerful and influential force well beyond the environment of the World War One aftermath for which it was developed. While the immense symbolic force of the concept was intended to aid veterans of 1914-1918 come to terms with wartime death, *anciens combattants* have continued to advocate the notion of 'dying for' long after the (immediate) wounds of the first global conflict have healed. In other words, the discourse of trauma healing has endured well beyond the trauma. Of course, the dead of subsequent wars are also believed to have 'died for a cause' and their comrades have written as much about them as about their Great War forebears, but the *poilus* have remained the central reference for veteran commentary throughout the decades, as illustrated by Mestre's comments. What does the fact that veterans of later wars have appropriated their forebears' discourse of trauma healing reveal about this language? Has this appropriation devalued the language, or strengthened it? This thesis suggests, in line with Pablo Jedlowski's comments that narrative constitutes a means of coming to terms with the past in a given discursive context[37] and Mosse's observation that the Myth of the War Experience could not have survived if it had not "met a real need,"[38] that the language developed to deal with the first modern, industrialised, global war and its unprecedented number of casualties continued to resonate with those facing the trauma of other twentieth century conflicts.

The veterans' appropriation and espousal of notions of 'sacrifice' and 'dying for' present certain problems. Firstly, the 'meaning' of wartime death was discussed post-war and posthumously. As a result of this retrospective and subjective attempt to legitimise the slaughter, certain causes were prioritised by veteran-activists while others were rejected. Secondly, while the same causes are constantly reiterated as

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[37] Pablo Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology: Themes and issues,' *Time and Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2001, pp. 29-44, p. 33.
[38] George L. Mosse, 'National cemeteries and national revival: The cult of the fallen soldiers in Germany,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 14, no. 1, January 1979, pp. 1-20, p. 2.

part of the unchanging pattern of veteran discourse, veterans consciously choose which particular cause/s to promote each Armistice Day. It could be argued that the selectivity involved in promoting reasons for sacrifice undermines the legitimacy of the process: what gives advocates the right to favour one cause over another? The third issue is the notion of 'dying in vain.' Positioned as the antithesis of 'dying for a cause,' the concept is used by veterans as an alternative method of motivating the state and population to heed the legacy of the fallen. Rather than seeking to inspire the living to emulate the fallen, this discourse reprimands survivors for failing to satisfy the expectations of those who died. While both ideas aspire to better contemporary society, one mobilises the war dead in a positive way and the other is condemnatory. There is no discussion in the veteran press regarding 'responsible' mobilisation of the war dead; the power to conjure the dead is simply considered as a right central to the veterans' very identity.

The second means by which the French state attempted to help survivors accept World War One was commemoration. As death existed from the beginning of the war, so too did ceremonies of mourning. These first commemorative services were generally private, carried out by individual families or communities to remember their own fallen, and often held in cemeteries situated outside the church (but without bodies to bury), reflecting the religious revival which occurred throughout France during the war.[39] However, so many soldiers died that the traditionally individual and private loss of a family member became a shared experience. After all, "who in France at that time […] did not lose a husband, a brother, a father, a grandfather or a close relative? One only need read the inscriptions on village monuments to realise that every family was touched by the 1 400 000 dead."[40] The phenomenon of omnipresent fatality did not necessarily banalise individual death; in fact, Capdevila and Voldman have suggested that faced with the anonymity of mass

[39] For more information regarding the war-religion relationship, see Becker, *La guerre et la foi*. Rémi Dalisson saw in these spontaneous festivals "precursors" to Armistice Day. Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' p. 9.
[40] General D. Surville (Président National), 'Editorial: 8 mai et 11 novembre,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 615, septembre-octobre 1992, p. 3.

death, communities actually placed special emphasis on commemorative services as a way of making up for and overcoming the enormity of loss.[41]

Collective ceremonies were able to provide the symbolism necessary to accept the reality of mass death and the new form of grief which accompanied it. As Mosse wrote, through commemoration, the war dead became emblems with which people could identify.[42] Communities gathered together with unprecedented intensity to mourn fallen inhabitants, bringing private sentiment into the public arena. This activity led Jay Winter to argue that during this period commemorating became an act of citizenship through its ability to affirm the morality and unity of a particular group while excluding outsiders.[43] It is thus evident that commemoration of the dead proved to be one of the major ways in which the French people attempted to cope with their wartime losses.

As Olivier Faron remarked, mourning animates individuals.[44] This was true of World War One France: as the number of victims increased, so too did agitation for official recognition of personal loss and the untimely disappearance of what appeared to be an entire generation.[45] State representatives proved increasingly willing to listen to public opinion, showing that for politicians, civilians and ex-servicemen alike, the need to remember and commemorate the war dead developed exponentially. Despite not being "immune" to the sensitivity surrounding the issue of the war dead, governments had made little progress in their treatment since the *Ancien Régime*.[46] However, faced with the horrors of trench warfare and the realisation that, as one veteran put it, "whoever we are, whether we want it or not,

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[41] Capdevila and Voldman, 'Rituels funéraires de sociétés en guerre 1914-1945,' p. 301.
[42] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 36.
[43] Winter, 'Facets of commemoration during and after the Great War,' p. 65.
[44] Olivier Faron, 'Le deuil des vivants,' in Collectif, *Encyclopédie de la Grande guerre 1914-1918*, Paris: Bayard, 2004, pp. 1113-1123, p. 1113.
[45] Sporadic, isolated commemorations such as those carried out during the 1870-1871 War were insufficient after World War One. Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory in modern France 1789-1996*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 214. Public demand also challenged state attitudes towards the bodies of the fallen. Yves Pourcher, 'La fouille des champs d'honneur,' *Terrain. Revue de l'ethnologie de l'Europe*, no. 20, 1993, pp. 37-56, p. 6 [online version].
[46] Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 64.

these dead would dominate our lives,"[47] prominent religious figures, politicians, writers and businessmen began as early as 1915 to debate how to glorify and perpetuate the memory of the war dead. Suggestions included commemorations, religious services and the construction of war memorials.[48]

For some pundits, the loss was too great to overcome.[49] In this vein, while commemoration of the dead soldiers became a way for the state to sublimate the people's loss,[50] patriotic ceremonies and symbolism could never entirely compensate for personal tragedy. As one anonymous veteran affirmed in 1960 (in other words, decades after World War One but during the Algerian War):

> We definitely support the inauguration of monuments across the four corners of France to honour the heroism of our men. But whatever we do will never be able to sufficiently pay tribute to the sacrifice of such heroes… The 'rear' will never erect enough expiatory monuments to compensate for the errors paid for by those at the 'front.'[51]

However, despite realising the inadequacy of commemoration to repay the massive debt, the ideas and expectations of politicians and communities led to the invention

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[47] Pierre Dumas (du 9e R.I.), 'Souvenirs de Pierre Dumas sur le 11 novembre 1918,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants*, no. 121, 3e trimestre 1979, p. 1.

[48] A well-documented example of the deliberations which pervaded intellectual circles is Jean Ajalbert's 1916 campaign, in which the lawyer-writer called for official recognition for fallen troops. In addition to the articles he penned, he invited distinguished Frenchmen and -women to contribute their ideas on the subject. On receiving multitudinous responses, he commented: "I had not hoped for so many replies, either in number or in detail. Everyone's eagerness, and the variety of points of view, tend to confirm that this is a topical subject." Jean Ajalbert, 'Préface,' in Jean Ajalbert (ed.), *Comment glorifier les morts de la Patrie? Opinions MM. A. Besnard, R. Boylesve, H. Bergson, J.-E. Blanche, F. Brunot, C. Chenu... etc., etc. Le projet d'Edmond Rostand*, Paris: Georges Crès et Cie, 1916, p. vi.

[49] The survivors could never hope to repay the sacrifice: "It would be impossible to return the admirable heroes who died in the night to the light. Obligatory ingratitude is our cruel destiny. Millions of nameless dead have lit suns close to burning out, and nothing will conquer their shadows." Emile Saint-Auban, 'Lettre à Jean Ajalbert écrit à Paris le 14 juin 1916,' in Ajalbert, *Comment glorifier les morts de la Patrie*, p. 87.

[50] Stéphane Tison, 'Traumatisme de guerre et commémoration. Comment Champenois et Sarthois sont-ils sortis de la guerre? (1870-1940),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 216, 'Guerres et après-guerres. "14-18" et Indochine,' octobre 2004, pp. 5-30, p. 11.

[51] Anon., 'Maintenir l'union des générations du feu, garder le souvenir des nos morts: tels sont les devoirs impérieux des Anciens Combattants,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 45e année, nouvelle série, no. 726, samedi 2 juillet 1960, p. 1.

of practices designed to remember and pay tribute to the war dead.[52] Commemoration kept the memory of the fallen alive; and conversely, the war dead provided a particularly compelling reason for commemoration.

Obviously a key occasion for commemoration was the Armistice of 11 November 1918. For Olivier Largeault of the A.G.M.G., the date's celebratory aspect constituted one important reason for maintaining its pre-eminence in the public conscience: "Bonfires, torchlight processions with flags in front, the vibrant *Marseillaise* sung by a jubilant crowd - who, among our old generations, would dare erase this extraordinary memory from their minds?"[53] Largeault's use of "old generations" is telling; as a key member of the A.G.M.G. during the 1960s, he aimed to integrate the generations of World Wars One and Two through imagined and mythologised memory of the Armistice. Yet more imperative than remembering the festivity which concluded the war was remembering the war itself. Precisely because of its exceptional nature and the enormity of the cataclysm which it brought to an end, veterans believed that the French state and population should pay tribute to the Armistice for posterity. Hence in the aftermath of the Great War, veterans campaigned for state recognition of *11 novembre*'s significance, first as the official celebration of the Armistice and then as a public holiday. *Ancien combattant* journals followed the political decision-making process avidly, contributing comments of their own in an attempt to encourage a favourable outcome.

Political debate around the second anniversary of the Armistice focused on whether *11 novembre* should be celebrated on the actual day, or on the closest Sunday.[54] In sarcastically remarking that nobody knew why 26 December was celebrated, the

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[52] For Eric Leed, ritualising and memorialising constituted key responses to social estrangement after World War One. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 3.

[53] O. Largeault (Président Général Adjoint), '11 novembre 1918,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, octobre 1965, no. 432, p. 1.

[54] Gaston About, 'Le 11 novembre doit-il être déclaré jour férié?' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 3e année, no. 126, dimanche 25 décembre 1920, p. 1.

U.N.C.'s Louis Dauphin made his opinion clear.[55] In 1922, after veteran-activists had boycotted the 1921 ceremonies[56] and "fought" for "a whole year […] for *11 novembre* to be considered an official festival, claiming this day only in order to make it a gift to the country,"[57] the French government finally declared the date an official public holiday to be celebrated annually on the day of the German surrender.[58] The commemoration of *11 novembre* was thus designated as the celebration *par excellence* of the Armistice, and of the World War One experience in general.[59] The French state was reluctant to allow the *anciens combattants* total commemorative freedom to promote their memory of war, especially given the anti-parliamentarianism rife within certain sections of their community.[60] However, as Rémi Dalisson has remarked, it was in the interests of both the state and the veterans to work together in creating a commemoration of the war: the state could influence and 'republicanise' veterans' memory and the veterans could receive financial support.[61]

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[55] Louis Dauphin, '11 novembre et 26 décembre,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 2e année, no. 36, dimanche 18 avril 1920, p. 1.
[56] Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' p. 12.
[57] Anon., 'Le 11 Novembre,' *Bulletin de l'Association Générale des Mutiles de la Guerre. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, no. 81, novembre 1922, pp. 345-346, p. 345. The use of the word 'fought' is particularly interesting, demonstrating that despite its relative homogeneity and acceptance (in comparison to memory of the Second World War for example, whose multitudinous meanings and appropriations manifested themselves in the famous *batailles pour la mémoire* of the immediate post-war era between Communists and Gaullists), memory of World War One also had its nuances. The phrase '*batailles pour la mémoire*' is taken from the title of Gérard Namer's magisterial work, *Batailles pour la mémoire: la commémoration en France 1944-1982*, Paris: SPAG, 1983.
[58] The public declaration of this decision was published in the July 1922 issue of the *Voix du Combattant* (16 juillet 1922, no. 155). The idea was made official by the law of 24 October 1922. Chemins de Mémoire, <http://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/page/affichecitoyennete.php?idCitoyen=1&idLang=fr> accessed 10 January 2011. Reflecting wartime trends for the persistence of local customs in war commemorations, certain regions of France adopted Armistice Day some years after its official inauguration as a national public holiday. In the religious Aveyron region, for example, locals preferred to mourn their dead on All Saints' Day, the traditional Catholic day of the dead. Pierre Douziech, 'Les cérémonies commémoratives de la Grande Guerre dans l'Aveyron,' *Etudes aveyronnaises. Recueil des travaux de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron*, 2003, pp. 173-178, p. 175.
[59] Maurice Crubellier, *La mémoire des Français: recherches d'histoire culturelle*, Paris: Henri Veyrier et Kronos, 1991, p. 15.
[60] Douziech, 'Les cérémonies commémoratives de la Grande Guerre dans l'Aveyron,' p. 175.
[61] Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' p. 11.

The celebration of *11 novembre* fuses many meanings because of the variety of constituents which the date commemorates. In the first instance, Armistice Day marks the anniversary of several positive events including the cessation of hostilities, French and Allied victory, the renewal of peace and hopes for the future.[62] Conversely, the date also implies bereavement for the war dead and reminds the population of the "cruel hours"[63] of World War One. The varied connotations of Armistice Day are further complicated by the fact that, after subsequent wars, the date's meaning has been expanded to represent the horror of warfare in general and commemorate the fallen of all wars in which France had participated. In other words, meanings attached to Armistice Day change over time and in different contexts,[64] and certain opinions do not necessarily hold true for all *anciens combattants* or all veteran associations.

Yet despite the manifold events commemorated in *11 novembre*, the pattern of veteran discourse has remained constant, with veteran-journalists tending to reiterate the same themes continuously across associations and between generations of fire. Veterans see in Armistice Day an opportunity to promote their primary causes: values, unity and peace. One line of thought promotes the constructive elements generated by victory. Some veteran writing has underscored the aspect of national

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[62] A series of dualities are at work: does *11 novembre* celebrate Victory or the dead, the Republic or the army, queried Dalisson. Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' p. 14. Despite recognising the various meanings attributed to the date, Janine Bourdin stated that for the *anciens combattants*, interwar Armistice Day ceremonies were unequivocally "for the dead." Janine Bourdin, 'Les anciens combattants et la célébration du 11 novembre 1938,' in René Rémond and Janine Bourdin (eds.), *La France et les Français en 1938-1939*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1978, pp. 95-114, pp. 95-96. It has also been shown that the people of the Ardennes region also wanted to celebrate peace rather than victory. Didier Bigorgne, 'Les pacifistes et le 11 Novembre dans l'entre-deux-guerres,' *Terres ardennaises*, vol. 12, 1992, pp. 42-48, p. 43.

[63] Anon., 'Trente-et-unième anniversaire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 188, samedi 29 novembre 1949, p. 1.

[64] As with any structured event, the meaning of commemoration is open to manipulation and restructure depending on the contemporary context. In part, the multiplicity of interpretations stems from the fact that each participant "makes his own festival." Sue Harris, 'Festivals and *fêtes populaires*,' in William Kidd and Siân Reynolds (eds.), *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 220-228, p. 227. For the changing meanings of Armistice Day in Britain, see Adrian Gregory, *The silence of memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946*, Oxford; Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994, esp. Ch 4 'The undertones of war: Armistice Day in the 1930s.'

grandeur resulting from Armistice Day 1918, which as "the last electrifying date in our History"[65] represented the victory of French independence.[66] As the commemoration of such an extraordinary occasion, Armistice Day functioned to regularly demonstrate the glory of victory and "remind the world what magnificent prestige surrounded France" at the time.[67] Victory was to be savoured, treasured and remembered, as exemplified in this 1926 U.N.C. article:

> Just as the woman who brings a baby to the world forgets her recent sufferings and holds her newborn in maternal embrace, so we, *Poilus*, heedless of the four years of anguish and torture, will proudly lift our Victory in our arms and show her to the world with faith and naïve pride so all may love her.
> Our Victory also signified avenged Justice.[68]

Other commentators have remarked upon expectations and wishes for the post-war era ushered in by the Armistice. Also worthy of remembrance and celebration was the "intense joy of the *Ceasefire*":[69] on Armistice Day 1918, "regardless of the tests she had undergone, for one minute at the ringing of the bells - except for the widows and the parents in mourning - France seemed to forget everything."[70] In other

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[65] Edmond Bloch, 'Anniversaires,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 48e année, nouvelle série, no. 893, samedi 9 novembre 1963, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

[66] Examples of other veteran articles which have focused on French grandeur include: Amédée Chivot, '11 novembre 1918: la Victoire! Commémoration du quarantième anniversaire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 43e année, nouvelle série, no. 641, samedi 26 juillet 1958, pp. 1 et 3; Jean Lucibello (Secrétaire de la Fédération de la Seine, Membre du Bureau National), 'Pour un 11 novembre d'union et d'action patriotique,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 96, octobre 1953, p. 2. In this article, Lucibello also aligned Armistice Day with consideration for the war dead and hope for peace.

[67] Chivot, '11 novembre 1918: la Victoire!' p. 3.

[68] L. Schaepelynck (Vice-Président de l'U.N.C.), 'C'est aujourd'hui que Victoire a huit ans,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 8e année, no. 384, samedi 11 novembre 1926, p. 1.

[69] Anon., 'Trente-et-unième anniversaire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 188, samedi 29 novembre 1949, p. 1.

[70] Jacques Meyer, '11 novembre 1918 - 11 novembre 1972: espoirs et réalités,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 325, novembre 1972, p. 10.

words, on that day euphoria momentarily countered the suffering of (some) French people.

However, despite their proliferation in veteran writing, references to the positive role of the Armistice in French history and the popular excitement which greeted the announcement of 11 November 1918 are almost always counterbalanced by allusion to the cost of war: the dead. In this way, it is the centrality of the dead to Armistice Day which is responsible for the invariability of veteran discourse because without recognising the sacrifice of the dead, the war experience has no 'meaning.' For example, one northern French *ancien combattant* comment from 1927 demonstrates just how briefly the joy lasted on Armistice Day 1918:

> When the bugle sounded the *Ceasefire* on Armistice Day 1918, an immense happiness filled the hearts of the *poilus*. Climbing up onto the parapet of the trenches to fill their lungs with the air of liberation in order to shout their joy and celebrate the end of their suffering, the first thing they noticed was the cadavers of their unfortunate brothers-in-arms spread across the battlefield.
> And their joy was less pure; their hearts tightened in thinking about those who had awaited this historic day for so long but who had not lived to see it.
> And in their thoughts, the *poilus* associated their brothers-in-arms who fell at their sides with this victory. They saw them again, smiling and confident, or throwing themselves into the attack and falling, mortally wounded by a bullet or murdered by an evil burst of shells.[71]

These words were pronounced by Lieven, President of a northern French *mutilés*' association, before the Bergues war memorial on Armistice Day 1927. Later that

[71] Lieven (Président de la Section de Bergues), 'Allocution au Monument de 1870,' in Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Bergues,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1. The film *J'accuse* powerfully depicts the soldiers' rapid change in attitude from jubilation upon hearing of the Armistice to depression when they consider the human cost of the war. Abel Gance, *J'accuse [That they may live]*, trans. Pierre van Paassen, video recording, Mad Phat Enterprises Inc., Bakersfield, C.A., [1938]. In his consideration of commemoration in La Sarthe, Stéphane Tison also noted how quickly euphoria turned to sadness among the civilian population. Stéphane Tison, 'Les commémorations de la Grande Guerre dans la Sarthe 1918-1922 (étude d'un quotidien *La Sarthe* du 11 novembre 1918 au 31 décembre 1922),' *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine*, sér. 3, no. 13, 1993, pp. 145-160, p. 150.

same day during the post-service toasts in Lille, Aimé Goudaert, long-serving President of the U.N.C. du Nord, repeated his colleague's sentiments.[72] Such *ancien combattant* writing reiterates the role which the fallen played in securing victory, indelibly linking Armistice Day, as the commemoration of 11 November 1918, with the war dead and necessitating inclusion of the fallen in any discussion of *11 novembre*.

For many World War One veterans, therefore, the date lent itself absolutely to contemplation and reflection on their fallen comrades. As an anonymous northern French writer explained: "Certainly all the men of war, all those who have suffered in their skin or in their affections, will have similar thoughts on Armistice Day: they will evoke the horror of war and the brothers-in-arms who fell so that France might live."[73] This internalised and private remembrance of the dead - termed 'passive' mobilisation of the dead in this thesis - was translated into public space through interaction with others, changing in the process from real to imagined memory of the fallen and from 'passive' to 'active' mobilisation. When ex-soldiers of 1914-1918 such as Lieven and Goudaert mobilised the dead in their *11 novembre* speeches, they did so through imagined memory.

The meanings which such orators and writers initially imposed on World War One and its conclusion hugely influenced how later veterans viewed its commemoration. For this reason, the war dead have remained central to Armistice Day in mythologised memory, as well. Perfectly demonstrating the perseverance of these interpretations in the *anciens combattants*' mythologised memory is the following

[72] Some of Goudaert's speech reads: "But after having tasted the un-awaited sweetness of the resurrection for a few moments, after having lived a few of those unforgettable, indescribable minutes, the drunkenness and the delight of the awakening wore off. They slowly lowered their eyes to the pockmarked and bloody ground, and in the infernal chaos, that horrible magma, they found the atrocious and pitiable line of cadavers of their brothers-in-arms: the dead… The Great Dead." Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution pour les vins d'honneur,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice a Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3.

[73] Anon., 'Le 11 novembre et la T.S.F.,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 66, 9 novembre 1928, p. 4

description of the reasons for celebrating Armistice Day, penned in 1971 by the former General Secretary of the A.G.M.G.:

> It is in Memory of this intense communion of all French people, closely knit through glory and pain, that we meet every year on this anniversary day of Armistice Day [1918]. We meet to honour the memory of the departed and to celebrate the presence of the survivors of this titanic battle forever engraved into the annals of the History of France and the world.[74]

The author mentioned the cult of the war dead, the popular euphoria of the Armistice and the feeling of unity it invoked, the surviving veterans and the historical relevance of the Great War, all elements absorbed into the *anciens combattants*' imagined and mythologised memories.

The multiple events commemorated on 'Armistice Day' mean that the war dead constitute but one reason for memorialisation alongside elements such as French and Allied victory, celebration, and aspirations for peace. It is, however, undeniable that the fallen are considered primary in this remembrance of war.[75] The centrality of the dead, combined with their symbolic potency, means that they are in fact used to underscore and promote the other elements of Armistice Day, and to add historical and emotional depth to veteran demands and opinions. The close bonds which exist between the veterans and their dead companions mean that, despite their physical separation, such an exchange is able to occur. Drawing on the dead during commemoration of war constitutes a powerful tactic of overcoming trauma by fulfilling a *devoir de mémoire*.

The war dead constitute the primary 'presence' in Armistice Day ceremonies. They are, in fact, the commemoration's very *raison d'être*: more than fifty years after the

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[74] L. Karrer (Secrétaire Général), '11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 494, octobre 1971, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1.

[75] Inherent to any commemoration of war are the dead, attested Bédarida. François Bédarida, 'Commémorations et mémoire collective,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 11-13, p. 12.

1918 Armistice, Paul Manet of the U.F.A.C. emphasised this point, writing that, "Regardless of the decades that pass, the memory of them [the fallen] occupies an indescribable place in our minds. The reason why we go and contemplate at the foot of these war memorials every Armistice Day is to honour these men, victims of a cataclysm called war."[76] In Manet's view, remembering the Armistice is secondary to remembering the men who died to procure it. Thus in Armistice Day celebrations the disappeared constitute an 'absent presence,' brought into the fold of the ceremony through specific manipulation of space and ritual. As Annette Becker has judged, the combination of ceremonial rituals and speeches (which never fail to recognise the dead) and war memorials (which act as their physical embodiment) actually allows the war dead to inhabit space on such occasions.[77] The incorporation of the war dead into ceremony simultaneously honours them and works towards minimising survivor trauma by lauding their sacrifice.

While the war dead are the most important 'actors' in Armistice Day ceremonies, the participation of other groups is also imperative; basically, before veterans can mobilise the fallen, they need to mobilise the living. Encouraging large crowds to attend services of remembrance constitutes the most visible and tangible expression of the veterans' *devoir de mémoire* towards the fallen. On the one hand, reaching more people is seen as a greater fulfilment of the veterans' responsibility to ensure the sacrifice of their fallen comrades be memorialised and respected.[78] On the other hand, the attendance of spectators serves to remind the population of the existence

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[76] Paul Manet (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 55e année, nouvelle série, no. 1240, samedi 7 novembre 1970, p. 1.

[77] Annette Becker, 'Les monuments aux morts: des œuvres d'art au service du souvenir,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 144, novembre 2004, pp. 7-10, p. 7.

[78] Even participation in *14 juillet* [Bastille Day] has been deemed an act of homage to the memory of the dead, although as the war commemoration *par excellence* Armistice Day obviously best fulfills this function. For example in 1965, an A.R.A.C. journalist wrote of Bastille Day: "Veterans and war victims, who have done so much for the *Patrie* during different wars, will not spare any effort in ensuring that the great republican and democratic ideals symbolised by *14 juillet* triumph. // In fulfilling this task, they will remain loyal to the memory of their glorious dead." Anon., 'Vive le 14 juillet! Donner tout son sens à sa commémoration,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 237, juillet 1965, p. 12.

of the veteran community.[79] There are four main groups targeted by veteran-activists: (pro-veteran) political representatives, youth, the general public, and members of their own community. The latter two groups are considered in this chapter.[80]

There are multiple explanations for the primacy of remembrance services in fulfilling the veterans' duty to the war dead. Firstly, participation ensures the survival of the commemoration and the values which it promotes, aiding veteran attempts to propagate this information and fulfil their *devoir*. As a veteran-writer of the U.F. wrote in 1946:

> In inviting the French people to commemorate the memory of Armistice Day 1918 with them, the *anciens combattants* want to make this day live again in our spirits and our hearts, this day which ended those superhuman trials endured by millions of men and ensured the health of France and of the world.[81]

Without spectators, commemoration's attempts to encourage communal interaction and disseminate messages would be nullified. In other words, apart from the fallen, the most important actor in the national commemoration of *11 novembre* is the crowd.[82] Even without actually *partaking* in the commemoration - except for singing the national anthem[83] and partaking in the minute of silence,[84] few

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[79] In recognition of the power of mass gatherings, the journal of the U.N.C. du Nord encouraged its members to take part in the upcoming 14 July 1926 parade in Lille and "demonstrate through our numbers that we are a force to be reckoned with." Anon., [n.t.], *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 60, juillet 1926, p. 1.

[80] Youth is the focus of a major part of Chapter Seven 'Mobilising the war dead to inspire civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism.'

[81] Anon., 'Manifeste du 11 Novembre,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 9, novembre 1946, p. 3.

[82] Martine Boiteux, 'Fête et révolution: des célébrations aux commémorations,' *Annales de la recherche urbaine*, no. 43, 1989, pp. 45-54, p. 45. Julien Drouart reached the same conclusion in his study of street demonstrations in early-1920s northern France, considering demonstrators to be the most important actors in street manifestations even though the organisers hold responsibility for the event's apparition. Julien Drouart, 'La Manifestation de rue à Lille (novembre 1919-juillet 1926),' Mémoire de maîtrise, Université Charles de Gaulle, 2003-2004, p. 38.

[83] Singing the anthem constitutes one moment when the barriers between spectators and actors disappear. Drouart, 'La Manifestation de rue à Lille,' p. 71. Pierre Favre, in his work on

Armistice Day rituals actively involve the crowd - as the recipients of the historical and moral messages, spectators are intrinsic to its enactment.[85] The crowd's importance was underscored by the U.N.C.'s François Malval, commenting on the Armistice Day 1922 parade: the presence of school children and "numerous patriotic and corporate associations, confirm[ed] that France knew how to remember painful hours."[86] In Malval's summation, public attendance equated to recognition and acknowledgment of the past.

Secondly, and probably even more importantly, annual commemoration of the fallen counters people's potential for forgetting, as Surville recognised in 2003:

> Commemorating an event is the occasion, if not to relive it then at least to evoke it and remind yourself of the faces of those who disappeared in the torment. The large majority of the population remains ignorant of the meaning of such and such a celebration, only concerned about the public holiday aspect of the anniversary in question. Without reminding the population of the facts every year on this occasion, they are in danger of forgetting them altogether.[87]

The veteran community considers the human ability to forget or consciously delete memories a crime when it comes to warfare and its victims. *Ancien combattant* journalists persistently warn against forgetfulness and reiterate their points of view in order to instil 'memory' of war in society.[88] This memorialisation of warfare is

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demonstration, has equated the public's role to that of theatre spectators. Pierre Favre, *La manifestation*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1990, p. 23.

[84] For Gregory, "it was the crowd who gave the Silence [in Britain] its force." Gregory, *The silence of memory*, p. 131.

[85] Namer described the crowd's participation as "active-passive" because it partakes of moments of passive engagement (for example, applause) but also active (for example, singing). Gérard Namer, *La commémoration en France de 1945 à nos jours*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987, p. 156.

[86] François Malval, 'Le 11 novembre 1922: Emouvante Manifestation de Solidarité Nationale et d'Entente Interalliée,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 4e année, no. 157, dimanche 30 juillet 1922, p. 1.

[87] D. Surville, 'Mémoire,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 670, juin-septembre 2003, p. 31.

[88] Public forgetfulness was one of the themes raised in Abel Gance's 1938 version of *J'accuse*. The guardians of Douaumont mournfully declared that few people "bother to come" to the site anymore. In comparison, the protagonist Jean Diaz, and Flo, the girlfriend of one of the fallen soldiers, are positioned as people "who remember." Their campaign for peace, undertaken on behalf of the dead

necessary in order to preserve "the faces" of the disappeared. For Surville, a veteran of the Algerian War, the fallen are an integral component of *11 novembre*, the occasion set aside to commemorate a war which was fought decades before his own.

The third reason why remembrance services are so important in fulfilling the veterans' 'duty of memory' to the war dead is because they necessitate a physical coming-together of individuals who otherwise may not interact. During commemoration, people converge for a time in one place with the express purpose of participating in an act of communion with their fellows. Such gatherings generate interaction and dialogue, most often centred on the event being commemorated. Speaking after the Armistice Day 1926 ceremony, Aimé Goudaert of the U.N.C. du Nord emphasised:

> I am so happy to be at this *poilus*' banquet with you - and there are more of you than last year. This banquet is an opportunity for men who ate from the same bowl and sat on the same pile of manure for five years to meet up, speak of their common memories and forget what divides them.[89]

The northern French veterans here met on Armistice Day to partake in a moment of (real) memory exchange. The temporality of commemoration is obvious in this segment: assembling and socialising on Armistice Day leads *anciens combattants* to remember their common experiences and create connections (including an acceptable homogenous narrative, or imagined memory) for the present and future. In this way, the process of communion engendered by ceremony is not restricted to inter-veteran unity but ideally enacted on a wider scale: through remembrance of their past, French people should be able to (re)discover national cohesion. In 1978, for example, one veteran estimated that the "official ceremonies were not artificially thrown upon an indifferent France. On the contrary I believe that this sixtieth anniversary of the Armistice of 1918, enlarged into a National Day of

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against the war-fevered population, proves that they are indeed alone in remembering the horrors of World War One. Gance, *J'accuse*.

[89] Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution au Banquet,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 65, décembre 1926, pp. 2-3, p. 3.

Remembrance, has profoundly affected the life of the nation."[90] For such authors, Armistice Day is thus an opportunity to unite people through 'memory' of war.

Despite the crowd's centrality to Armistice Day, veteran commentary rarely explicitly recognises it as an entity, tending instead to portray the crowd as an anonymous, faceless mass and a mere recipient of appeals designed to motivate the public into action.[91] The situation is complicated by the fact that some veteran-writers believe that *11 novembre* is a celebration of the soldiers' success through which "the French people […] can be proud of what France was"[92] while others incorporate the entire society into the commemoration by referring to Armistice Day as a "day of French pride."[93]

Failing to acknowledge the crowd also stems from the common plaint, which originated during the Great War and which has been espoused in veteran writing by members of all generations of fire, that those of the home front cannot possibly comprehend the combatant experience, no matter how much instruction they receive.[94] As Georges Pineau summarised in 1927, "the crowd which has not seen war cannot understand."[95] This conviction lends an element of contradiction to veteran attempts to memorialise warfare, yet the idea of the combatant-civilian

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[90] Jean-Maurice Martin (Président-Délégué de l'U.N.C.), '60 ans après: 11 novembre 1978: du passé à l'histoire,' *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1440, décembre 1978, p. 4.

[91] Portraying the crowd as a disembodied abstraction rather than an assortment of living individuals echoes traditional historical views of the crowd (whether sympathetic or not). George Rudé, *The crowd in history: A study of popular disturbances in France and England 1730-1848*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1981, p. 9.

[92] Edmond Bloch, '11 novembre: jour de la fierté française,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 47e année, nouvelle série, no. 844, samedi 17 novembre 1962, pp. 1 et 3, p. 3.

[93] Bloch, '11 novembre: jour de la fierté française.'

[94] In the opening pages of his wartime novel *Face à face*, Jacques Péricard explains that he is writing the book is so that the "good people of the home front" are able to understand the men of war. The break between 'those' of the front and 'those' of the rear is so wide, in his opinion, that "it sometimes seems to us that we are not even speaking the same language anymore." Lieutenant Jacques P. Péricard, *Face à face: souvenirs et impressions d'un soldat de la Grande Guerre. Avec une préface de M. Maurice Barrès de l'Académie française et 35 dessins de la plume de M. Paul Thiriat*, Paris: Libraire Payot et Cie., 1916, pp. 19 and 21.

[95] Georges Pineau (de l'Association des Ecrivains Anciens Combattants), 'L'esprit combattant,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 8e année, no. 436, vendredi 11 novembre 1927, pp. 1 et 3, p. 3.

divide has remained inherent to veteran 'memory' of war throughout the decades. If civilians were considered unable to understand the World War One experience, it follows that they would be similarly incapable of identifying wholly with the meaning of the Armistice. This sentiment is illustrated by one *Journal des Combattants* journalist, writing of 11 November 1918 soon after the termination of World War Two:

> You can try to explain to non-combatants how it felt to the men in the trenches who heard the *Ceasefire* sound out, that moment when they were sure the war had finished. These people do not understand! They cannot understand the exact meaning of a resurrection because they did not witness the *poilus* shaking hands, embracing each other with joy and emotion, sure that they were going home to see their families again![96]

The inability of many veterans to communicate their experiences to civilians often compounds their trauma; while the act of naming trauma aids in its recovery,[97] denying its existence negates this possibility.[98] Despite their confusion regarding the place of the "people" in the Armistice Day ceremony, and their conviction that civilians can never really understand the meaning of the *Ceasefire*, the veteran press constantly reiterates the necessity of widespread attendance.

However, public turnouts at Armistice Day have over the decades often been lamentably low. Minimal attendance concerns the *anciens combattants* because without the crowd's acknowledgement of the meanings inherent in commemoration, veterans are unable to properly enact their *devoir de mémoire* or benefit from the healing it offers by way of transforming trauma into some greater good. As the

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[96] P. Beauvilliers, 'La célébration du 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 187, samedi 22 octobre 1949, p. 1.

[97] Gina Ross, *Beyond the trauma vortex: The media's role in healing fear, terror and violence*, Berkeley, C.A.: North Atlantic Books, 2003, p. 3.

[98] Hook, Elizabeth Snyder, 'Awakening from war: History, trauma and testimony in Heinrich Böll,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 136-153, p. 137.

President of a northern French veterans' group recently admitted, "we contemplate their [the soldiers'] sacrifice but tell ourselves that Memory is not the privilege of veterans. It also belongs to other citizens… of which there will be few [at the commemoration] apart from local politicians."[99] Intense disappointment was also evident in Aimé Goudaert's 1926 speech to the *Lillois* people: "All you who came with us to pay respect to those whose memory is doubly dear to us, you can share the title of 'Friends of the Dead' with the *anciens combattants* because there are but few of you who have not forgotten."[100] Thus, because of their rarity, individuals who partake of the *11 novembre* communion are welcomed and respected at veteran functions.

Just as attending remembrance services can be seen as tangible proof of a community's adherence to certain values,[101] non-attendance can signify the opposite. For this reason, small crowds stoke veteran fears of waning public interest in memory of war and cause them much concern. Poor turnout is affronting, as veterans deem attending a ceremony once a year is considered small repayment of the soldiers' trauma and sacrifice.[102] Non-observance of *11 novembre* rituals is also considered disrespectful. "How does one explain that the war dead are the most neglected?" asked the *Journal des Combattants* in 1955, reporting that some *communes* had held no ceremony and laid no wreath for the war dead on either All Saints' or All Souls' Days.[103] Despite the fact these dates are consecrated not uniquely to the victims of conflict but to all who have died, the *Journal* believed proper tribute should have been paid to both the war dead and civilians.

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[99] A. Leweurs, (Président), '11 novembre…' *Le Combattant du Pas-de-Calais et du Nord (Journal trimestriel de la Fédération départementale de l'Union Fédérale des A.C., de Résistants, de Victimes de Guerre (Mutilés - P.G. - Déportés - Orphelins - Veuves - Ascendants)*, no. 283, troisième trimestre 1997, p. 1.

[100] Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution pour les vins d'honneur,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 65, décembre 1926, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

[101] Namer, *La commémoration en France*, p. 150.

[102] P. Desorbaix, 'Novembre: Mois des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 62, novembre 1930, p. 1.

[103] E. Delvigne, 'Le Culte des Morts pour la France pose d'émouvants problèmes,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 40e année, nouvelle série, no. 488, samedi 15 octobre 1955, pp. 1 et 2, p. 1.

Few veterans investigate the causes of minimal attendance at Armistice Day ceremonies, possibly as a tactic of denial. Grand Papa, a regular contributor to the northern French veterans' paper *Le Mutilé des Flandres*, ventured a rare opinion on the subject. He brashly blamed the materialism of the late 1920s for the fact that "we see fewer people at the cemetery on Armistice Day than we see every day at dances or in courts whenever famous cases are trialled."[104] His criticism of the material excesses of contemporary society echoes a significant body of literature devoted to the 'Wasteland' of post-World War One Europe.[105] The *anciens combattants* are not exempt from condemnation, either: soon after the riots of May 1968 which saw French students challenge their parents' political and memorial standpoints, the General Secretary of the A.G.M.G. complained about veterans' indifference "which means that an evening of television is given precedence over a meeting or a Sunday walk, or over an Annual General Assembly."[106] The veteran press crusades against lethargy, advocating instead the value of action, community, and especially unity, particularly in respect to remembering war and its victims. Attempting to rouse the public to action has been a stalwart of veteran discourse throughout the twentieth century; the veterans draw on the dead in order to incite the population to take heed of past lessons to build a better future.

Merely attending services of remembrance is considered insufficient; veterans want people to connect with the emotion and symbolism of the date. Only with full comprehension of the tragedy can past sacrifice truly be put towards a greater good and the *ancien combattant* duty be fulfilled. Less than a decade after the Armistice, a northern French veteran forcefully reprimanded the public (and perhaps his colleagues, too) for their inexcusable lassitude: "If you thought you had paid out your debt and could now sleep in peace because someone has eloquently heaped praise on our dead, then you need to lower your head and lament over your

[104] Grand Papa, 'Il était une fois…,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres*, no. 65, 22 octobre 1928, p. 1.
[105] To use the title of T. S. Eliot's modernist masterpiece.
[106] L. Karrer (Secrétaire Général), 'Souvenir et avenir,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 474, juin 1969, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1.

decadence."[107] Spectators needed to understand the meaning of the commemoration, and particularly use the opportunity to commune with the fallen. Only with emotional engagement from the spectators can the veterans' duty be wholly achieved.

The veterans recognise that without the crowd's attendance, the celebrations hold no meaning. This argument remains valid, however, only as long as the crowd does in fact recognise and relate to the significance of the ceremonies. Public ignorance concerning the historic importance of certain dates worries veteran observers, and prompts publications which underline their significance: "The masses have perhaps forgotten its [*11 novembre*'s] origin, like they undoubtedly have for *14 juillet* [Bastille Day]. *11 novembre* remains the symbol - probably unconscious - of a country which seems to die often; of a country which continues."[108] Echoes of this 1968 comment penned by the well-known World War One veteran-writer Jacques Meyer were visible decades later when General Surville, President of the A.G.M.G., attempted to inject some levity into what he perceived as a grave situation by claiming that while people may not be aware of the true implication of commemorative dates, "everyone, young and old, is grateful for the public holiday!"[109] Veteran concern for maintaining the meaning of commemorative dates is visible across associations and generations of fire.

Perhaps even more alarming for the veteran population than a lack of familiarity with the historical importance of the commemoration is the possibility of

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[107] André Lamandé, 'L'Appel des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 27, novembre 1927, p. 1.

[108] Jacques Meyer, 'La symbolique du 11 novembre,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 229, novembre 1964, p. 12. This article was reprinted in the *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, novembre-décembre 1968. Meyer made the same point about public forgetfulness in his book *Le 11 novembre*. Jacques Meyer, *Le 11 novembre*, Paris: Hachette, 1960, p. 154.

[109] General D. Surville (Président National), 'Editorial: 8 mai et 11 novembre,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no 615, septembre-octobre 1992, p. 3. Exclamation mark in original text.

participation for the 'wrong' reasons.[110] Commemoration has a serious, honourable goal, after all:

> It is very worrying that some people only come for the 'spectacle': the presence of high-ranking personalities, prestigious brass bands, or historic reconstructions with costumes and materials from the era.
> Have these spectators understood deprivation, hunger, anguish, torture, incarceration in squalid jails?
> Are they conscious of the supreme sacrifice of the men whose names are engraved in stone?[111]

Penned in 2004 by a veteran contemplating the future of commemoration, the comment "engraved in stone" refers primarily to the dead of World War One to whom the majority of monuments were constructed (although veterans of later wars were also honoured this way, too), indicating the persistence of the 1914-1918 dead in contemporary formulations of remembrance.

However, despite understandable veteran reluctance to cater for entertainment-minded members of the public, recent advances in memory work demonstrate that the past has to compete with other forms of public amusement for attention.[112] In today's consumer society, spectacle and drama are guaranteed methods of encouraging audience engagement;[113] by contrast, rites and rituals are by their very definition repetitive (necessarily resulting in a lack of originality, as well as an

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[110] Commemoration provides a space for individuals to subvert the status quo; it has been noted that people redefine or even ignore the symbolism inherent in festivity. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public memory, commemoration, and patriotism in the twentieth century*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. 15-20.

[111] Bernard Faucheur (rédacteur en chef), 'Editorial: Se souvenir encore demain…' *Cahier-Journal de l'Union Fédérale des associations*, no. 114, septembre-octobre 2004, p. 1. The author of this thesis attended Armistice Day ceremonies in Paris on Armistice Day 2007, and was interested to hear the comments of the (very few) French people in the crowd upon seeing President Nicolas Sarkozy drive past in his car. Their excitement at witnessing France's new President at close quarters far outweighed their enthusiasm for the military parade or the speeches.

[112] However, entertainment constitutes only one of four key elements in Frank E. Manning's definition of 'celebration,' regardless of whether organisers are conscious of it or not. Frank E. Manning, 'Cosmos and chaos: Celebration in the modern world,' in Frank E. Manning (ed.), *The celebration of society: Perspectives on contemporary cultural performance*, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983, pp. 3-30, p. 4.

[113] For example: Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, pp. 235-236.

absence of specificity and occasional waning public interest[114]). Maintaining interest is vital because, as one theoretician of commemoration noted, events only truly become 'events' if they manage to capture people's attention.[115] For the veterans, though, the elements which capture public interest have little to do with war's realities. They sincerely desire that the French population engage with the inexpressible hardships and traumas of war - especially the "sacrifice of the men whose names are engraved in stone" - and respect their memory. Without this 'commitment' from the population, the veterans fail in their *devoir de mémoire* and thus mitigate the moral and emotional benefits they achieve from instructing people about war.

As well as encouraging the French public to attend, *ancien combattant* publications constantly urge veteran participation in commemorative services in order to ensure their *devoir de mémoire* is suitably executed. Throughout the decades since World War One, veterans have considered their participation imperative to *11 novembre* commemorations. As Maurice de Barral argued more than thirty years after the Armistice, attempts to "either diminish [the ceremony's] importance or splendour" or failure "to reserve [the veterans'] rightful place - in other words, first place - in all the ceremonies on this day is a sacrilege."[116] Alongside the war dead and the crowd, veterans are therefore the central 'actors' of *11 novembre*.

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[114] François Marcot, 'Rites et pratiques,' in *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: Centre régional de Publication de Paris Institut du Temps présent, 1986, pp. 31-39, p. 31; Charles Rearick, 'Festivals in modern France: The experience of the Third Republic,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 12, no. 3, July 1977, pp. 435-460, p. 446.

[115] Patrick Garcia, 'Le symptôme commémoratif: l'exemple du Bicentenaire de la Révolution française (1789),' *Cahiers de la Villa Gillet*, no. 10, 'La transmission,' novembre 1999, pp. 87-105.

[116] Maurice de Barral, 'Le 11 Novembre constitue une date majeure,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 35e année, nouvelle série, no. 239, samedi 4 novembre 1950, p. 1. Again in the year 2000 certain veteran observers believed that the state was neglecting its Bastille Day duty towards the *anciens combattants*: while politicians were seated in official tribunes between the Concorde and the Arc de Triomphe, benches were provided for the veterans at ground level. This neglect prompted one commentator to ask "Where is France going?" before reverting to the standard veteran catchphrase, underscoring France's debt to her soldiers: "We try hard to remind people that these men gave France a part of their youth and lived in suffering so that today we might live democratically and in peace." Michel David (Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur), 'Les oubliés du défilé,' in Charles Dubois, [n.t.], *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres,*

There are multiple reasons why veteran participation is considered vital to *11 novembre*. First is their belief that erstwhile actors of war should take prominence in commemorating the wartime endeavour.[117] As a scholar of commemoration has remarked, when people who lived an event participate in rituals of remembrance, the 'distance' between the event and its commemoration is lessened.[118] In this way, the participation of veterans in *11 novembre* ceremonies makes war more 'accessible' to the non-combatant population, which in turn enables the *anciens combattants* to better fulfil their *devoir de mémoire* to encourage people to understand war's messages and commune with the dead. It is pertinent to ask here, however: what happens when veterans of later wars enact memory of World War One? They are transmitting mythologised memory and have no personal knowledge of or connection to the experience; it would appear, therefore, that the 'distance' is widened. Does this distance mitigate the possibility of encouraging people to 'connect' with the commemoration? The persistence of World War One veteran 'memory' could imply that increasing temporal distance from the event does not negate its power; yet at the same time, this ever-increasing distance gradually lessens the authority of veterans of later wars to take their place as 'actors' on the *11 novembre* stage.

Another key motivation for veteran participation is their passionate belief that homage should be paid to the "those who returned" as well as to the war dead.[119] A final reason why veterans believe themselves invaluable to the ceremonies is the

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mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers, 84e année, nouvelle série, no. 2663, 29 juillet 2000, p. 1.

[117] In republican festivals preceding World War One, soldiers had also been key actors. Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' p. 8. Janine Bourdin has noted that of the four primary groups which participate in Armistice Day ceremonies (veterans, the population, young people and politicians), veterans are the most important. She believed this reflected the wartime situation which separated soldiers from those left behind. Bourdin, 'Les anciens combattants et la célébration du 11 novembre 1938,' p. 96. Perhaps the veterans' participation is also vital because, as one observer has remarked, only people who are familiar with pain can truly celebrate. Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A theological essay on festivity and fantasy*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 25.

[118] Bédarida, 'Commémorations et mémoire collective,' p. 12.

[119] Anon., 'L'anniversaire de l'Armistice,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 11e année, no. 591, samedi 15 novembre 1930, p. 1.

conviction that "We do not forget them. In fact, their companions-at-arms remember them better than anyone."[120] In claiming to remember "better than anyone," veterans are obliged to attend rituals which publicly prove this point: attendance is an *ancien combattant* duty designed, like the numerous other *devoirs*, to alleviate some of the pain and guilt of survival by ensuring adequate memorialisation of the fallen.

In fact, for veteran spokespeople participation in rituals of remembering is considered vital to *ancien combattant* identity.[121] The extent to which commemoration shapes the rhetorical French veteran 'persona' (an ideal created by *ancien combattant* agitators as one component of the myth they generate) is evident in a recent U.N.C. pamphlet which states that "I am an *Ancien Combattant*, a widow, or a war orphan. Belonging to the U.N.C., I participate in commemorative ceremonies."[122] The definite tone and the use of the present tense leave no doubt about the centrality of commemoration to the U.N.C. agenda. Describing the civic action undertaken by the association, the U.N.C.'s website also emphasises this point, declaring: "Because they served their country, veterans and war victims must make their voices heard regarding all problems and values in society and city life. They must not forget those of their comrades who died for France; they participate in days of remembrance in their memory."[123] In other words, identifying as a French veteran necessitates identifying with the commemorations which the community supports - of which there are many throughout the year.[124] This point of view is not

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[120] Henri Becquart, 'Fêtons le 11 novembre,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 64, novembre 1926, p. 2. Becquart made his point clear by citing the work of famous French playwright Edmond Rostand: *anciens combattants*, he claimed, "follow to the letter these four lines penned by Edmond Rostand: // What do we owe the Dead? Enrich their deaths, we should, // So that they not be forgotten in this world: // The names he remembers, each person should write // And each day that he lives, these names should recite!" One historian believed the veterans considered themselves the only survivors capable of adequately honouring the dead. Douziech, 'Les cérémonies commémoratives de la Grande Guerre dans l'Aveyron,' p. 174.

[121] In the aftermath of World War One, "organised mourning" continued to define veterans. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 212.

[122] Union Nationale des Combattants, *Agenda 2008: 90ème anniversaire 1918-2008*, p. i.

[123] Union Nationale des Combattants, <http://www.unc.fr/actions.php?type=4> accessed 10 January 2011.

[124] See for example the list of commemorative dates supplied by the U.N.C.'s Sevran branch at <http://www.unc-sevran.com/fr/ceremonie-et-comemoration.php> accessed 10 January 2011.

unique to the U.N.C. or to recent times: considering involvement in remembrance services as obligatory has remained a constant feature of all *ancien combattant* discourse throughout the decades since 1919, illustrating the interrelationship between veterans, the war dead, and identity, memory and commemoration. The themes are so closely linked because associations promote commemoration as an opportunity to attest to the tragedy and sacrifice of war in order to come to terms with the experience.

The urgency of veteran appeals for audience attendance waxes and wanes depending on contemporary domestic and international circumstances; not surprisingly, appeals for mass involvement peak at times of domestic or international uncertainty, or when public or state indifference seems particularly worrying. Striking, however, is the fact that the language of duty does not change over time or between associations, highlighting the persistence of this belief to *ancien combattant* 'identity' and 'memory.' In the late 1920s, the *Mutilé des Flandres* commanded its readers:

> […] Every year, our Association organises the Remembrance Manifestation, which you should consider it your duty to attend.
> Let us all be ready, this coming Armistice Day, to pay to our dear great Dead the homage we owe them.
> Let us be ready, at this grandiose manifestation, to solemnly place the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the armistice under the auspices of our brothers-in-arms who fell at our sides.
> **It is a duty**.[125]

The sentiment of this article was reiterated by an 'advert' (for want of a better word) on the front page of the same paper, which read: "Let each man be present at the demonstration to pay homage to our Great Dead. ***THIS IS A SACRED DUTY***."[126] Memorialisation of the fallen was promoted in the aftermath of World War One as inherent - sacred, even - to the veteran 'identity;' the imagined memory of these

[125] Anon., '11 novembre,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 65, 22 octobre 1928, p. 1.
[126] Anon., '11 novembre,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 65, 22 octobre 1928, p. 1.

servicemen, developed into mythologised memory for veterans of later wars, has ensured this idea remain central to veteran discourse throughout the decades. The survival of such thinking, and the language used to reiterate the links between creed and action, is demonstrated in the following article, published in the *Journal des Combattants* two decades after the comments in the *Mutilé des Flandres*:

> Comrades: in every town, in every village, in the smallest *communes*, you will ALL attend the ceremonies organised on Armistice Day by your local associations.
> On this day of a glorious anniversary, the men of the Great War must show that they are still here!
> You will be there because of discipline… You will be there because of solidarity… You will be there because of interest…[127]

The language employed in this passage is telling. Firstly, the use of the future tense leaves no room for readers to misinterpret the author's imperatives.[128] Additionally, nouns like "solidarity," "interest" and "discipline" echo the mentality of the *ancien combattant* community with regards to services of remembrance: commemoration allows the veteran community to fulfil its aspirations of influencing and impressing the population with its impeccable behaviour and dedication. More importantly, however, enacting memorial customs constitutes the most tangible expression of the veterans' *devoir de mémoire* towards their fallen comrades and allows survivors to externalise their trauma. The fact that the *Journal des Combattants* article was printed three years after World War Two ended, and yet called explicitly on surviving *poilus*, highlights the dominance of World War One veterans, not only in associative leaderships and journals but also in 'memory.'

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[127] Le Journal des Combattants, [n.t.], *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 32e année, nouvelle série, no. 89, samedi 8 novembre 1947, p. 1. Again in 1948, a pair of adverts on the front page, one each side of a large photo of the Place de l'Opéra on Armistice Day 1918, encouraged *anciens combattants* to attend the ceremonies. Le Journal des Combattants, [n.t.], *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 33e année, nouvelle série, no. 139, samedi 6 novembre 1948, p. 1.
[128] Again, this technique was not restricted to a certain era.

World War One constituted a watershed, particularly in its unprecedented numbers of casualties. Responding to this mass death, communities held their own spontaneous, small-scale ceremonies of remembrance during the war to pay tribute to individual fallen soldiers. As time passed, the state recognised and attempted to assuage this grief through two primary means. One of these tools of trauma healing was the rhetoric of 'sacrifice for a greater cause;' the other, the implementation of rituals of remembrance. Foremost among these commemorations was Armistice Day, initially a veterans' celebration but enshrined as a public holiday in 1922 after the *anciens combattants* had successfully lobbied Parliament. While the ceremony commemorates numerous events, fundamental to any discussion of Armistice Day are the fallen. In order to fulfil its *devoir de mémoire* towards these men and women, the veteran community invites - indeed, requires - the living to attend *11 novembre* ceremonies. It is only through the public's physical attendance at and emotional engagement with the commemoration that the veterans' duty can be carried out, their trauma put to a greater purpose, and the dead effectively mobilised.

Part I has demonstrated the powerful relationship between the French *anciens combattants*, their fallen comrades and the key themes of identity, memory and commemoration. The *anciens combattants*' very identification as 'veterans' obliges them to remember and memorialise the war dead, and this importance has not diminished with time. This *devoir de mémoire* is enacted chiefly through commemorative ceremonies, attendance at which is also considered intrinsic to veteran identity. Having established the connections between veterans and their erstwhile companions-at-arms, as well as detailed the context in which this relationship is enacted, this thesis now considers the methods through and the motivations for which the *anciens combattants* mobilise the dead.

Part II - Methods

Chapter Five

Flowers, flags and flames: Mobilising the war dead through ritual

> "France […] has done and will do all she can to acquit herself of the debt of recognition towards them through homages, flowers, crowns, decorations, monuments, and so on. No effort has been spared."
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> - M. Crémon (ancien poilu), 'Discours,' in G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1.

This chapter is the first in Part II, which demonstrates the methods through which *anciens combattants* mobilise the war dead on Armistice Day. Two main means are discernible: the implementation and enactment of special rituals, and the use of certain symbolic spaces, both elements which contribute to the highly structured act of commemoration.[1] This chapter focuses on the former, explaining the many customs and rites whose crucial function is to integrate fallen soldiers into the ceremony and focus participants' thoughts and feelings on the war dead. In other words, physically performing *11 novembre* rituals symbolically brings the dead into the living world (and amounts to public testament of and devotion to their evocation) and provides commemorative actors and spectators with a unique opportunity to connect with the dead. Thus encouraging people to reflect on the sacrifice of the war dead, veterans are able to capitalise upon the moment of living-dead communion and use their fallen comrades to promote causes.

[1] David I. Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 9.

In order to explicitly reveal the messages which *anciens combattants* attach to these practices, the chapter not only examines the rituals which incorporate the dead (a verb which is especially appropriate because of its connotations of 'body') but concentrates particularly on veteran discourse relating to rituals which mobilise the fallen on Armistice Day. In illustrating the importance of ritual to veteran mobilisation of the dead, the chapter argues that ritual (defined as "socially standardised or repetitive symbolic behaviour"[2]) constituted one primary means through which survivors came to terms with World War One death. Rituals which resurrected the dead - and thus facilitated 'communication' between survivors and the fallen - were central to dealing with the losses of 1914-1918 because they translated the wartime ordeal into a tangible enactment of both the veterans' *devoir de mémoire* and their desire for unity. The power of the rituals developed after World War One has ensured their continued centrality in attempts to mitigate the trauma of subsequent wars, providing veterans of these conflicts with emotional safety and, importantly, legitimisation. In this way, rituals contribute to the cross-association (horizontal) and cross-generation (vertical) standardisation of veteran discourse.

Symbolism, ritual and iconography are vital to the reconstitution and representation of a particularly valued history; without them, there would be no structure or repetition to the enactment of memory.[3] Through recognising and participating in such acts of allegiance, citizens identify with the overarching political and social forces of their society.[4] On Armistice Day, rituals are used to unite the French population with its state in the act of war remembrance. Without the many formal procedures which have become intrinsic to *11 novembre* liturgy, the commemoration would cease to fulfil its vital pedagogic function.

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[2] Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 9. Rituals constitute a performative, formalised language. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 58.
[3] Susan G. Davis noted in her consideration of parades that ritual and convention lend them their communicative force. Davis, Susan G., *Parades and power: Street theatre in nineteenth century Philadelphia*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986, p. 159.
[4] Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 1.

Antoine Prost described interwar *11 novembre* ceremonies as a combination of funerary respect and patriotic celebration.[5] This cult, he believed, meant that people of all faiths could be "reconciled in neutrality" during the ceremony.[6] Pierre Douziech, author of a study on Armistice Day in the Aveyron *département*, seconded this opinion, suggesting that rituals were designed to unite the masses beyond religious creed.[7] This point of view is again reflected in the comments of the veteran-writer Amédée Chivot, who used a metaphor to define *11 novembre* as "a symbol and a flag: a symbol of our regained grandeur; a flag around which all righteous Frenchmen should gather, regardless of their opinions or beliefs."[8] Hence for Chivot as well, the ceremony reflected a secular republican credo (with distinct patriotic overtones).

In other words, Armistice Day sought to unite the French public in the act of mourning the dead above any existing religious or political belief system. This aim necessitated the introduction of original sites, rituals and liturgy; however, much of this 'new' discourse of wartime commemoration was in fact drawn from and influenced by time-honoured local and religious rites.[9] For this reason, ceremonies

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[5] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 53. Prost also believed that spectators in *11 novembre* ceremonies participate in a Durkheimian act of self-worship, for him the only case in history of civic religion as Rousseau defined it. This 'civic religion' was based on the nation and the national experience of war. Ken Inglis, however, contradicted this interpretation in pointing out that Prost neglected to consider certain aspects of Rousseau's definition of a civic religion. See K. S. Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167, 'Les monuments aux morts de la Première guerre mondiale,' 1992, pp. 5-21, p. 16 analysing Antoine Prost, 'Les monuments aux morts: culte républicain? Culte civique? Culte patriotique?' in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire. I: La République*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984, pp. 195-325, pp. 219.

[6] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54.

[7] Pierre Douziech, 'Les cérémonies commémoratives de la Grande Guerre dans l'Aveyron,' *Etudes aveyronnaises. Recueil des travaux de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron*, 2003, pp. 173-178, p. 177.

[8] Amédée Chivot, '11 novembre 1918: la Victoire! Commémoration du quarantième anniversaire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 43e année, nouvelle série, no. 641, samedi 26 juillet 1958, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1. The image of gathering around a flag is apt; one of the purposes of flags, according to Julian Drouart's research into street manifestations, is to unite people around a message. Julien Drouart, 'La Manifestation de rue à Lille (novembre 1919-juillet 1926),' Mémoire de maîtrise, Université Charles de Gaulle, 2003-2004, p. 52.

[9] Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, 'Rituels funéraires de sociétés en guerre 1914-1945,' in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker, Christian Ingrao *et al*. (eds.), *La violence de guerre*

across France varied according to regional customs, the wartime experience of different areas, and religion.[10] This last element was particularly influential: Catholic rites were often adopted and adapted to create rituals for memorialising war and its victims.

Although official France was secular following the separation of Church and State under the 1905 law, a religious revival occurred during the Great War.[11] In consequence, during the war Catholic rituals such as mass and benediction were adopted and remembrance services for the fallen were performed on consecrated ground. This religiosity continued into the post-war era, with distinctly Christian elements characterising much of Armistice Day commemoration.[12] The acts of wreath-laying, 'hymn-like' oration and processions have been transplanted into *11 novembre* liturgy directly from Christian burial tradition.[13] Other rituals were developed with less obvious reliance on preceding customs; however, the symbolism of such Armistice Day routines and icons as the Eternal Flame, the Unknown Soldier and the minute of silence still bear remarkable similarity to Christian liturgy when scrutinised. As General Surville of the A.G.M.G. has noted,

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1914-1945. Approches comparées des deux conflits mondiaux, Paris: Editions Complexe, 2002, pp. 289-311, p. 301; Prost. *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54; Jay Winter, 'Facets of commemoration during and after the Great War,' *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps*, nos. 49-50, janvier-juin 1998, pp. 65-68, p. 68.

[10] Commemoration, even secular commemoration, has been termed a religious experience. Gérard Namer, 'La commémoration en 1945,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 253-266, p. 253.

[11] For information regarding the revival of religion in France during World War One, see Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire 1914-1930*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1994. For John Horne, the reintegration of Catholicism into French national space was due in part to the idea that German troops specifically targeted religious people for abuse and religious sites for destruction during the 1914 invasion, which created an image of martyrdom for the nation. John Horne, 'Corps, lieux et nation: la France et l'invasion de 1914,' *Annales*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, pp. 73-109, p. 104.

[12] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54; Maurice Crubellier, *La mémoire des Français: recherches d'histoire culturelle*, Paris: Henri Veyrier et Kronos, 1991, p. 15. Kertzer, too, recognised that many symbols of legitimacy are religious, and that many political powers develop their own rituals through incorporating religion. Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 45. One example of this for Armistice Day is the Catholic mass (and services of other religions).

[13] Christianity itself relies heavily on the dual processes of ritualisation and memorialisation. A Biblical reference which explicitly underscores this relationship is 1 Corinthians 11:24 which reads, "When he [Jesus] had given thanks, he broke it [the bread], and said, 'Take, eat. This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in memory of me.'" For Annette Becker, this passage demonstrates that memory is at the centre of Christian sacrifice. Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 106.

official, religious and military ceremonies all "obey a certain ritual" and the ceremonial order of all three types follows "perpetual and logical rules;"[14] for this reason, appropriating prevailing iconography and ritual for remembrance of war was almost unavoidable as 'invented' customs must to some extent rely on the past.[15] The appropriation or slight alteration of existing rites is also valuable in terms of transferring legitimacy;[16] this authority was a principal reason why veterans of later wars, struggling to affirm their 'identity' amid an environment infused with the World War One narrative and often hostile to their situation, appropriated the rituals of Armistice Day.

Not only Catholic ritual but also its terminology was re-appropriated for remembrance of World War One. Certain words associated with warfare, such as the Latin '*pax*' [peace] have a long Christian tradition;[17] however, most noticeable

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[14] Général D. Surville (Président National), 'Réflexion à propos d'une cérémonie,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 603, octobre-novembre 1990, p. 3.

[15] Absolutely new beginnings are impossible, claimed Paul Connerton in his *How societies remember*, because of the persistence of past loyalties and because modes of expression rely on prior context. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 6. In this way, the 'creation' of new rituals is in fact the rearrangement of pre-existing icons. Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 10.

[16] As George Mosse has pointed out, even the revolutionaries of 1789, aiming to create an entirely new political and cultural system, were required to espouse traditions familiar to them and their followers. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 34. Without the "energies" of past myths, the new times and spaces of the French Revolution were devoid of meaning, noted historian Joseph Byrnes. Joseph F. Byrnes, 'Celebration of the Revolutionary Festivals under the Directory: A Failure of Sacrality,' *Church History*, vol. 63, no. 2, June 1994, pp. 201-220, p. 209. Nonetheless, the French Revolution is still considered a "founding moment" by some scholars. Daniel Lindenberg detailed three reasons for using the phrase: the ambiguity stemming from the revolutionaries' desire to deny the past yet position themselves as the ultimate reference point; the ambivalence stemming from the Revolution which has resulted in multiple interpretations; and, the fact that it was the Revolution which introduced the mechanisms which challenged the state's monopoly over the past. Daniel Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 42, April-June 1994, pp. 77-95, pp. 78-80. This reliance on past symbolism and ritual explains in part the persistence of Armistice Day liturgy in ceremonies of the Légion française des combattants during World War Two. (Jean-Paul Cointet, *La Légion française des combattants 1940-1944: la tentation du fascisme*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1995, p. 346) and in post-World War Two commemoration.

[17] Bruno Deltour, 'La mémoire de la Grande Guerre: un mythe patriotique alsacien à l'épreuve de l'Europe,' *Revue des science sociales*, no. 30, 2003, pp. 116-123, p. 120. For J. Glenn Gray, the relationship was reciprocal: Christian terms existed in the military, and vice versa. He specifically cited 'martyr,' 'devotion,' 'salvation,' sacrifice' and 'crucifixion,' as well as the phrase "Onwards, Christian soldier!" J. Glenn Gray, *The warriors: Reflections on men in battle. With an Introduction by Hannah Arendt*, New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1970 [1959], p. 47.

was the religious terminology used in reference to the participation and sacrifice of fallen soldiers. Dying for the homeland was promoted as the republican equivalent of religious martyrdom,[18] with words such as 'martyr,' 'saint' and 'hero' pervading commemorative discourse. The espousal of such language was one method employed by commemorative actors (state and veteran alike) to laud the soldiers as examples of the most virtuous behaviour. Celebrating the dead soldiers, and their sacrifice, was intended to moderate the trauma resulting from the losses of war; the (relative) success of this discourse is visible in its appropriation by veterans trying to face their own torment.

Such religious terminology also underpins veteran writing on the fallen. Just as state representatives sought to provide justification for wartime death in order to alleviate the mourning of their citizens, so too did the *anciens combattants* attempt to console members of their community (whose suffering was perhaps more intense than grieving families' as it was supplemented with survivor guilt and the trauma of the frontline experience) by portraying soldiers as divinities of a secular cult. For example, the veteran-writer for the *Mutilé des Flandres* known as 'Grand Papa,' whose moralistic articles often start with the words "Once upon a time…," associated the French soldiers of World War One with religion in writing "these superhumans, these demi-gods who go by the blessed name of '*Poilu*.'"[19] Other instances of religious phraseology include Paul Galland's declaration of "the hallelujah of deliverance represented by 11 November 1918"[20] and Léon Viala's post-World War Two plea for international peace: "Piously kneeling before our war memorials, we state our desire to cooperate with all our energy for the promotion of peace-making between all nations."[21] The abundant religious terminology in *ancien*

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[18] Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 190.
[19] Grand Papa, 'Il était une fois…,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, 22 octobre 1928, no. 65, p. 1.
[20] Paul Galland, 'La barque en péril,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 797, samedi 10 novembre 1934, p. 1.
[21] Léon Viala (Président), 'Manifeste pour le 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 189, samedi 5 novembre 1949, p. 1. Viala was a regular contributor to the *Journal des Combattants* during the interwar and post-World War Two eras, and was also President of the

combattant writing suggests the veterans' affinity with the sacredness inherent in war commemoration, and a need to see the dead as examples of the most selfless human behaviour. In thus celebrating the dead, veterans could find a degree of comfort in their situation.

However, for some survivors the quasi-religiousness of *11 novembre* ceremonial liturgy, space and terminology could still not adequately address their trauma. Particularly the loss of life resulting from World War One prompted certain soldiers to seek solace in traditional religious beliefs and practices. Epitomising the Catholic rhetoric prevalent in much northern French veteran discourse immediately after World War One, an *ancien combattant* spoke of the war dead in this 1920 oration:

> We are not allowed to forget them!
> France recognises and does not forget - *Gallia grata et memor* - and has done and will do all she can to acquit herself of the debt of recognition towards them through homage, flowers, crowns, decorations, monuments, and so on. No effort has been spared. We applaud all these initiatives, because they are well earned. But there is one thing which we particularly owe them, the best and most useful thing of all: the homage of prayer.
> Let us pray that the souls of our French soldiers, which remain in the ambulance of souls called Purgatory, be healed of sinful wounds and sent to Heaven.[22]

This veteran saw the exertion expended in promoting remembrance of war as positive, but regarded the age-old beliefs of Christianity as "the best" and "most useful" for the fallen. This point of view is probably reminiscent of its era and region: two years after the Armistice, northern France was still reeling from the cost of war and the pull of religion was prominent and appealing. As time progressed, however, the elements of Armistice Day commemoration - the flowers, crowns, decorations and monuments described above - began to take on primary importance

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U.F. from the association's re-formation in 1945 until 1947. He was, in addition, President of the C.I.A.M.A.C. for one year from 1927 until 1928. Claire Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne de 1930 à 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004, p. 54.

[22] M. Crémon (ancien poilu), 'Discours,' in G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1.

in remembering war and its victims. Many of these rituals had, after all, been developed with the express purpose of paying tribute to - and mobilising - the fallen, and to help survivors come to terms with the war experience.

One powerful *11 novembre* rite is the act of wreath-laying. Participants and spectators lay bouquets at the base of war memorials as people traditionally did at tombs, in a gesture which Prost suggested was created in an attempt to unite religious believers and atheists in a common communion of bereavement.[23] The *anciens combattants* also see the ritual as unifying: one veteran-writer believed that when the President of the Republic lays his wreath, it represents the "homage of an entire people"[24] - an analysis which suits understandings that the President's role is to ensure national unity as best as possible.[25] The link between placing flowers and paying homage to the dead was also underscored when on 10 November 1920 the infantryman Auguste Thin laid a posy of wildflowers on the coffin when selecting which of eight cadavers exhumed from the major battlefields of the Great War would become the Unknown Soldier.[26]

Wreath-laying is a particularly poignant *11 novembre* ritual because it constitutes a double tribute to the dead. Firstly, the action is highly symbolic. Individually or in partnership with others, wreath-layers approach the monument with reverence, often bowing their heads for a moment's silent contemplation. The individuals who perform this task are selected from local community, political, educational and veteran associations, and their action represents the homage of each group to the

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[23] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54. In Christian tradition, chrysanthemums were the flowers of All Saints' Day homage. E. Delvigne, 'Le Culte des Morts pour la France pose d'émouvants problèmes,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 40e année, nouvelle série, no. 488, samedi 15 octobre 1955, pp. 1 et 2, p. 1.

[24] J. R., '11 novembre 1991,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 610, novembre-décembre 1991, p. 14.

[25] Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, p. 262.

[26] Maurice Duplay, 'L'apothéose du Soldat inconnu et le cœur de Gambetta,' *Historama*, no. 182, novembre 1966, pp. 30-39, p. 34.

fallen. Citizens are usually invited to place their contributions after the ceremony: as one veteran enthused on 11 November 1950, "Magnificent wreaths; people do not stop laying bouquets and simple flowers."[27] Secondly, in addition to the symbolism of the wreath-laying gesture, the performers leave something material behind them. These garlands, carefully and intricately crafted, stand as visible testaments of survivor devotion to the dead. It could also be posited that as physical symbols 'given' to the dead, these garlands represent the exteriorisation of trauma so ardently desired by the veteran community.

Their important emblematic role means that wreaths can be used by participants to promote certain messages through their incorporation of the dead into the ceremony. Erstwhile National Secretary of the A.R.A.C. posited the act of wreath-laying as emblematic of hopes for peace, claiming that "the flowers laid by them [the *anciens combattants*] will be full of the first fruits picked along the path of Peace and national independence."[28] Symbolic of their homage to the fallen, the veterans' wreath in this instance also represented their desire to improve international relations and French domestic wellbeing, both pertinent desires in the context of 1954 France when some veterans, particularly of the A.R.A.C., contested the possibility of German rearmament yet continued avidly campaigning for cross-border relations. Comparable symbolism was attributed to flowers by the former President of the U.N.C.'s North African section, the U.N.C.-A.F.N., writing one year after Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's decision to no longer officially commemorate the date of the 1945 Nazi capitulation[29] (and a time of tense veteran-state relations):

> The impact of these few moments of contemplation - which will unite and assemble Frenchmen in even the smallest communities - is

[27] Anon., 'La cérémonie officielle,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 35e année, nouvelle série, no. 241, samedi 18 novembre 1950, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.
[28] C. Lucibello (Secrétaire National), '11 novembre,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 108, octobre 1954, p. 3.
[29] Secrétaire d'État auprès du Ministère de la Défense, chargé des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre, *L'Information historique pour la paix en 1985*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1985, p. 40.

> immense. To those who preach violence, difference and divergence, we reply with an example of order, public-spiritedness and union.
> […]
> Of all the wreaths which will decorate our villages at this time, the bouquet of peace, fraternity and hope remains the most important. It is this bouquet which Frenchmen will cherish [on 11 November].[30]

This veteran of the North African conflicts had through mythologised memory not only absorbed the wreath-laying ritual's message of tribute to the war dead, but also its further connotation as a symbol for peace. In addition, his comments demonstrate how rituals simultaneously create and are created by the various meanings which organisers, performers and spectators attribute to them. In this way, laying a bunch of flowers can symbolise remembrance of the war dead as originally intended, but through its connection to the fallen can also represent other ideals for certain individuals or groups. The trauma of war is in this way not only exteriorised through ritual, but also put to the service of a higher cause.

Reciting the names of community fallen, an important ceremonial ritual often performed by children,[31] bears resemblance to prayer or hymn. For Prost, the ritual reflects the Catholic tradition of reading out the names of local deceased every Sunday at Church.[32] Prost's point of view is highlighted in examples like the following, in which the *Mutilé de Flandres* journalist described the Armistice Day ceremony at Bergues. In this community, "the names of the Dead were read by M. Lefebvre ... to which comrade Baert Henri replied 'Fallen on the Field of Honour.'"[33] It is easy to understand how this means of mobilising the fallen - the one instance of veteran discourse or practice which veers away from talking of the 'community of the dead' and instead purports to call up soldiers on an individual level - translates into encouraging public identification with whatever cause is being

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[30] François Porteu de la Morandière (Président de l'U.N.C.-A.F.N.), 'Le 11 novembre, journée nationale du souvenir: le vrai bouquet,' *La Voix du Combattant/La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1418, septembre-octobre 1976, p. 24.
[31] Luc Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' *Le Temps des Savoirs*, vol. 6, 2003, pp. 69-92, p. 80.
[32] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54.
[33] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Bergues,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.

promoted: individually naming each victim before a crowd of onlookers personalises the otherwise incomprehensible mass of anonymous fallen, yet also conveys the enormity of the cataclysm. This personalised mobilisation of the war dead also constitutes a tangible way of coming to terms with past trauma; in many respects, the process of individualisation may be more successful in helping exteriorise trauma by stressing the 'real' links between survivors and the fallen.

Speeches are also a vital part of *11 novembre* liturgy. As Paul Connerton remarked in his work on remembrance, ritual utterances are not produced by the orators themselves but are already "encoded" in tradition.[34] Connerton's thesis is confirmed by Armistice Day practice in France. While local orators are free to write their own speeches, they can also request a pre-prepared speech from the government or from veteran associations. Whatever method is followed, most speeches follow a blueprint, concentrating primarily on a potent combination of horrifying statistics and traumatic personal accounts, expressed using personal pronouns (particularly 'I,' 'we' and 'us'[35]) which aim to engender a sense of togetherness.[36] In addition, certain key words like 'honour,' 'youth,' 'glory,' 'courage' - and Marcel Engrand's "two great words," 'liberty' and 'independence'[37] - are utilised to arouse emotive response and celebrate soldiers, living and especially dead.[38] As Jay Winter has noted, such language does not fit the reality: how much 'courage,' he asked, was

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[34] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, p. 58.
[35] Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne*, p. 111.
[36] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, pp. 58-59.
[37] Marcel Engrand (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'La manifeste de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 39e année, nouvelle série, no. 441, samedi 6 novembre 1954, p. 1. The U.F.A.C.'s manifesto in particular repeats the same words and statistics year after year.
[38] Annette Becker has compiled a list of 40 commonly-cited words in French commemorative speeches. In alphabetical order, they are: *admiration* [admiration], *âme* [soul], *amour* [love], *croix* [cross], *drapeau* [flag], *émotion* [emotion], *espérance* [hope], *exemple* [example], *expiation* [atonement], *famille* [family], *fleurs* [flowers], *foi* [faith], *France* [France], *gloire* [glory], *guerre* [war], *immortalité* [immortality], *jeunesse* [youth], *justice divine* [divine justice], *larmes* [tears], *louanges* [praise], *leçons (données par nos morts)* [lessons (given by our dead)], *mort* [death], *paix* [peace], *parents* [parents], *patrie* [homeland], *prières* [prayers], *protection* [protection], *purgatoire* [purgatory], *reconnaissance* [recognition], *religion* [religion], *résurrection* [resurrection], *sacrifice* [sacrifice], *soldats* [soldiers], *souffrance* [suffering], *souvenir* [memory], *testament* [testament/legacy], *tombes* [tombs], *union* [union], *vie* [life], *vertus* [virtues]. Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 105.

needed to be killed by long-range artillery; or for that matter, to fire it?[39] The language was invented, therefore, not to express a reality but to reflect something else entirely: a need to see glory in wartime death in order to accept this past.

In other words, while oration technically allows greater freedom to address contemporary concerns, except when a specific grievance is targeted, the words, tone and gist of these verbal communications remain generic, with little change over the years and little licence for variation. The standardisation of *11 novembre* speeches lies in the ritual's function: speech-givers are required by ceremonial behavioural codes to address certain elements inherent in 'memory' of war. For one, orators unfailingly refer to the war dead in salutary terms, with their speeches often framed as a diptych which positions the dead as the givers of life.[40] Orators are also bound to espouse both the folly of conflict and the idea of 'sacrifice,' often positioned as the positive notion of 'dying for' but sometimes highlighted through the more accusatory 'dying in vain.' The duality of 'war as waste' and 'war as glory' constitutes one of the many contradictions ingrained in the veterans' 'memory,' and have been passed down through the generations of fire. The standard pattern of *11 novembre* oration both reflects and contributes to the invariability of veteran writing: both forms of discourse employ the same vocabulary and bring up the same themes, ingraining a certain reading of the war experience ever-further into 'memory' (veteran and otherwise) and making the potential for change increasingly unlikely.

In his observation of street manifestations in Lille, Julien Drouart noted that the aural element produced by performing marching tunes during parades enhanced

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[39] Jay Winter in Jay Winter and Robert Wohl, 'The Great War: Midwife to modern memory?' in Jay Winter (ed.), *The legacy of the Great War: Ninety years on*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009, pp. 159-184, p. 166. Winter saw in the regression to old language and forms after World War One a "counter-revolution" (p. 170). Wohl agreed, but saw multiple cultures existing simultaneously during the period. Robert Wohl in Winter and Wohl, 'The Great War: Midwife to modern memory?' p. 180.

[40] Becker, 'Aux morts, la Patrie reconnaissante,' p. 51; Annette Becker, 'Les monuments aux morts: des œuvres d'art au service du souvenir,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 144, novembre 2004, pp. 7-10, p. 8.

participant enthusiasm and served to alert the wider public to the march.[41] In this way, music aims to incorporate greater space into commemoration. This is true of Armistice Day ceremony, with bands playing military tunes as part of the service and to accompany marching troops.[42] Of special importance is the *Sonnerie aux Morts*, written in 1931 by Pierre Dupont, head of music for the Republican Guard,[43] and since integrated into ceremony as aural testimony of survivor devotion to the war dead. The *Ceasefire* is the other important bugle piece, recreating the historic moment in 1918 when the fighting ended. Attesting to the importance of place in ceremony, this sound is perhaps especially pertinent when the note rings out "from various points around the clearing" where the Armistice was signed in the Compiègne forest.[44]

As the national anthem of France, *La Marseillaise* is usually central to *11 novembre* liturgy. Along with the *tricolore* flag, it serves to symbolise the Republic and demonstrate the state's appropriation of the memory of war.[45] Both these elements create and consolidate national solidarity.[46] Acting as visual representations of France, these two emblems encourage spectators to connect with the war dead through associating them with the nation for which they died. As Armistice Day serves in part to celebrate the French and Allied victory of 11 November 1918 - as well as the return of the 'lost provinces' of Alsace and Lorraine - an element of national pride is inherent in its commemoration. The patriotic aspect of Armistice Day reflects the love of France inherent to the *ancien combattant* 'memory;' as the

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[41] Drouart, 'La Manifestation de rue à Lille, p. 46.
[42] On 11 November 1991, for instance, the *Garde républicaine* played while the parade marched up the Champs-Elysées. J. R., '11 novembre 1991,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 610, novembre-décembre 1991, p. 14. Note, however, that many veterans have preferred to avoid marching to military music. Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 90.
[43] Didier Francfort, 'Pour une approche historique comparée des musiques militaires,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, janvier-mars 2005, no. 85, vol. 1, pp. 85-101, pp. 97-98.
[44] Mary-Ange Nierderl-Brissaud, 'Le 11 novembre 2002 - 84e anniversaire,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1680, décembre 2002, pp. 6 et 12, p. 6.
[45] Philippe Barrière, *Histoire et mémoires de la Seconde guerre mondiale: Grenoble en ses après-guerre 1944-1964*, Grenoble: Presses universitaires Grenoble, 2004, p. 220.
[46] Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 73.

entity for which soldiers fought and died, the 'nation' has to feature in constructions of 'dying for' and thus constitutes one means of legitimising wartime death.

Patriotism has been visible in most ceremonies since the inception of *11 novembre*[47]; however, in his investigation into post-World War Two ceremonies, François Marcot noted that patriotism was more evident in post-1945 ceremonies than during the interwar years. Testifying to this trend was the standardisation of the playing of *La Marseillaise* and greater employment of flags. This shift in focus was paradoxical: while the 1918 victory clearly promoted both French military tactic and the unity of the population in the face of crisis, exalting the 1944 victory was problematic for France. Not only had the population been divided in its reaction to Occupation, but the military victory over Nazi Germany belonged more to the Allied troops than to de Gaulle's Free French or the scattered Resistance fighters.[48] In other words, while following the Great War the primary function of Armistice Day had been to aid the externalisation of grief and trauma, after 1945 greater emphasis was placed on the 'nation.'

This shift was indicative of the uncertainty of state and veteran commemorative organisers after World War Two; they sought in *11 novembre* first and foremost a means of legitimising the recent war. Veterans (and state representatives) appropriated the imagined memory of their forebears, stressing an element of this 'memory' which corresponded well to their need. Yet despite the increased patriotism of post-World War Two *11 novembre* commemoration, neither the ceremony's facilitation of living-dead communion nor its role in helping survivors accept the past waned. The reasons for the commemoration's initial instigation were

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[47] Prost has found that at certain times and in certain communes, the national anthem has been excluded from Armistice Day services. Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, pp. 59-60.

[48] François Marcot, 'Rites et pratiques,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 31-39, p. 32. According to Jean-Pierre Rioux, the primary messages of commemoration of World War Two are the unanimity of the *ancien combattant* movement, respect for the army, pro-republican sentiment and homage to the efforts of individual Resistance fighters. Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Les variables politiques,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 89-102, p. 99.

just as valid following later conflict, explaining the persistence of its rituals in veteran 'memory.' Additionally, in the highly-charged atmosphere of World War Two's aftermath, continuing with tradition was one way of appearing neutral to the new political circumstances. As the spiritual ideal behind commemoration is simplicity and unification, leaders hoped that ratifying Armistice Day rites would help maintain consensus among the deeply divided population.[49] More importantly to political groups, controlling the *11 novembre* celebrations could legitimate leadership claims.[50] In other words, while patriotism was more pronounced in post-1945 Armistice Day ceremony, its overall discourse remained comparable.

In addition to the *tricolore*, other flags are central to the ceremony.[51] Among them are flags of *ancien combattant* associations and (often disbanded) military regiments, whose use has been particularly poignant at certain times such as on 11 November 1946 when banners captured by the Nazis were once again incorporated into the event.[52] Flags of disbanded regiments are prominent in *11 novembre* parades because, according to one veteran observer, they "better represent the sacrifice of our dead" than the flags of *ancien combattant* associations.[53] The

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[49] Marcot, 'Rites et pratiques,' p. 33.

[50] A "battle for memory" took place following World War Two as opposing political factions attempted to gain control of public memory to fashion myths appropriate to their wartime experience. Gérard Namer, *Batailles pour la mémoire: la commémoration en France 1944-1982*, Paris: SPAG, 1983.

[51] As has been noted, soldiers have long rallied to symbols they can recognise. Armand Marchal (Président de la Fédération nationale des Porte-Drapeau de France), 'Zoom sur les Porte-Drapeau de France,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 159, mars 2006, p. 5. The importance of flags as visual symbols of allegiance was particuarly stressed during the 1940-1944 Occupation. Upon entering Paris on 14 June 1940, the Nazis hung swastika flags. Pierre Audiat, *Paris pendant la guerre (juin 1940-août 1944)*, Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1946, p. 17; Herbert R. Lottman, *The fall of Paris: June 1940*, Great Britain: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992, p. 357. Conversely, the Resistance encouraged French citizens to wear red, white and blue, or to hang *tricolores*, in protest against the occupying powers.

[52] Gérard Namer, *La commémoration en France de 1945 à nos jours*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987, p. 175. Another example was on 11 November 1920, when blackened and torn regimental flags which had been lost to Germany in 1871 but returned after the 1918 Armistice participated in the ceremony in Paris dedicated to the Unknown Soldier. Jacques Meyer, *Le 11 novembre*, Paris: Hachette, 1960, p. 150. It is not only at *11 novembre* ceremonies that veterans' groups parade their flags; they are also prominent in other commemorations.

[53] Anon., 'Le projet de programme de la Fête du 11 Novembre 1928,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 485, samedi 20 octobre 1928, p. 1. The participation of associative flags is not only necessary in *11 novembre* ceremonies, but in all events in which veterans participate. For this reason, the Union Fédérale and the U.N.C. often print photos of the hundreds of flags parading at their annual congresses on the covers of their journals,

incorporation of regimental flags therefore brings the fallen into the commemoration.

Flags are important ceremonial implements. Their significance is reflected in the prominence attributed to the flag-bearers of veteran associations, whose role marks them as representatives of their group.[54] Standards and banners have many uses in *11 novembre* observance: they act as visible representations of participating regiments and associations; add a pleasing visual element to the ceremony; and are mostly red, white and blue to demonstrate their national loyalty. The flags' most important role, however, is the testament they pay to the war dead. Lined up before and around the war memorial, flags participate in rituals designed to honour the fallen. They are dipped at strategic moments throughout the ceremony (during the minute of silence, the playing of *La Marseillaise* and other music, and while wreaths are being laid) with the purpose of visibly demonstrating survivor homage to the dead.[55]

Ancien combattant commentary pays tribute to the important role that flags play in *11 novembre* ceremony, focusing particularly on the way in which flag rituals honour the fallen. Upon watching the Armistice Day celebration at the Arc de Triomphe in 1927, one veteran noted that "the flags flapped in the wind, forming a guard of honour for the sleeping *Poilu*."[56] In this case, the flags' presence served to simultaneously protect and worship the Unknown Soldier, a visible manifestation of

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and open articles with comments like "**more than 4500 particpants, more than 1200 flags**" (for the U.N.C.'s 2000 Conference at Caen). Mary-Ange Niederl-Brissaud, 'Le Petit Journal,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 7-10, p. 7. Bold in original.

[54] There is much information published in veteran newspapers about flag-bearers, from general information to biographies. Most noticeably, every *Journal des Combattants* issue features a *porte-drapeau* [flag-bearer] on the front page. Beneath the individual's photo are the words "This journal is entrusted to [the person's name and affiliation]." There is a particular dress code associated with the role: white gloves (to symbolise respect for the flag), very often a beret, and official decorations pinned on the left. Marchal, 'Zoom sur les Porte-Drapeau.'

[55] One historian saw in the lowering of the flags the hommage of the nation. Pierre Douziech, 'Les cérémonies commémoratives de la Grande Guerre dans l'Aveyron,' *Etudes aveyronnaises. Recueil des travaux de la Société des lettres, sciences et arts de l'Aveyron*, 2003, pp. 173-178, p. 174.

[56] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.

the veteran duty to memorialise the actions of their dead comrades. Obviously much veteran attention centres on the act of dipping the banners, the most significant flag ritual. As early as 11 November 1921, before the date was even officially a public holiday, links were established between dipping flags and paying tribute to the dead. A veteran writing for the *Patriote de Flandres* newspaper instructed: "Flags, bow down before the majesty of our heroes!"[57] Flag rituals therefore contribute immensely to veteran efforts to mobilise the dead on Armistice Day, constituting a fundamental means of connecting the living with the fallen and demonstrating survivor homage and gratitude.

Just as flags must be lowered at certain key moments during the Armistice Day ceremony, other rituals also rely on strict timing. In fact, time is crucial to Armistice Day liturgy, with certain procedures such as the minute of silence being carried out at symbolic moments. One reason for the importance of timing stems from the desire to symbolically include the entire nation in the commemoration, a desire which is most obviously manifest in simultaneous performance throughout the country.[58] Other temporal factors besides the timing of rituals come into play regarding the Armistice Day commemoration, including its position in seasonal and religious calendars.

Although undoubtedly coincidental, the Armistice was declared on the day devoted to Saint Martin, patron saint of the army, creating a relationship between Christianity and remembrance of the Great War seemingly beyond human construction.[59] Surprisingly, few veteran articles mention this remarkable coincidence; Marcel Hachette's weather-related comment that 11 November 1960

[57] G. L., 'La Fête de la Victoire à Steenvoorde,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 558, dimanche 13 novembre 1921, pp. 1-2, p. 1.
[58] David Kertzer saw in simultaneous symbolic action one of the most powerful means of tying local groups to national manifestations of identity. Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 23.
[59] Becker described Saint Martin as a "perfect" saint for the soldiers: once a soldier himself, he became a monk and then a bishop, and was known for sharing with the poor and praying. Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 128.

"did not benefit from the usual Saint Martin sun"[60] is representative of the veterans' minimal engagement with the topic. Saint Martin's absence from veteran discourse is striking given the seemingly perfect twist of fate which the date provides.

For the *anciens combattants*, a more important temporal alignment existed which linked *11 novembre* to traditional custom. In the Catholic faith, 1 November is All Saints' Day and 2 November, the Day of the Dead (All Souls' Day), so the French public had long been accustomed to performing funerary rites around that time of year.[61] Remembering and memorialising the war dead less than two weeks later reinforced time-honoured routine. In the words of Olivier Largeault, President of the A.G.M.G. during the 1960s:

> NOVEMBER. Nature loses her rich ornamentation of spring and summer. She collects her thoughts before sinking into a long winter sleep.
> NOVEMBER. In France and in many other countries, flowers are tenderly laid in civil and military cemeteries. Humans piously bend their heads at the graves of their parents and friends, and before the graves of the soldiers who were the victims of national duty and the artisans of victory.
> In our country, November is particularly known to evoke memories which mix pain with joy, pride with pity, apprehension with hope.[62]

As All Saints' Day practices and associating November with mourning the dead were already ingrained in popular conscience by the time of the Great War,[63] being "close to [the day] of the Dead"[64] facilitated public acceptance of *11 novembre*. P.

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[60] Marcel Hachette, '11 novembre 1960,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 378, novembre 1960, p. 1.
[61] Stéphane Tison, 'Les commémorations de la Grande Guerre dans la Sarthe 1918-1922 (étude d'un quotidien *La Sarthe* du 11 novembre 1918 au 31 décembre 1922),' *Revue historique et archéologique du Maine*, sér. 3, no. 13, 1993, pp. 145-160, p. 151.
[62] O. Largeault (Président Général Adjoint), 'Se souvenir et agir,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 422, novembre 1964, p. 1.
[63] Tison, 'Les commémorations de la Grande Guerre dans la Sarthe 1918-1922,' p. 151.
[64] Anon., 'Pour le Monument Interallié,' *Le Mutilé de Cambrésis*, no. 59, novembre 1929, p. 2.

Desorbaix, writing in 1930 for the *Mutilé du Hainaut* veterans' newspaper, well illustrated how the Great War built upon traditional custom:

> We have all practiced rituals such as visiting the cemetery and bringing flowers to the familial tomb on All Saints' and All Souls' Days since our little legs were strong enough to allow us to accompany our parents. Before us, our parents had the same experience. Before them: their ancestors, for generation upon generation for centuries.
> […]
> Since the great tumult of 1914-1918, a collective rite has been added to these ancient, private rites: the solemn homage to the War Dead.[65]

Desorbaix's example provides evidence for Capdevila and Voldman's theory that war sharpens and gives meaning to pre-war funerary traditions.[66] It also reiterates the idea that festivity tends to build on pre-existing examples as a way of appropriating their legitimacy. The temporal alignment of days of mourning facilitated veteran mobilisation of the war dead, and aided public acceptance of *11 novembre* as a means of coming to terms with, and officially acknowledging, death. A similar quest for legitimacy prompted veterans of later wars to adopt the imagined memory of their forebears.

Numerous passages in the *ancien combattant* press attest to the November weather as well-suited to mourning. Traditionally, the tone of autumn commemorations was sombre and solemn in anticipation of the oncoming winter, whereas festivals held in the warmer months associated with sun and plenty (and in more recent times, holidays) tended to promote a more positive and celebratory atmosphere. François Malval used this same argument in 1921 when trying to argue for *11 novembre*'s institutionalisation as a public holiday:

> November, month of the dead, month of remembrance, month of peace, a month which had nothing to offer but mist and coldness, could you in your immense melancholy shelter a national holiday?

[65] P. Desorbaix, 'Novembre: Mois des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut*, no. 62, novembre 1930, p. 1.
[66] Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 165.

> Humans would have had nothing to distract themselves, neither the glowing gaiety of a flower-filled May nor the warm sun of July; they would have needed to delve into themselves and relive a past heavy with glory and suffering, counting the passing years, the departed faces and the profound furrows dug each day by inexorable death.[67]

More than sixty years later, with the ceremony well-ingrained in French national space, Gérard Morvan of the U.F. reiterated the solemnity associated with the season: "Nature having wanted it thus, November - often darkened by clouds or rain, or at least miser in sunshine - is the month of seriousness, contemplation and remembrance."[68] This sort of weather was ideally suited to thinking about - and mobilising - the fallen as a means of coming to terms with the traumatic past.

Perhaps paradoxically, the veterans sometimes claim that the lack of climatic vibrancy characteristic of November not only encourages meditation but also lends itself to festivity. Edmond Bloch noted in 1963 that November is "grey and cold, the time for bad colds, [but through celebration] we make this day lose its true character."[69] Through its dual function as an opportunity to exteriorise grief and trauma, and as an opportunity to commune with the fallen, the celebration of Armistice Day was for Bloch able to counter the disheartening weather conditions. Positioning the commemoration in this way emphasises not only the *anciens combattants*' deeply-felt affiliation to the date but also their need to portray it in a positive manner.

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[67] François Malval, 'Un jour, une date trop mémorables pour les A.C.,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 3e année, no. 121, dimanche 20 novembre 1921, p. 1. As Dalisson has remarked, Armistice Day is the only important national festival not celebrated in spring or summer. Rémi Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre ou l'enjeu de la mémoire combattante dans l'entre-deux-guerres 1918-1939,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, 1998, vol. 48, no. 192, pp. 5-23, p. 13.

[68] Gérard Morvan (Président de l'Union Fédérale), 'O temps du souvenir ainsi que de l'oubli,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, des Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 335, novembre 1982, p. 2.

[69] Edmond Bloch, 'Anniversaires,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 48e année, nouvelle série, no. 893, samedi 9 novembre 1963, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

Ancien combattant writers commonly refer to the Armistice as a time outside of time. One example is Beauvilliers, who wrote in the *Journal des Combattants* a few years after the termination of World War One that on 11 November 1918 "the clock of destiny reverberated […] as far as the borders of the civilised world. It was the Armistice!"[70] The author alluded to "the clock of destiny" as a metaphor - for France and her civilising mission, for peace, for hope. These sentiments capture much of what the celebration of *11 novembre* represented for the veterans; however, Beauvilliers' employment of the clock is especially poignant. In addition to its metaphorical use, the clock represents, quite simply, time.

The issue of time is hugely consequential in the ceremonies of *11 novembre*, just as it was for the actual termination of the Great War: although negotiations for the Armistice document had ended by the early morning, the *Ceasefire* was not sounded until 1100 hours. The Armistice was in this way officially declared at the eleventh hour on the eleventh day of the eleventh month. This symbolic temporal configuration is represented in Armistice Day commemorative liturgy by the minute of silence, always held at 1100 hours. For Nora, in arresting a historical continuity, the minute of silence constitutes "a concentrated appeal to memory;"[71] in other words, a potent moment of recognition of past warfare and its trauma and victims.[72]

For many veterans, the minute of silence is the high point of the commemorative service. Language utilised by the *anciens combattants* since 1918 attests to the pious nature of the practice: for example, ten years after the Armistice, an anonymous writer for the A.G.M.G. reported that "at 1100 hours, a minute of silence was

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[70] P. Beauvilliers, 'La célébration du 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 187, samedi 22 octobre 1949, p. 1.

[71] Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history: *Les lieux de mémoire*,' *Representations*, vol. 26, Spring 1989, pp. 7-25, p. 19.

[72] Adrian Gregory, in his study of Armistice Day in Britain, declared that the enduring power of the Silence lay in its role as both a public and private action: pausing for two minutes was a visible public act which simultaneously encouraged people to reflect on the past and the present situation. Adrian Gregory, *The silence of memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946*, Oxford; Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994, p. 18. Paradoxically, in this way the Silence was both a unifying and an isolating experience for individuals.

religiously observed."[73] The primacy of the World War One ritual which best allows for and encourages living-dead communion has not waned over the decades or across the generations of fire. Writing in 1981, Robert Bruyez believed that the minute was "the most moving ceremony of this Armistice Day, even though it was the shortest."[74] For this veteran, who had not personally experienced World War One, the opportunity provided by the minute of silence to commune with the dead was paramount. The sacredness of the ritual stems from its ability to thoroughly incorporate the war dead into the ceremony - and by extension, incorporate them into the realm of the living.

This minute, more than any other *11 novembre* rite, lends itself to contemplation. The most common focus of such meditation is the fallen: during the minute of silence, when time itself stands still, the living and the dead are able to communicate in what can be viewed as secular prayer,[75] an extension of the veteran desire for unity. Spectators and participants alike are encouraged to think of the war dead, particularly their fate and the reasons for which they died. One *Mutilé de Flandres* writer even encouraged his readers: "In this solemn minute of contemplation let us *live* with our great Dead. // This silent homage will be the tribute of recognition which the country will today consecrate to her defenders."[76] The minute of silence thus allows survivors to connect with the dead because each individual is encouraged to meditate on the past and 'remember' those who lost their lives. The survival of this ritual beyond the immediate post-World War One era in which externalising grief and trauma was primary, and its survival beyond the period when participants and spectators personally knew the victims of 1914-1918, attests to its potency. With the deaths of other soldiers in later wars, this ritual has helped new

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[73] Anon., 'Le dixième anniversaire de l'Armistice,' *Bulletin de l'Association Générale des Mutiles de la Guerre. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, no. 153, novembre 1928, p. 342.
[74] Robert Bruyez, 'Cérémonies anniversaire de l'Armistice et du Soldat inconnu,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 65e année, nouvelle série, no. 1780, 21 novembre 1981, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1.
[75] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54; Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory in modern France 1789-1996*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 223.
[76] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Bergues,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1. Italics added.

generations of mourners to cope. Given its undoubted position as the most 'sacred' of the Armistice Day rites, the primacy of the minute of silence to veteran 'memory' is guaranteed.

In other words, observing the silence at 1100 hours constitutes a mark of respect for the fallen. The many individual and separate acts of reverence together form "the tribute of recognition" which France as a nation gives on Armistice Day. The communal element inherent in the minute of silence was reiterated in another *Mutilé de Flandres* article, written in 1925 at a time of strained relations between the veterans and the French government due to the cost of living and pension adjustments.[77] For this author, the unity and homage displayed during the minute of silence was cause to celebrate even during such difficult times:

> What consolation, amid our great distress, to witness the homage of this crowd! For a few seconds the crowd receives communion in a single, magnificent thought: recognition and love for those who died whilst serving the *Patrie*!
> Such emotion when, amid the tranquillity of Nature, the canon sounds at 1100 hours, ordering the Town to think of its Great Dead!
> In spite of ourselves, in this minute we especially think about the guy who fell at our side, his head smashed in or his body crushed. Reuniting the 1 500 000 war dead in the same distressing memory, during this sublime minute we pay a solemn and powerful homage to the colossal hecatomb.[78]

Obvious in this passage is the tension inherent to the veterans' narrative between glorifying war's sacrifice and describing war's horror (the brutality of war comes across much more forcefully here than in most *ancien combattant* writing).

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[77] The greatest showdown between the veterans and the state over the pension issues of the mid-1920s had occurred one year before this article was published, on the eve of 11 November 1924. Veterans gathered at the Chamber of Deputies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then marched through Paris to draw attention to their plight. The *Journal des Combattants* described the event as "formidable and magnificent," saying that "Paris has not seen such a moving and grandiose manifestation for a long time." Le Comité d'Entente, 'La formidable et magnifique manifestation du 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 67, septembre-octobre-novembre 1924, p. 2.

[78] Maurice Vincent, 'A nos morts,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres*, no. 30, novembre 1925, p. 1.

Yet, the author highlights the positive elements which can be drawn from memorialising war: for one, the minute of silence pulls disparate individuals together through reflection on the fallen. Even if people are not present at the ceremony but scattered throughout town, the canon shot at 1100 hours heralds a moment when citizens are invited to think about the fallen wherever they find themselves. The minute of silence, then, is designed to conquer spatial boundaries - between citizens of the nation who "receive communion" together, and between communities of the living and the dead. This idea echoes the findings of the sociologist Pascal Lardellier, whose illuminating study on "new rites" in France also recognised that through observing festive rituals, people participate in an act of "communion."[79] It is this ability to both facilitate interaction between the realms of the living and the dead and generate unity among members of the national community which gives the minute of silence its symbolic potency. The ritual is so ingrained in imagined and mythologised memories because it helps veterans come to terms with wartime death and simultaneously enables them to enact a sacred *devoir de mémoire*: unity.

Meditation during the minute of silence need not be focused on the dead if circumstances call for self-reflection instead. For example, faced with public and state indifference in the aftermath of the Second World War, the U.F. writer-veteran Labrousse wondered if "during the minute of silence, will they know to silence their selfishness? Will their conscience be forced to more sincerely contemplate those Sons who also need the Nation's gratitude, but who need something more tangible than just a wreath placed on their war memorial or on the Unknown Soldier's tomb?"[80] Here Labrousse sought to employ the potentially powerful commemorative function of the minute of silence to 'voice' a poignant plea for recognition. Despite the fact that veterans delight in witnessing crowd involvement in *11 novembre* ceremonies, Labrousse criticised the general willingness to honour

[79] Pascal Lardellier, *Nouveaux rites: du mariage gay aux oscars*, Paris: Belin, 2005. See especially Ch. 'La République en ordre de marche: 14 juillet, la grande communion nationale.'
[80] M. Labrousse, 'Onze novembre,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants, Victimes des deux Guerres et Groupes de Jeunes (Région Parisienne)*, 2e année, no. 8, novembre 1949, p. 1.

the war dead through ritual when people were reluctant to aid the men and women who survived. Placing struggling survivors in opposition to the war dead, he intended to highlight the discrepancies in their treatment and encourage action to right this injustice. The author here mobilised the war dead in an attempt to counter public and state indifference to the plight of war survivors - those of the first great cataclysm, and also the new generation of victims.

Despite the rigid ceremonial order of *11 novembre*, 'new' rituals have occasionally been added to the programme, often in a bid to reengage public interest or further solidify governmental control over France's memory of war.[81] One such example was in the early 1920s when for many veterans it seemed that the Unknown Soldier was already fading from the minds of the French public. Gabriel Boissy, a journalist and veteran of the 81st infantry regiment,[82] embarked upon a press campaign in order to revive the memory of the Soldier.[83] He proposed installing an Eternal Flame at the Tomb to be rekindled every evening in a gesture of remembrance, an idea which has been described as "beautiful and noble."[84] Boissy hoped that such repetitive commemorative action would draw crowds to the Tomb throughout the year and not just on the great anniversary days.

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[81] Occasionally, rituals are carried out in celebration of a particular event or historical figure. Such was the case when on 11 November 1944 Charles de Gaulle and Winston Churchill laid a wreath at the base of Clemenceau's statue in the recently-liberated Paris. Meyer, *Le 11 novembre*, p. 145. One year later, a speech was pronounced beneath the Arc de Triomphe for the first time since the inhumation of the Unknown Soldier. Serge Barcellini, 'Les cérémonies du 11 novembre 1945: une apothéose commémorative gaulliste,' in Christiane Franck (ed.), *La France de 1945: Résistances, retours, renaissances. Actes du colloque de Caen du 17 au 19 mai 1995*, Caen: Université de Caen, 1996, pp. 85-100, p. 88.

[82] Jean-François Jagielski, *Le Soldat inconnu: invention et postérité d'un symbole*, Editions Imago: Paris, 2005, p. 135.

[83] While it was in fact the editor-in-chief of the *Intransigeant* evening paper, Léon Bailby, who first came up with the idea of the Eternal Flame, Boissy is credited with its conception. Jagielski, *Le Soldat inconnu*, p. 135.

[84] André Mutter, 'Allocution au cours de l'émission "Magazine des Anciens Combattants de la Radiodiffusion Française (chaîne parisienne)" le 7 novembre 1953,' in Anon., 'La Flamme sacrée: émouvant symbole,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 38e année, nouvelle série, no. 392, samedi 14 novembre 1953, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.

It was on 11 November 1923 that the much-anticipated Lighting of the Eternal Flame was added to the ceremonial program. André Maginot, Minister for War and Pensions and "glorious *mutilé*,"[85] performed the Flame's first kindling. This action initiated a ritual which has become central to remembering France's war dead. The Comité de la Flamme, founded with the express purpose of maintaining the Flame and the memory it embodies, meets every evening to perform the symbolic rekindling.[86] The action is therefore not restricted to important anniversaries, but is performed daily before a large audience comprised mostly of tourists and people affiliated with the organisation in charge.

The fire emblem was especially suitable for Boissy's aim. Firstly, as the ancient Greek symbol for eternity, fire embodied the perpetuity which Boissy sought. Secondly, fire had long been central to ritual, and its appropriation for war remembrance intertwined pagan, Christian and secular ceremonial worship. Thirdly, the connotations of fire resonated with the hope and renewal generated by the Armistice; one veteran, for example, described this time as the dawning of a fresh day and era, writing that "a new sun began to shine: the flame of recognition, the flame of remembrance."[87] Finally, fire was also particularly suited to the idea of the nation in mourning. As former Veterans' Minister (and Resistance fighter) André Mutter pointed out, "Fire symbolises an inhabited home. A home without a hearth is a home without a soul." He elaborated, drawing parallels between the fire emblem and the cult of the war dead: "The Unknown Soldier symbolises all who died for France; the perpetual Flame symbolises all the homes of France."[88] Also advocating

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[85] Anon., 'L'Anniversaire de la Victoire,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 5e année, no. 225, dimanche 18 novembre 1923, p. 1.

[86] The Comité de la Flamme was created by Maurice Brunet and Jacques Péricard. General Gouraud was selected as the Comité's first President. Anon., 'La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe,' *Les Chemins de la mémoire*, no. 93, octobre 1999, pp. 10-11, p. 10. For more information on the Comité de la Flamme, visit Chemins de mémoire, <http://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/page/affichepage.php?idLang=fr&idPage= 2437> accessed 10 January 2011.

[87] Grand Papa, 'Il était une fois…,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, 22 octobre 1928, no. 65, p. 1.

[88] André Mutter, 'Allocution au cours de l'émission "Magazine des Anciens Combattants de la Radiodiffusion Française (chaîne parisienne)" le 7 novembre 1953,' in Anon., 'La Flamme sacrée: émouvant symbole,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants*

this idea, the veteran-writer Amédée Chivot noted that "since man learnt how to make fire, this has taken on a symbolic character which has slowly come to mean the idea of 'presence.'"[89]

As Mutter and Chivot suggested, the Eternal Flame is an emblem, a visible representation of both the disappeared and survivor remembrance of the disappeared. The memory of the dead is contained within the Flame; the dead are ever-present just as the Flame is ever-burning. The Eternal Flame is in this way equated to the Christian cross as an emblem of immortality and resurrection.[90] Promoting the possibility that death could be transcended, such allegory complemented dialogue which espoused the symbolic survival of the war dead (Jean Volvey, for example, believed that the *anciens combattants* and other war victims trust that the war dead "live on in [their] hearts"[91]) as a means of coming to terms with the trauma.

It is not just the Eternal Flame that embodies the fallen: the cult of the dead is thoroughly intertwined with notions of 'fire' in general. For one *Mutilé de Flandres* journalist writing in 1927, paying homage to the dead "showed that the sacred flame still burns in the loyal hearts of the *Anciens Combattants*."[92] A decade later, with fascism on the rise across Europe, the A.R.A.C. journalist Gabriel Cudenet implored his fellows:

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de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers, 38e année, nouvelle série, no. 392, samedi 14 novembre 1953, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.

[89] Amédée Chivot, '"Relais sacré": la communion des esprits et des cœurs,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 42e année, nouvelle serie, no. 591, samedi 2 novembre 1957, p. 1.

[90] Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' p. 12.

[91] Jean Volvey, 'Ils restent vivants dans nos cœurs,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 41e année, nouvelle série, no. 542, samedi 10 novembre 1956, p. 1.

[92] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.

> On this anxiety-ridden *11 novembre*, let us participate in an act of faith in liberty, in the immense cause of human emancipation.
> At the Arc de Triomphe we will reignite the flame. Let us rekindle the flame within us, the sacred flame of hope and struggle, the flame of Life.[93]

While Cudenet avoided any explicit reference to the war dead, "hope," "struggle" and "Life" are all notions associated with the fallen. The passage could thus be interpreted as a plea: the author hoped that by observing the ritual of the Flame (and thus 'remembering' the dead), survivors would be roused into action. Cudenet's interpretation of the Flame's function echoes the conclusions of Volker Ackermann, who in his study of the Unknown Soldier recognised that depending on the circumstances the Flame can symbolise patriotism, France and humankind.[94] As David Kertzer recognised, the strength of symbols comes from their very ambiguity.[95]

Its significance as 'eternity' means that the notion of 'flame' also indicates passing on responsibility. The first stage of this transferral of accountability (and of duty) was from the World War One dead to their surviving comrades. This image is exemplified in the 1927 article of a northern French veteran, who hoped that "tomorrow, when the noise of words dies out, we will join our hands together tighter and lift the torch up higher, handed down to us by a beautiful youth cut down so early."[96] The surviving World War One soldiers are thus bound to carry out the will of the dead.

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[93] Gabriel Cudenet ("Paix et Liberté"), '11 novembre 1937,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 7e année, no. 84, 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1937, p. 6. This is a rare instance in which 'flame' (ie. the Eternal Flame) is not capitalised.

[94] Volker Ackermann, '"Ceux qui pieusement sont morts pour la France." Die Identität des unbekannten Soldaten [à Paris],' *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1991, pp. 25-54, p. 53. Avner Ben-Amos saw in the Flame a ritual that was simultaneously patriotic, spiritual and funerary. Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory*, p. 224.

[95] Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 11.

[96] André Lamandé, 'L'Appel des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut*, no. 27, novembre 1927, p. 1. The idea of transferring responsibility from the dead to the living was also made clear in John McCrae's 'In Flanders Fields': "Take up our quarrel with the foe: // To you from failing hands we throw // The

The same analogy is drawn between generations of fire. As a World War One veteran-poet wrote in 1955, as the second generation of fire increasingly began to assume leadership and activist roles:

> At a terrible rate, death touches our ranks
> Our duty is done! Give the Flags to our Sons!
> When the last *Poilus* will pass on the guard, the defence,
> It's their turn to take up flame that still burns.[97]

Here the author wrote of passing on responsibility. Seven years later the same message was reiterated in the *Journal des Combattants*, but in a much more urgent tone:

> In fact, we, the Combatants of 14-18, are seriously starting to age. […]
> And that is the urgent reason why we watch our younger Comrades of 39-45 - perhaps with regret but also with tenderness - and shout at them with all our remaining strength:
> LET'S GO! ON YOUR FEET, YOUTH!
> The torch will fall from our faltering hands. You do not have the right to let it go out.
> Come - quickly - and like children who are bound to bring aid and assistance to their Old Parents, come and help us. Take this torch again and hold it high.[98]

Clear is this passage is the duty/right dichotomy: veterans of later war are not only duty-bound to perpetuate the tasks of their elders, they "do not have the right" to ignore these responsibilities.

The idea of passing on the torch to younger veterans is also prevalent in commentary on the 'veteran dead,' those ex-servicemen whose deaths were

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torch; be yours to hold it high. // If ye break faith with us who die // We shall not sleep, though poppies grow // In Flanders fields."

[97] Henri Soupa (Montauban), 'Onze novembre 1918,' *Mutilé-combattant. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre, Anciens Combattants, et toutes Victimes de Guerre*, no. 321, octobre 1955, p. 1.

[98] Albert Decroix, '"Allons, debout les jeunes,"' *Journal de l'Union des Associations d'Anciens Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres du Pas-de-Calais*, novembre-décembre 1962, no. 42, p. 2.

mourned precisely because they *survived* the war (and often devoted much time to the veteran movement). In this way, the sacredness of 1914-1918 was imposed via the cult of the founding fathers, as Sophie Delaporte has recognised.[99] For example, lamenting the death of Henri Lévêque, President of the A.G.M.G. for over thirty years, one veteran stated that "I ardently hope that a devoted team continues this task, so suddenly interrupted. The friendship we have just lost […] must be rewarded."[100] As World War One veterans relinquished their roles within the associations, younger veterans took on the responsibility of continuing the work that had begun long before their indoctrination into positions of power. This transferral of responsibility, prevalent in veteran discourse via the rhetoric of 'duty,' accounts largely for the survival of a veteran 'memory' and the language which accompanies it: younger veterans were bound to continue along a pre-determined path - and to write of this path in an encoded discourse.

Finally, there is much reference in *ancien combattant* discourse to passing on the flame to young people so that the veterans' memories and ideals persist once the actors of warfare have themselves disappeared. The notion of 'passing on the torch' and the duties it entails account in part for the inflexibility of veteran discourse - the same ideals are transmitted from generation to generation, and the younger veterans are expected to carry out these ideals in the same way as their elders.

The importance of encouraging France's young people to engage with the physical act of kindling the Flame, one of the most important *11 novembre* rituals and imperative to the establishment of bonds between the living and the dead, was emphasised recently in a *Chemins de la mémoire* article, penned by the President of the Comité de la Flamme:

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[99] Sophie Delaporte, *Les gueules cassées: les blessés de la face de la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Editions Noêsis, 1996, p. 207. For the Union Blessés de la Face, this cult figure was Colonel Picot.

[100] O. Largeault, 'Deuil et tristesse,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 403, février 1963, p. 1.

> *I wish that at every ceremony, a young person takes the arm of the* ancien combattant *and that, in a few years, he replaces him.*
> *I wish that young people, duly informed, prepare themselves to take over from their elders.*
> *I wish that in civic instruction classes at school, someone speaks to them of the symbol that is the Sacred Tomb.*
> *I wish that […] this place be a place of pilgrimage where parents bring their children.*
> *To sum up: I wish that we all give the Flame this double symbolic character of Memory and Hope.*[101]

Lighting the Flame is seen as a particularly important ritual for young people because the Flame "carries a message for the future."[102] Witnessing or fulfilling such a pious act inserts young people into France's historic continuum and also aids them in identifying with the Unknown Soldier and the dead he represents. In this way, young people mobilise the dead through ritual. For civilian youth, this activity no longer constitutes an act of catharsis as it did for survivors of World War One and later conflicts, but instead aims to prevent a comparable tragedy. The veterans use their experience of trauma to educate young people about war and campaign for a better future.

The Eternal Flame was installed under the Arc de Triomphe upon the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Positioning the Flame in a location inseparable from the cult of the war dead was intended to assure its prominence in remembrance, just as its symbolism was intended to guarantee the centrality of the war dead in the French national conscience. Its important physical location endowed the Flame with a duty: to safeguard the unidentified warrior and the fallen soldiers he embodied. The *Journal des Combattants* touched upon the theme of protection when its author described the Flame as "watch[ing] over a sacred dead man, an unknown dead man.'"[103] In this way the symbol itself, as well as the men responsible for its care,

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[101] Jean Combette (Général de corps d'armée (CR), Président du Comite de la Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe), 'La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe, Flamme de l'Espérance,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 93, octobre 1999, p. 1.
[102] Combette, 'La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe.'
[103] M. Labrousse, 'XXX e anniversaire de la Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants, Victimes des deux Guerres et Groupes de Jeunes (Région Parisienne)*, 6 année, no. 24, décembre 1953, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.

have a metaphorical duty to guard the 'memory' of the fallen symbolically embedded within the Tomb.

Another Flame-related ritual was introduced to *11 novembre* ceremonial liturgy in 1929: the funerary gathering.[104] This additional service, held beneath the Arc de Triomphe on the eve of the traditional commemoration, was attended by official representatives including General Gouraud,[105] Colonel Pralormo, military attaché to the Italian ambassador, and Francis James of the American Legion, guests representative of the internationalism (at least, between former allies) of Armistice Day. For the A.G.M.G.'s journalist, however, it was the participation of former servicemen which most captured his attention: "Beneath the illuminated Arc de Triomphe, which seemed to leap from the shadows like a memory from the past, members of the Comité de la Flamme maintained a guard of honour. […] For a quarter of an hour, the glorious soldier [Gouraud], immobile in the *garde à vous* position, bowed his head."[106] At 2300 hours, canons were fired and drums played. Gouraud lit the Flame in his official capacity as Military Governor of Paris. This new rite focused on the centrality of the war dead (as represented by the Unknown Soldier) to the *11 novembre* ceremony, as well as the "fervour [and] pity of the survivors."[107] The wake, then, also served to insert the war dead into the ceremony and into the 'memory' of the World War One experience.

In contrast to many *11 novembre* ceremonial rituals which rely on timing, the procession by its very nature denies simultaneity.[108] The practice, which undoubtedly originated from traditional Christian funerary rites in which corpses

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[104] Anon., 'Le 11 Novembre,' *Bulletin de l'Association Générale des Mutiles de la Guerre. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, nos. 164-165, octobre-novembre 1929, pp. 234-235, p. 234.
[105] General Henri Joseph Eugène Gouraud had been particularly prominent in World War One where he lost his right arm. He was subsequently decorated with France's highest military honours and acted as Military Governor of Paris from 1923 until 1937.
[106] Anon., 'Le 11 Novembre,' octobre-novembre 1929, p. 235.
[107] Anon., 'Trente-et-unième anniversaire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 188, samedi 29 novembre 1949, p. 1.
[108] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* [*La fête révolutionnaire 1789-1799*], trans. Alan Sheridan, Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 153.

were accompanied through town to the cemetery,[109] was carried out during remembrance services for the fallen during World War One itself, when mourners gathered in a central area and proceeded together towards the cemetery or place where the ceremony was held.[110] By the advent of Armistice Day, therefore, the procession had already become an essential feature of remembrance ceremonies of war. The ritual was absorbed into *11 novembre* liturgy: before the service at 1100 hours, veterans, school children, spectators and politicians gathered at a pre-designated site and then paraded through town to the war memorial. The purpose of this activity was twofold. Firstly, weaving through the streets captured the attention of onlookers. Secondly - and more importantly - the route symbolically connected spaces of the living and the dead.

As parades are a form of communication,[111] in physically linking the dead and the living, the procession organisers aimed to orientate people's thoughts towards the disappeared.[112] With this task accomplished, the war dead could then be mobilised to promote certain causes. One example of how the veteran community has capitalised upon this possibility is the following comment, penned by an anonymous *Journal des Combattants* writer in 1949. Reflecting on the upcoming *11 novembre*

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[109] Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 54. The procession was also central to revolutionary festivals (Martine Boiteux, 'Fête et révolution: des célébrations aux commémorations,' *Annales de la recherche urbaine*, no. 43, Paris, 1989, pp. 45-54, p. 45) and festivals of the *Ancien Régime* (Danielle Tartakowsky, 'Les manifestations de rue en France 1918-1968,' *L'Information historique*, vol. 58, no. 5, décembre 1996, pp. 212-214, p. 212; Michel Vovelle, *Les métamorphoses de la fête en Provence de 1750 à 1820*, Paris: Aubier/Flammarion, 1976, p. 237). Such research demonstrates that rituals are in essence adopted and adapted to suit the new meanings ascribed to them, rather than purely invented.

[110] Reflecting on commemoration of World War Two, François Marcot noted that before the procession people most often gathered in front of the Town Hall, which he described as the geographic and 'civic' centre of the community. Marcot, 'Rites et pratiques,' p. 31.

[111] Davis, *Parades and power*, pp. 3 and 7.

[112] In designating a certain route through urban space, the procession sacralises certain spaces but condemns others. Boiteux, 'Fête et révolution,' p. 46; Antoine Prost, 'Jeanne à la fête: identité collective et mémoire à Orléans depuis la Révolution française,' in Christophe Charle, Jacqueline Lalouette, Michel Pigenet *et al*., *La France démocratique (combats, mentalités, symboles). Mélanges offerts à Maurice Agulhon*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1998, pp. 379-395, p. 392. Members of the Grand Army of the Republic, an American Civil War veterans' group, also deliberately chose procession routes to maximise their relations with sites of power. Cecilia Elizabeth O'Leary, *To Die For: The paradox of American patriotism*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 57. For information relating to the procession routes of French Third Republic state funerals, see Avner Ben-Amos, 'The sacred center of power: Paris and republican state funerals,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 22, no. 1, Summer 1991, pp. 27-48.

procession, which he believed would "take all its grandeur from its simplicity and its dignity," he outlined the ritual's underlying messages. For one, the procession would "solemnly confirm the persistence of their [the veterans'] memory." In addition, it would also demonstrate the veterans' "pride in having been the artisans of a glorious armistice and [show that] their dearest wish is to be the artisans of an era of world peace."[113] As this extract reveals, memorialising the war dead through participation in the Armistice Day procession allows veterans to promote their points of view.

Variations on the standard procession have been added to the Armistice Day ceremonial programme from time to time. The most successful and longest-running of these was the Relais Sacré, introduced in 1923 at the request of André Linville, editor of the *Journal des Combattants*. The central idea was that a Flame, lit from the Eternal Flame in Paris, would travel through France to Brussels whilst a Belgian delegation would follow the same path in reverse. Symbolically, the Relais Sacré linked the two allies in a powerful and repeated gesture of friendship, and allowed French people outside the capital to witness and carry out rituals of welcome for the Flame. Enacting the ritual thus helped greater numbers of people exteriorise their trauma, and transformed this trauma into a positive affirmation of friendship. The rite was a triumph: in the words of one veteran, "There is no point underlining the grandiose simplicity of this double symbolic gesture which, better than any speech, strengthens the friendship - the fraternity, even - between the Belgian and French peoples. They are united in war, united in peace, united in the cult of their Unknown *Poilus*."[114] In the case of the Relais, for this veteran commentator action spoke louder than words, expressing sentiment which speech might have failed to pinpoint. The power of ritual to demonstrate otherwise-silenced feelings explains its

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[113] Anon., 'Les célébrations du 11 Novembre dans la région parisienne: les cérémonies des Flambeaux,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 189, samedi 5 novembre 1949, p. 1.

[114] Anon., 'La célébration de l'anniversaire de l'Armistice,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 19e année, nos. 224-225, novembre-décembre 1934, pp. 260-261, p. 260.

importance in veteran 'memory' and its frequent employment in veteran mobilisation of the war dead.

The theme of Franco-Belgian friendship was also prominent in the following description of the Relais, penned by Georges Heuse representing Belgian *anciens combattants* residing in Paris:

> This Flame which we carry with contemplation and reverence is a part of the eternal soul of our disappeared friends. We clutch them in our tense fists, eyes lost in distant shadows searching for a friendly young face which one day smiled at life.
> This Torch which travels the country, passing through valleys, plains and towns, represents our desire to remind the living that they cannot forget those whose love for their homeland became an act of faith and heroism, until their last cry torn from their last battle.
> It is also, as time slides past, a chance for the survivors to pause once a year in front of eyes which will always cry. The heart of a mother or father whose son did not return carries wounds which will never heal. All this is symbolised by the Relais Sacré; all this and many more things besides, extremely tenuous, which palpitate in our thoughts as ex-soldiers.
> […] It underlies and sings with inviolable serenity the friendship which links our two nations.[115]

Heuse's account succinctly outlines how the Relais Sacré mobilises the war dead. In the first instance, the ritual centres on the friendship of French and Belgian soldiers. "Beaded with blood [and] bathed in suffering,"[116] this friendship alludes automatically to the fallen. Secondly, the Flame represents - is, in fact, the "soul" - of these victims. Following from this analogy, the physical act of carrying the torch equates to holding the dead soldiers; the Relais Sacré thus provides participants with an opportunity to connect with the disappeared and in this way allows survivors to

[115] Georges Heuse (Président de la Fédération Nationale des Combattants belges, Paris), 'Les symboles du Relais Sacré,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 30e année, nouvelle série, no. 3, 1 décembre 1945, pp. 1-2, pp. 1-2.
[116] Heuse, 'Les symboles du Relais Sacré,' p. 1.

exteriorise their trauma. Finally, the travelling Flame rallies survivors to remember and mourn the fallen; the living are in this instance mobilised around the dead.

The Relais Sacré proved a popular ritual, with ever-increasing participation throughout France and beyond her borders. In tribute to the twentieth anniversary of the Armistice, torches had been lit on 1 November at the war memorials of all major towns across France. Carried to Paris by a delegation comprising two veterans, a war widow and an orphan, the Flames were incorporated into several ceremonial services on 11 November before being extinguished at 2100 hours beneath the Arc de Triomphe.[117] Torches had also been carried from most of the French colonies and several Allied nations, so that the December issue of the *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G.* reported that 117 torches arrived in Paris on 10 November.[118] Perhaps the apogee of the Relais Sacré came on 11 November 1951. In celebration of the hundredth anniversary of Marshall Foch's birth, so many communes requested to receive the Flame that funding proved inadequate.[119] The participation of these national and international groups signified their adherence to the messages of Armistice Day ritual, in particular, its function as a means of facilitating living-dead communion.

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[117] Anon., 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 23e année, no. 252, octobre-novembre 1938, p. 259.

[118] Anon., 'Les cérémonies des Flambeaux,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 23e année, no. 253, décembre 1938, pp. 311-312, p. 311. Flames arrived from Belgium, the United States, Britain, Greece, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia and Portugal, with Italy and Czechoslovakia also sending delegations. To mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Armistice, the Flame crossed the entire country, with ceremonies held in its honour in 64 *départements* and 13 Parisian *arrondisements*. The *Journal des Combattants* congratulated one *département* in which the Flame burned in 445 communes. Le Comité du Relais Sacré, 'Bravo, Camarades!' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 33e année, nouvelle série, no. 142, samedi 27 novembre 1948, p. 1. The Union française was represented by Flames from Indochina, the Antilles and Guyana, although due to maritime worker strikes, North Africa and Afrique occidentale française were not present. Anon., '11 novembre 1948: trentième anniversaire sous le signe de la Flamme,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 33e année, nouvelle série, no. 141, samedi 20 novembre 1948, p. 2.

[119] Anon., 'La célébration du 11 novembre et la commémoration du centenaire de Foch,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 36e année, nouvelle série, no. 287, 20 octobre 1951, p. 1. Marshall Foch was born on 2 October 1851.

After World War Two, the Armistice Day procession was used to not only connect different physical localities within France, but also to link different periods in French history. The ritual developed into an extension of Charles de Gaulle's 'Thirty Years' War' theory, physically and psychologically joining the wars and including the entire French population in the commemorative process. On 11 November 1945,[120] fifteen coffins, representing the different types of World War Two military and civilian *morts pour la Patrie*, were paraded along the Champs-Élysées and through the streets of Paris before being carried to the Mont Valérien fortress west of Paris, where several prominent Resistance fighters had been executed during the Occupation.[121] Physically linking the Arc de Triomphe with a pre-eminent site of World War Two memory - and appropriating the symbolic rituals reserved for the Unknown Soldier on 11 November 1920 - were conscious attempts to symbolically interrelate the victims of the two World Wars.[122] Such gestures were intended to help survivors of the second conflict come to terms with the experience through reference to a successful culture of war remembrance already firmly entrenched in national and veteran 'memories.' It was therefore a means of appropriating the legitimacy Armistice Day afforded.

The Relais Sacré, too, was used to interrelate the two World Wars. On 1 November 1946, Laurent Casanova, Minister for Veterans, lit two torches from the Eternal Flame.[123] One travelled to the Faubourg Pavé national cemetery at Verdun and the

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[120] In Namer's words, the theme of 11 November 1945 was "above all" the Thirty Years' War. Namer, *La commémoration en France*, p. 140. See also p. 167.

[121] In contrast to the Unknown Soldier of World War One, the bodies contained within these fifteen coffins had been identified. Their names were released to the public on 29 October 1945. Barcellini, 'Les cérémonies du 11 novembre 1945,' p. 91. For details of the 11 November 1945 ceremony: Barcellini, 'Les cérémonies du 11 novembre 1945;' Namer, 'La commémoration en 1945;' Namer, *La commémoration en France*, Ch. 8 'L'apothéose de 1945 et la dernière commémoration gaulliste: le 11 novembre.'

[122] Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 2. The elements of the commemoration were also designed to insert it into a historical continuum of great French republican festivals. Barcellini, 'Les cérémonies du 11 novembre 1945,' p. 87.

[123] Casanova was acting in his official capacity as Minister for Veterans; his communist affiliations did not affect his participation in a Gaullist-inspired ritual.

other to Mont Valérien.[124] Ten days later, these torches returned to the capital with the torch from Brussels.[125] The World War One veteran Jean Volvey, who participated regularly in the Relais Sacré service, emphasised the historical continuity inherent in the altered ritual: "From the Arc de Triomphe to Mont Valérien, the Flame has followed the path travelled by French sons heading towards the death of martyrs."[126] The Flame now represented the sacrifice of two generations of Frenchmen, and was employed to help a second generation come to terms with the trauma generated by war.

The same motivation underpinned another procession carried out shortly after World War Two. This time, a symbolic flame was carried between Verdun and the Place de Stalingrad in Paris, where a 'Liberation Tree' had been planted in 1944 to commemorate the successful overthrow of Nazi power. In name and action, this deed harked back to the time of the French Revolution, when planting 'Liberty Trees' was considered an important act of civic liberty and a sign of loyalty to the new Republic and its ideals.[127] The 1944 action demonstrated the recyclability of

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[124] For a history of the Mont Valérien site, particularly the Mémorial de la France Combattante completed there in 1960, see Nathan Bracher, 'Remembering the French Resistance: Ethics and poetics of the epic,' *History and Memory*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2007, pp. 39-67, pp. 54-59.

[125] Paul Michel, 'Le 11 Novembre: Fête des Combattants de 1914-1918,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 40, samedi 26 octobre 1946, p. 1.

[126] Jean Volvey (Président de l'U.D. de la Seine), 'Le Relais Sacré,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 35e année, nouvelle série, no. 241, samedi 18 novembre 1950, pp. 1-2, p. 1.

[127] Testifying to the symbolic power of Liberty Trees, Mona Ozouf has noted that since the French Revolution trees have often been planted during periods of revolutionary resurgence. Conversely, during counter-revolutionary eras the trees are uprooted in an effort to destroy visual proof of republican ideology. Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 232. The act of planting trees has been carried out to celebrate major milestones in French national history including war memorialisation; for example, in the village of Godewaersvelde in Flanders after World War One, the municipality planted an *arbre de la Victoire* in 1920. G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1. Planting Victory Trees constituted one of the "classic civic" rituals incorporated into *11 novembre* liturgy alongside invented rituals, according to Dalisson. Dalisson, 'La célébration du 11 novembre,' pp. 12 and 18. See John Stephens' article on the planting of honour avenues in Western Australia for a detailed analysis of the role of trees in commemorating war. John Stephens, 'Remembrance and commemoration through honour avenues and groves in Western Australia,' *Landscape Research*, vol. 34, no.1, 2009, pp. 125-141. Particularly insightful was his appraisal of growing trees as symbolically representing the human life lost at war (p. 134).

ritual and the potential for memorialists to manipulate existing customs to create 'new' meaning. For the revolutionaries who promoted ceremonial plantings as part of the developing national culture, Liberty Trees replaced the Christian cross as symbols of life and resurrection,[128] once again displaying the recyclability of symbols.

The procession for the Liberation Tree took place on 11 November 1946, when a torch was lit from the Flame at Verdun and carried to the base of the Tree. This action united "two great acts of war, but also two generations moved by the same spirit of sacrifice."[129] The tried-and-tested ritual of procession, created to minimise physical and psychological distance between the living and the dead, was used by organisers to promote a reading of French wartime participation which linked the dead of the World War One trenches with the victims of the Second World War, visibly attesting to the inter-generational unity which the *anciens combattants* so avidly celebrate in their discourse. A follow-up ceremony was held at the Place de Stalingrad on 11 November 1965, when three columns containing earth transported from sites symbolic of the two world wars (Verdun, Stalingrad and Bir Hakeim) were erected around the Liberation Tree.[130] This new ritual again used 'memory' of the war dead to symbolically join the two wars and the two generations of combatants, expanding on the traditional function of *11 novembre* processions (especially the Relais Sacré) which attempt to physically and psychologically connect the communities of the living and the dead. The fallen were mobilised to add legitimacy to World War Two by linking it to the glory of its predecessor.

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[128] Christopher Dawson, *The Gods of Revolution*, London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972, p. 74; Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 260.

[129] Gaston Lesne (Président du Comité de l'Arbre de la Libération), 'Après les fêtes de la Victoire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 44, samedi 23 novembre 1946, p. 2.

[130] Anon., 'Les cérémonies officielles du 11 novembre à Paris,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 50e année, nouvelle série, no. 995, samedi 20 novembre 1965, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.

Time and timing play an important role in *11 novembre*, partly because of fortuitous religious and seasonal alignments and partly because the ceremonial order is rigidly laid out. The fact that rituals derive their emotive force from their very standardisation and repetition[131] provides one reason for the continuity of Armistice Day practice and its associated discourse throughout the decades. While new rites have at times been added to the ceremonial programme, usually in an effort to (re)capture public attention, this process barely affects the overall pattern of veteran discourse, which acknowledges the developments but positions them within its pre-established discursive codes. The many rituals of *11 novembre* were 'invented' (or, in reality, rearranged from existing customs) to incorporate the war dead into the commemoration. The moments of living-dead communion engendered by ritual activity constituted one primary means of coming to terms with the trauma of the World War One experience; as the post-World War Two processions demonstrate, such customs resonated with veterans of subsequent generations of fire because they provided both emotional comfort and legitimacy. The rituals, inherent to the imagined memory of the Great War *poilus*, were adopted by veterans of later wars relying on the mythologised memory they inherited upon joining veteran associations.

[131] Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, p. 42.

Part II - Methods

Chapter Six

Of ceremonies and cemeteries: Mobilising the war dead through space

> "For more than four years, they embodied the earth of France of which they were the rampart."
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> - Henri Lévèque, 'Soldat Inconnu, pardonne-nous, soutiens-nous!' *Intransigeant*, 13 novembre 1938, in *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 23e année, 22e année, no. 253, décembre 1938, pp. 300-302, p. 300.

This second chapter of Part II addresses the specific spaces in which Armistice Day services are held. Most commonly, this space is the local war memorial, the grandest of which is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Less often, ceremonies take place in other places associated with war and its victims, such as cemeteries and battlefields. These four spaces are considered in this chapter in order to demonstrate the affinity which veterans feel for the physical environments of *11 novembre* commemoration, their awareness of the role of space in memorialisation, and their attempts to underscore the links between space and the fallen in order to mobilise their dead comrades in defence of certain causes.[1] Despite readily grasping the significance of space in commemoration and the power of communal gathering at such sites (testament to their awareness of the ideal of 'unity' inherent in ceremony), the veterans have

[1] The dead and the living coexist in places which Maria M. Tumarkin has labelled 'traumascapes,' physical spaces which bear the memory of past trauma. Maria M. Tumarkin, *Traumascapes: The power and fate of places transformed by tragedy*, Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2005, p. 170.

rarely considered the symbolism inherent in monuments to war, an interesting omission in light of the multitudinous meanings embedded in such constructions.

The chapter argues that, as with ritual, space has contributed to the invariability of veteran discourse because the sites associated with World War One remembrance, central to the *poilus*' imagined memory, have been passed on to veterans of subsequent wars. Despite the fact that 'new' spaces for commemoration have been created following other conflicts[2] and particularly following the proliferation of 'memory' which has encouraged minority memories to seek out their own spaces for identity formation,[3] the war memorials (including the Arc de Triomphe), battlefields and cemeteries of the Great War continue to exert a powerful influence over the veteran community. These places are significant because they integrate the fallen into the living world and thus serve as a means of overcoming the trauma of mass wartime death.

The distinct physical environments within which *11 novembre* takes place influence commemoration, and the act of remembering in turn takes possession of the terrain and symbolically imbues it with meaning.[4] In terms of mobilising the fallen, Armistice Day customs resurrect the dead while the commemorative environments,

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[2] For example, in his consideration of Second World War commemoration under Mitterrand, Michael Martin surmised that places of memorial enactment became increasingly "diverse and imaginative" during the period in a bid to maintain the interest of a public familiar with mass spectacle As an example, Martin cited the Normandy Landings, which had only been celebrated on the beaches (rather than at *monuments aux morts*) from 1984, the fortieth anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, p. 234. This same observation has been made by Lieberman. Sophie Lieberman, 'Remembering the *guerre oublié*: Some comments on the creation of the Commission pour le Memorial de la Guerre d'Algerie and French memory at the close of the twentieth century,' in Chris Dixon and Luke Auton (eds.), *War, society and culture: Approaches and issues. Selected papers from the November 2001 symposium*, N.S.W.: Research Group for War, Society and Culture, 2002, pp. 33-44, pp. 39-40. Among the sites to gain in commemorative importance during the Mitterrand years was Compiègne, where the 1918 Armistice had been signed. Gérard Namer, *La commémoration en France de 1945 à nos jours*, Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1987, p. 202.

[3] Whereas prior to 1945 the Arc de Triomphe constituted the pre-eminent *lieu de mémoire* of France's wartime past, today there is a proliferation (and localisation) of such sites. Namer, *La commémoration en France*, p. 208.

[4] According to Gérard Namer, the act of commemorating brings a physical location "to life." Namer, *La commémoration en France*, p. 145.

believed to physically embody the spirit and memory of the dead, contribute to the power of such rituals. The veterans have long recognised the significance of space. In 1927, one northern French *ancien combattant* deplored the declining symbolic value of physical reminders of war, directly quoting the dead to emphasise his point:

> "Throughout the years, maintain the great significance of this pilgrimage - may it never become a soulless gesture. It does not mean much if you erect marble or bronze monuments for us in the city centres if people around you are incapable of understanding the phenomenal price we paid in suffering, devotion and sacrifice. If this is the case, we have died in vain."[5]

The fallen soldiers here identified the complementary relationship between physical and symbolic space. Commemorative space must be endowed with meaning - in the case of war, with memory of trauma, grief, conflict and honour - in order for its potency to resonate. Maintaining the symbolism of physical locations associated with warfare is thus a veteran duty built into the community's imagined and mythologised memories.

The ambiguity inherent in space is well acknowledged in France. The French term '*lieu*,' translated into English simply as 'site' or 'place,' in fact assumes a more subtle meaning in its original language. In the introduction to the first of his multi-tomed *Les lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora mentioned that the term needs to be understood on all levels.[6] His 'sites of memory' include locations such as archives and museums, monumental places like cemeteries or architecture, functional spaces like manuals, autobiographies and associations, and symbolic spaces like commemorations or pilgrimages, anniversaries or emblems.[7] In other words, for Nora and his students, *lieux de mémoire* exist not only as physical but also as abstract, psychological constructions.

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[5] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.
[6] Pierre Nora, 'Présentation,' in Pierre Nora (éd.), *Les lieux de mémoire. I: La République*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984, pp. vii-xiii, p. vii.
[7] Pierre Nora, 'Mémoire collective,' in Jacques Le Goff (ed.), *La nouvelle histoire*, Paris: C.E.P.L., 1978, pp. 398-400, p. 400.

The breadth of Nora's definition has been challenged by some historians. Henry Rousso, for example, questioned the 'hierarchy' of memory sites. If all physical sites hold some memory, he asked, then which are the most topical? Are 'sites of memory' the same as 'memory of sites' or precise events?[8] Marie-Claire Lavabre, while lauding Nora's work, also suggested that 'places of memory' are becoming increasingly abstract as their symbolic or material reality is replaced by the intellectual processes which determine which places to remember.[9]

Regardless of her personal concerns over definition, Lavabre remarked on the successful dissemination of the term '*lieu de mémoire*,' judging that its inclusion in the 1993 *Grand Robert de la langue française* dictionary reflected its absorption into mainstream language.[10] Analysis of veteran publications also demonstrates increasing employment of the term. For example, a recent information sheet about the U.N.C. Lille branch noted that "thanks to its members, the U.N.C. has adopted another look: with its permanent exhibition of uniforms and documents, the basement has become a *lieu de mémoire*."[11] In writing of the activities of its Civic Action Commission in 2000, the U.N.C. also remarked on the increased number of organised trips to *lieux de mémoire*, including Mont Valérien, the D-Day beaches and Verdun.[12]

Nora's *Les lieux de mémoire* catered to traditional identifiers of national identity - "classical mnemonics" according to some historians[13] - as well as topics less readily identifiable with the French collective psyche.[14] Given that identity is the base of all memorial research, Lavabre decided that Nora's project aimed to legitimise a

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[8] Henry Rousso, 'Pour une histoire de la mémoire collective: l'après Vichy,' *Cahiers de l'Institut d'histoire du temps présent*, no. 18, 1991, pp. 163-176, p. 171.
[9] Marie-Claire Lavabre, 'Usages et mésusages de la notion de mémoire,' *Critique internationale*, no. 7, avril 2000, pp. 48-57, p. 51.
[10] Lavabre, 'Usages et mésusages de la notion de mémoire,' p. 51.
[11] Information sheet for U.N.C. Groupe du Nord, I.P.N.S. [imprimé par nos soins].
[12] Anon., 'Commission d'Action Civique,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1653, mars 2000, p. 14.
[13] Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, 'Introduction,' *Representations*, no. 26, 'Memory and Counter-Memory,' Spring 1989, pp. 1-6, p. 3.
[14] Lavabre, 'Usages et mésusages de la notion de mémoire,' pp. 50-51.

(national) identity.[15] However, the existence of a 'national identity' has been disputed. In 1994, John Gillis stated that the nation no longer provided a site of memory for the majority of people,[16] partly because sites of memory, both material and psychological, have lost much of their ability to establish a single interpretation of the past.[17] Nora himself considered post-modern society insufficiently suffused with memory[18] but thought that the nation bore responsibly for ensuring its inviolability.[19]

For Nora, the decline of French national memory has resulted in the creation and selection of certain physical environments which continue to promote the Republic.[20] Historians including Patrick Hutton have seconded this opinion, declaring that a nation removed from its past needs to visit sites of memory in order to retrieve it.[21] Even Gillis conceded that sites retain their ability to attract different groups and hence provide space for interaction between members of a community.[22] These historians perceived that geography interacts with social or cultural elements of history, and considered the role of place in constructing memory and identity. Commemorative space is particularly important to such concerns.[23]

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[15] Lavabre, 'Usages et mésusages de la notion de mémoire,' p. 51. Debating the reasons for the partition of *Les lieux de mémoire*, Burke wondered if the volumes had been produced as critical historiography (which, he noted, Nora rejected), as a means of contributing to national unity, or a combination of both. Peter Burke, 'French historians and their cultural identities,' in Elizabeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald and Malcolm Chapman (eds.), *History and Ethnicity*, London and New York: Routledge, 1989, pp. 157-167, p. 163.

[16] John R. Gillis, 'Memory and identity: The history of a relationship,' in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The politics of national identity*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 3-26, p. 17 and 20.

[17] John R. Gillis, 'Remembering memory: A challenge for public historians in a post-national era,' *The Public Historian*, vol. 14, no. 4, Fall 1992, pp. 91-101, p. 93.

[18] Davis and Starn, 'Introduction,' p. 3.

[19] Pierre Nora, 'Entre mémoire et histoire: la problématique des lieux,' in Pierre Nora (éd.), *Les lieux de mémoire. I: La République*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984, pp. xvii-xlii, p. xxii.

[20] Nora, 'Présentation,' p. vii.

[21] Patrick H. Hutton, 'The role of memory in the historiography of the French Revolution,' *History and Theory*, vol. 30, no. 1, February 1991, pp. 56-69, p. 68.

[22] Gillis, 'Remembering memory,' p. 93.

[23] Although Gérard Namer recognised that *lieux de mémoire* are not necessarily *lieux de commemoration*, and vice versa. Gérard Namer, 'La commémoration en 1945,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 253-266, p. 256.

Implicit in the very definition of 'national celebration' is the wish to geographically unite the entire territory,[24] a desire which has been central to festivity in France since the instigation of the First Republic.[25] However, although ceremonies for Armistice Day occur throughout the country, the national veteran press focuses almost exclusively on the Parisian events, with brief references to regional festivities in the 'Our Sections' part of the newspapers.[26] In her study of Paris as physical and psychological space, Évelyne Cohen appreciated that although provincial-capital struggles leave the capital in conflict with 'France,' by default the action and opinion of Parisians represent the whole country purely because the great national events take place there.[27] Chris Warne, too, recognised that national memory converges in cities and especially capitals.[28] Thus, as commemorations are especially pertinent to the formation and propagation of national sentiment, Paris forms the centre of French festivity and memory.[29] For this reason, that the *anciens combattants* focus their attention on the Parisian ceremonies is understandable.

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[24] Lyn Spillman, *Nation and commemoration: Creating national identities in the United States and Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 140. This desire is expressed regardless of the fact that a 'nation' is a mythic construction. Olier Mordrel, *Le mythe de l'Hexagone*, Paris: J. Picollec, 1981.

[25] Much scholarship has been devoted to the use of festivals during the French Revolution to promote the idea of 'nation.' See, among others Martine Boiteux, 'Fête et révolution: des célébrations aux commémorations,' *Annales de la recherche urbaine*, no. 43, 1989, pp. 45-54; Jean Ehrard and Paul Viallaneix (eds.), *Les fêtes de la Révolution*, Paris: Société des Études Robespierristes, 1977; Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* [*La fête révolutionnaire 1789-1799*], trans. Alan Sheridan, Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

[26] For Claude Lévy and Alain Monchablon, the greatest variable in commemorations of World War Two was the urban-rural divide. They believed that despite attempts to revive interest, town-based commemorations quickly degenerated into monotony. Claude Lévy and Alain Monchablon, 'Les variables locales et régionales,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 79-88, pp. 84-85. Little analysis of the urban-rural divide exists in national veteran publications.

[27] Évelyne Cohen, *Paris dans l'imaginaire national de l'entre-deux-guerres*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999, pp. 11 and 44.

[28] Chris Warne, 'The mean(ing of the) streets: Reading urban cultures in contemporary France,' in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier and Jeanine Picard (eds.), *Recollections of France: Memories, identities and heritage in contemporary France*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 226-245, p. 226.

[29] Paris became the centre of 'national' festivity during the Revolution. Boiteux, 'Fête et révolution,' p. 46. The importance of the capital in determining 'national' behaviour has not waned; in his examination of the Liberation days, Alain Brossat described Paris as the "place par excellence of the intensification of matters of memory." Alain Brossat, *Libération, fête folle: 6 juin 44-8 mai 45. Mythes et rites ou le grand théâtre des passions populaires*, Paris: Éditions Autrement, 1994, p. 88.

Nonetheless, there are several ways in which the particular use of space on Armistice Day symbolically incorporates the entire French nation (thus achieving the epitome of veteran desires for unity). Representatives of local political, community, youth and veteran associations are sometimes invited to the capital for the ceremonies, linking French citizens with one another and unifying French national space.[30] This official spatial conquest is reiterated by the thousands of non-Parisian French and foreign tourists who visit Paris to witness the *11 novembre* celebrations. Simultaneous ceremonies in towns across the country contribute to spatial integration (as in 1952 when the *Journal des Combattants* boasted that "the thirty-fourth anniversary of the Armistice was celebrated with magnificence all across France"[31]) but also, importantly, temporal integration (signified most noticeably by the minute of silence at 1100 hours). This spatial and temporal alignment of *11 novembre* ceremonies is (in theory, at least) a visible enactment of national unity, an aspiration expressed by members of all associations and all generations of fire.

Fanning outwards from a central point, several emblems inherent in Armistice Day commemoration are designed to create a configuration suggestive of vast space.[32]

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[30] The action of inviting representatives to the capital harks back to the 1790 Fête de la Fédération, which commemorated the fall of the Bastille prison one year earlier on 14 July 1789. To celebrate in 1790, *fédérés* [selected political delegates] were invited to Paris from around the country. For details of this 'pilgrimage,' see Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, pp. 54-58.

[31] Anon., 'Le 34e anniversaire de l'Armistice du 11 novembre 1918 a été célébré magnifiquement dans la France entière,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 37e année, nouvelle série, no. 341, samedi 15 novembre 1952, p. 1. The 1790 Fête de la Fédération constituted the first example of a patriotic or civic festival which was celebrated at the same time across a vast geographic space. Michel Vovelle, *Les métamorphoses de la fête en Provence de 1750 à 1820*, Paris: Aubier/Flammarion, 1976, p. 107. The oath, pronounced in *communes* across France at noon on 14 July 1790, contained none of the joy or spontaneity which revolutionaries aspired to. Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 49.

[32] In this respect, Armistice Day ceremonies again hark back to the 1790 Fête de la Fédération, in which the *autel de la Patrie* [altar of the Homeland] functioned as the anchorage point for celebration. Positioned in the centre of the arena with its four corners indicating the entire world, this arrangement symbolised the diffusion of the miracle of democracy to all humankind. It was at this altar that the civic oath, promising unanimous devotion to the *Patrie*, was taken at midday. The altar's horizontal extension suggested a space capable of enveloping the world and simultaneously bringing disparate elements into its centre. Richard A. Etlin, 'L'architecture et la Fête de la Fédération Paris 1790,' in Jean Ehrard and Paul Viallaneix (eds.), *Les fêtes de la Révolution*, Paris: Société des Études Robespierristes, 1977, pp. 131-154, p. 138. Note that the idea of 'spreading

One such construction is the Arc de Triomphe, from which branch several enormous and majestic avenues including the Champs-Élysées. Burial sites for the war dead also testify to this spatial orientation, as cemeteries are often constructed around an ossuary or chapel with the simple crosses marking the soldiers' graves radiating outwards from the central structure. Describing the visual impact of one such military cemetery, Notre-Dame-de-Lorette,[33] a writer for the *Mutilé des Flandres*, placed particular emphasis on the sense of spatial domination:

> The thirty-five thousand wooden crosses which overhang the tombs stretch towards each other with long arms, as if to shake hands in a supreme gesture. You feel as if an immense May Day pole was stretched around the Monument to symbolise the troops standing to attention, whose vigil lends memory its immortality.[34]

Bodies buried after the Second World War also indicate notions of spatial diffusion. In the crypt at Mont Valérien, sixteen *tricolore*-draped coffins (fifteen of which were carried there on Armistice Day 1945) are spread around an urn containing

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outwards' ('*rayonnement*' in French, associated with colonial notions of *la mission civilatrice*) need not be physical. The U.N.C. 79 website describes the association as "participating in the *rayonnement* of France" across the globe. U.N.C. 79, <http://unc79.free.fr/_/index.php> accessed 10 January 2011.

[33] Notre-Dame-de-Lorette is one of France's most important World War One military cemeteries with 20 058 bodies buried in the grounds and 19 998 unidentifiable bodies in ossuaries. These figures are cited in an edition of the French journal *Historiens et Géographes*. Claude Carlier, 'Un lieu de mémoire: la nécropole nationale de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette [Pas-de-Calais],' *Historiens et Géographes*, no. 364, octobre-novembre 1998, pp. 141-144, p. 143. The *Chemins de la Mémoire* website provides the slightly different figure of 40 058 bodies in total, 12 more than Carlier. Chemins de Mémoire, <http://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/page/affichelieu.php?idLang=fr&idLieu=1229> accessed 10 January 2011. The Notre-Dame-de-Lorette basilica was constructed on the site of the original chapel, destroyed by the fighting, and the cemetery was built around it. The structure is located 15 kilometres from Arras, on the "hill which dominates the Artois," Edouard Vandendriessche, 'Notre Dame de Lorette,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 26, 15 juillet 1925, p. 1. The Artois was a province under the *Ancien Régime*, which today forms a large portion of the Pas-de-Calais *département*. For more information on Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, visit the Chemins de Mémoire website (http://www.cheminsdememoire.gouv.fr/page/affichelieu.php?idLang=fr&idLieu=1229); the aerial photograph on the website well illustrates Vandendriessche's description of the cemetery.

[34] Edouard Vandendriessche, 'Notre Dame de Lorette,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 26, 15 juillet 1925, p. 1.

ashes collected from deportation camps.[35] The room's organisation is a geometrical depiction of the ideal of widespread memory dissemination and national unity.

While erecting monuments to commemorate war is an ancient practice,[36] it was only after the Franco-German War of 1870-1871 that the construction of war memorials became a social act in France.[37] This change was due partly to the growing awareness of the fate facing regular and conscripted soldiers, a trend which was exacerbated by the wartime participation of millions of young Frenchmen from across the country during the First World War. Under pressure to acknowledge so many deaths and attempt to lessen survivor trauma and mourning, the government initiated public commemorations for the war dead and constructed specific spaces for remembrance. Importantly, the French term for 'war memorial' is '*monument aux morts*' which translates literally as 'monument to the dead,' testifying to the centrality of the dead in space and remembrance.[38] In veteran 'memory,' too, the war dead, space and the act of commemorating are interwoven.

Rather than providing a neutral backdrop, landscape and local topography play an integral role in monumentalisation,[39] with locations chosen specifically to enhance underlying political, economic, ideological and aesthetic messages. Thus

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[35] Anon., 'La rénovation de la crypte du Mont Valérien,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 115, mars 2002, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

[36] Ken Inglis stated that with a lenient definition of 'war memorial,' the practice of constructing monuments to commemorate war is as old as history itself. K. S. Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167, 'Les monuments aux morts de la Première guerre mondiale,' 1992, pp. 5-21, p. 7. Reinhart Koselleck believed memorials to the dead to be as old as humankind. Reinhart Koselleck, 'Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftung der Überlebenden,' in Odo Marquardt and Karlheinz Stierle (eds.), *Poetik und Hermeneutik Bd. 8*, München: Fink, 1979, pp. 255-276, p. 256.

[37] Maurice Agulhon, 'Réflexions sur les monuments commémoratifs,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 41-46, p. 41.

[38] One of Ken Inglis' 'Ten questions for historians' regarding war memorials regarded the terminological difference between the French and English appellations. He posited that 'war memorial' better suited English-speaking countries: firstly, these countries often listed names of those who served rather just the fallen; and secondly, the constructions were almost always monumental (rather than utilitarian). Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' p. 10. See 'Appendix I - Language and translation' for further examination of the term.

[39] Vicki Cummings, 'Building from memory: Remembering the past at Neolithic monuments in western Britain,' in Howard Williams (ed.), *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003, pp. 25-43, pp. 29 and 35.

deliberation during and after World War One centred not only on appropriate forms of commemoration, but also on suitable spaces for remembrance. The majority of commentators advocated constructing memorials in secular rather than religious space, and placed particular emphasis on building monuments outside.[40]

Thus war memorials were mainly constructed in open, public spaces - sometimes religious (in front of the local church or in the cemetery) but more usually laic and republican (in front of the town hall, school or main square).[41] Several reasons favoured erecting war memorials in open space. Firstly, memorials functioned as substitute graves for missing or non-repatriated soldiers where families could gather, grieve and perform traditional funerary rituals as a means of accepting the

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[40] The consideration of 'open' versus 'closed' space echoed the mentality of the French revolutionaries. The hierarchical structure of the *Ancien Régime* was seen to promote closed, vertical spaces, as walls nourished illusions of public and political inequality and exclusivity. Emmet Kennedy, *A cultural history of the French Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989, p. 331; James Gaasch, 'Rousseau and the politics of fête,' PhD thesis, University of California, 1976, p. 30. In contrast, the revolutionaries followed the thinking of Jean-Jacques Rousseau who had advised against "adopt[ing] these exclusive spectacles which sadly enclose a small number of people in an obscure den" and instead advocated "meet[ing] in the open air, beneath the sky." Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles. Texte revu d'après les anciennes éditions avec une introduction et des notes par M. Léon Fontaine*, Paris: Garnier, 1889 [1758], pp. 267-268. Horizontal spatiality, without physical limits associated with social hierarchy or Christianity, celebrated liberty. Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, p. 129. The Champ-de-Mars, the immense space where the first *14 juillet* celebration took place, illustrated this symbolic spatiality, becoming a sort of secular temple where French people could gather and venerate Liberty. As Richard Etlin has recognised, the spaces and epic-proportioned, Antiquity-inspired forms of the Champ-de-Mars would have been almost inconceivable for the French popular imagination of the time. Etlin, 'L'architecture et la Fête de la Fédération,' p. 131.

[41] As an A.R.A.C. poet noted: "In the middle of a cold cemetery // Or where noisy games are played, // A stone worthy of idolatry - // The monument - is placed." Germaine Sillon (de la F.O.P.C. Tours), 'Le monument,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 3e année, no. 34, octobre 1933, p. 1. According to Annette Becker, between a third and a half of all Great War memorials were erected in front of the local town hall or primary school, republican locations *par excellence*. Constructing the monuments in village centres represented a change from previous policy; even for the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, the majority of memorials were built within cemeteries. Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi: de la mort à la mémoire 1914-1930*, Paris: Armand Colin Éditeur, 1994, pp. 112 et 118. One reason for the proliferation of monuments on Church land was due to the Republic's lack of initiative regarding the war dead of the 1870-71 conflict; their care was primarily left to independent veteran and religious organisations. Avner Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory in modern France 1789-1996*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 213. For a discussion of tensions surrounding the choice of a secluded or central space for building a monument, see Daniel Sherman, 'The nation: In what community? The politics of commemoration in postwar France,' in Lisa B. Miller and Michael J. Smith (eds.), *Ideas and ideals: Essays on politics in honour of Stanley Hoffmann*, Boulder, C.O.: Westview Press, 1993, pp. 277-295, pp. 288-289.

deaths of their loved ones.[42] This practice allowed, secondly, for the exteriorisation and collectivisation of personal grief. This process transformed the physical space into an area for public homage. This process led Antoine Prost to interpret war memorials as national altars to the Republic and the *Patrie* as well as spaces for mourning,[43] attesting to the duality of patriotism and grief enshrined in 'memory' of World War One. Thirdly, memorials erected in public space integrated the war dead into the community of survivors through their centrality and accessibility, furthering ideals of unity and facilitating narratives of the 'living dead'. The visibility of such memorials, fourthly, furthered the republican ideal of monumentalisation as a form of public education; listing names in enclosed, interior spaces - even in republican buildings - was thought to provide insufficient public exposure to the tragedy.[44] In this way, war's lessons - and war's cost - were made perceptible. Practical reasons played a role, finally: as Ken Inglis realised, by 1920 sites were chosen which could accommodate large crowds.[45]

According to the great French historian Maurice Agulhon, monuments create "urban décor."[46] This is definitely true of the *monuments aux morts*, which form an integral part of France's rural and urban landscape. In fact, René Peyre of the A.R.A.C. claimed that "there is no town or village in FRANCE which does not preserve,

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[42] Such monuments contained the 'memory' of fallen soldiers. Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 112.

[43] Antoine Prost, 'Mémoires locales et mémoires nationales: les monuments de 1914-1918 en France,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 42, no. 167, 'Les monuments aux morts de la Première guerre mondiale,' 1992, pp. 41-50, p. 50.

[44] Edmond Perrier, one of the dignitaries who contributed to Jean Ajalbert's 1916 debate regarding the commemoration of fallen French soldiers, wrote that "a number of plaques or monuments were dedicated to the dead of 1870, but they are mostly seen in churches. One cannot say that they are poorly placed, these glorious lists." Edmond Perrier (Directeur du Muséum), 'Lettre à Jean Ajalbert écrit à Paris le 18 juin 1916,' in Jean Ajalbert (ed.), *Comment glorifier les morts de la Patrie? Opinions MM. A. Besnard, R. Boylesve, H. Bergson, J.-E. Blanche, F. Brunot, C. Chenu... etc., etc. Le projet d'Edmond Rostand*, Paris: Georges Crès et Cie, 1916, p. 82. The lawyer Maria Vérone countered Perrier's suggestion to place memorial plaques next to those of 1870, believing that "nobody reads a box in a room of the Town Hall. On the other hand, a monument raised on public ground attracts and holds people's attention." Maria Vérone (Avocate distinguée du Barreau de Paris), 'Lettre à Jean Ajalbert,' in Jean Ajalbert (ed.), *Comment glorifier les morts de la Patrie? Opinions MM. A. Besnard, R. Boylesve, H. Bergson, J.-E. Blanche, F. Brunot, C. Chenu... etc., etc. Le projet d'Edmond Rostand*, Paris : Georges Crès et Cie, 1916, p. 91.

[45] Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' p. 13.

[46] Maurice Agulhon, 'La "statuomanie" et l'histoire,' *Ethnologie française*, n. sér., vol. 8, nos. 2-3, 1978, pp. 145-172, p. 145.

engraved in the stone of a monument, the memory of those who defended the *patrie* and freedom at the front and never returned."[47] (Peyre's statistic is slightly exaggerated; *almost* every *commune* has a memorial[48]). Peyre referred in this passage to memorials erected to the fallen of 1914-1918, which is perhaps not surprising because the text functions as a message for Armistice Day, the date which commemorates the Great War. Yet his exclusion of the victims of other wars confirms the persistence of a certain mode of thinking in the veteran community, especially seeing as veterans of World War Two often appropriated the memorials erected to their forebears[49]; Peyre had himself not participated in the Great War but drew on the discourse - and the sites of remembrance - established for the survivors of that conflict. The proliferation and visibility of war memorials across the country functioned to spread the 'memory' of the war dead through time and space: durable materials ensured their long life,[50] and their construction in countless locations meant that most French citizens were accustomed to their presence. In parallel, the centrality of these monuments to 'memory' of war (including the veterans' imagined and mythologised memories) has ensured the pre-eminence of these physical locations.

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[47] René Peyre, 'Message du 11 novembre,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, no. 481, novembre 1985, p. 21.

[48] In the words of Bouillon and Petzold: "Out of all French *communes*, only a dozen had no dead, and therefore no monument." Jacques Bouillon and Michel Petzold, *Mémoire figée, mémoire vivante: les monuments aux morts*, Charenton-le-Pont: Citédis, Paris: Ministère de la Défense, 1999, p. 29. Daniel Sherman believed "almost all" the 36 000 *communes* in 1920 had a memorial, while William Kidd suggested "some 36 000" and Annette Becker cited "approximately 36 000" memorials. Daniel J. Sherman, 'Art, commerce and the production of memory in France after World War I,' in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The politics of national identity*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 186-211, p. 187; William Kidd, 'Identity and iconography: French war memorials 1914-1918 and 1939-1945,' in Nicholas Hewitt and Rosemary Chapman (eds.), *Popular culture and mass communication in twentieth-century France*, Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, pp. 220-240, p. 221; Annette Becker, 'Deuils privés, deuils collectifs: comment transfigurer les morts de la Grande Guerre?' *Modern and Contemporary France*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1998, pp. 169-176, p. 172.

[49] Agulhon, 'Réflexions sur les monuments commémoratifs,' pp. 44-45.

[50] As memorials are constructed to perpetuate the memory of a certain event, Ajalbert concluded an article pushing for the construction of *monuments aux morts* with the words, "**But not cardboard; marble**" printed in bold to emphasise his desire that the memory of the war dead remain for posterity. He had earlier outlined the practicality of constructing in stone, as its durability would testify to society's ongoing grief and perpetuate the memory of war. Jean Ajalbert, 'La reconnaissance nationale,' *L'Eveil*, 12 juin 1916, in Jean Ajalbert (ed.), *Comment glorifier les morts de la Patrie? Opinions MM. A. Besnard, R. Boylesve, H. Bergson, J.-E. Blanche, F. Brunot, C. Chenu... etc., etc. Le projet d'Edmond Rostand*, Paris: Georges Crès et Cie, 1916, pp. 1-6, p. 6.

As a form of architecture, war memorials are highly politicised constructions - "historico-political monuments" in Agulhon's words[51] - which are erected in public space to propagate and reinforce a specific interpretation of the past.[52] In this way the *monuments aux morts* are physical expressions of their creators' thoughts and feelings about war, nationality, nation, community and death,[53] whose construction erases alternative readings of the past from the landscape.[54] In excluding non-dominant narratives, war memorials function much like the imagined veteran memory developed from the exchange of real stories after World War One.

The sentiments embedded in the thousands of war memorials constructed across France after World War One range from peace-loving to mournful to patriotic.[55] This variety lies partly in the fact that departmental and national politicians, volunteer groups, religious groups, teachers, veterans, artists and entrepreneurs were all involved in the drive to build war memorials. These individuals and organisations helped manage the practical issues surrounding construction, but also aspired to influence the memorial's design[56] - and in doing so, form a relationship with the dead.[57] In other words, the locations, symbols and inscriptions eventually chosen cannot be attributed directly to the *anciens combattants*, but rather to a more

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[51] Agulhon, 'La "statuomanie" et l'histoire,' p. 145.

[52] The Deportation Memorial in Paris, for example, deliberately uses space to encourage visitors to emulate the values for which French citizens were deported during World War Two including unity, liberty and patriotism. Marc D'Avignon, 'The conflict between memory and history: A study of post-World War II commemorations in France,' Colorado College, 1998, p. 35. Monuments can also formulate a reading of the present: Sherman has noted, for example, how after World War One war memorial design often sought to re-establish pre-war gender norms. Daniel J. Sherman, 'Monuments, mourning and masculinity in France after World War I,' *Gender and History*, vol. 8, no. 1, April 1996, pp. 82-107, p. 85.

[53] Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' pp. 5-6.

[54] Andrew Jones, 'Technologies of remembrance: Memory, materiality and identity in Early Bronze Age Scotland,' in Howard Williams (ed.), *Archaeologies of remembrance: Death and memory in past societies*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003, pp. 65-88, p. 67. Nonetheless, while their material presence ensures the place of monuments in history, memory does not always remain constant; as aesthetics and taste change with time, so too can intended messages.

[55] Annette Becker believed monuments could not be classified as either 'religious' or 'republican' because the two cults were inextricably intertwined. Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 118.

[56] That the monument's design still had to conform to dominant nation-wide specifications despite the many opinions put forward led Prost to believe that the *monuments aux morts* commemorated national sentiment at the local level. Prost, 'Mémoires locales et mémoires nationales,' p. 41.

[57] Benjamin Ziemann, *War experiences in rural Germany 1914-1923*, trans. Alex Skinner, Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007, p. 257.

'multi-memoried' interpretation of the war.[58] Nonetheless, over the ninety years since 1918 veteran-writers have unfailingly referred to the *monuments* in their publications, attesting to their importance in memorialisation of war.

Veterans describe war memorials as physical representations of the war dead. As an anonymous A.R.A.C. author wrote, commemorations are held "in front of these monuments which symbolise their [the soldiers'] sacrifice."[59] Given the centrality of such memorials in remembrance of war, they became the physical and geographical focus for commemoration - "sites of symbolic exchange" in the words of Jay Winter[60] - where veterans, local dignitaries and members of the public gathered to recognise and pay tribute to the sacrifice of the fallen and, to a lesser extent, the trauma of the survivors. Writing of Armistice Day 1949, Labrousse of the Union Fédérale described how war memorials operate as spaces of communication between the dead and the living:

> Since 11 November 1918, since that unforgettable minute, you [veterans] have never ceased remembering our 1 500 000 comrades who fell to defend Liberty and Peace.
> Every year, for thirty-one years, you have not forgotten their sacrifices and you have always spared them a pious thought. You have always gathered together in front of your local war memorials at the minute of the *Ceasefire* in order to demonstrate your gratitude to those who fell so that France might live.[61]

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[58] An example of direct veteran intervention in contemporary discussion relating to war memorial construction (and an example of how veterans have used their publications as a means of expressing their opinions) comes from a *Voix du Combattant* journalist. In an article entitled 'What inscriptions should we put on the *monuments aux morts*?' published two years after the Great War, he made his point of view clear. While he had no argument against the term '*enfant*,' he suggested that the label 'children of this *commune*' was too exclusive given the extent of inter-*commune* migration. L. R., 'Quelles inscriptions mettre sur les monuments aux morts ?' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 2e année, no. 48, dimanche 13 juin 1920, p. 1.

[59] Anon., 'Projet d'allocution pour le 11 Novembre,' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre*. Supplément au *Réveil des Combattants* no. 156, 12e année, no. 119, octobre 1958, p. 4.

[60] Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: The Great War in European cultural history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 94.

[61] M. Labrousse, 'Onze novembre,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants, Victimes des deux Guerres et Groupes de Jeunes (Région Parisienne)*, 2e année, no. 8, novembre 1949, p. 1.

For many veteran activists, then, war memorials act as symbolic sites where the living can connect with the dead and thus serve as the physical focus for veteran musings about the war dead. Also apparent in Labrousse's writing is the connection between space, ritual and the war dead, and the differences between remembering (which can be personal and unconscious) and memorialisation (constituting a deliberate and collective action).

However, the majority of veteran commentary relating to the *monument aux morts* only partially makes use of the potential of these physical sites to mobilise the dead. The *anciens combattants* tend to focus on the potent effect of communal gatherings at the memorial, rather than on the symbolic power of the memorials themselves. One example of many is Laurent Copiac's 1938 plea:

> For the upcoming *11 novembre*, which will be the twentieth anniversary of the Armistice, all the survivors and victims of war must stand in tight, silent rows in front of the *monuments aux morts* in order to confirm their loyal memory and their deep affection for their brothers and comrades who died to conquer peace and to kill war. In meditating before these funerary monuments, French war veterans - and, we hope, veterans from other countries - will again earnestly take the sacred vow to always fight war.[62]

Copiac here aptly recognised the effectiveness of large - particularly international - crowds in promoting peace. As with most other veteran-writers, however, he did not make mention of the messages embedded in war memorials themselves, which are imbued with meaning because the deceased died for a certain cause.[63]

This general lack of recognition or interest is remarkable given the very obvious parallels which veterans could draw between the location, iconography and aesthetics of war memorials and many of the reasons for which they mobilise the

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[62] Laurent Copiac, 'Les vrais sauveurs de la paix sont les morts de la guerre,' *L'Après-Guerre* (Edition de la Fédération Départementale Aveyronnaise), in *Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses*, 4e année, no. 34, novembre 1938, p. 6.

[63] Olivier Dumoulin, 'Des morts pour vivre,' in Olivier Dumoulin (ed.), *Autour des morts: mémoire et identité. Actes du Ve colloque international sur la sociabilité. Rouen, 19-21 novembre 1998*, Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 2001, pp. 437-444, p. 439.

dead. Among these causes are libertarian ideals of equality, symbolised on the memorials by the names listed in alphabetical or chronological order.[64] This feature could be appropriated by the veterans to influence the living; as Jay Winter appreciated, promoting the idea of equality in death should impact on life.[65] If symbols are at the centre of memories,[66] then the symbols decorating the *monuments aux morts* were specifically chosen to echo the views of artists and designers. Christian imagery and terminology were prevalent, though often understated, yet the *anciens combattants* rarely comment on this feature, either. Patriotism is also present in certain war memorials, expressed through emblems such as Marianne and the *coq gaulois* but especially the '*Mort pour la France*' inscription.[67] As the idea of 'dying for France' put the nation above all else, in their study of war memorials Jacques Bouillon and Michel Petzold saw this inscription as a way of guaranteeing national moral and civic unity.[68]

Given that the symbolism of war memorials explicitly mobilises the dead to promote certain causes and readings of war, the *anciens combattants*' general lack of awareness of this potential is noteworthy. One possible explanation is that the veterans do not feel qualified to comment, not being responsible for the design in the first place. It also seems likely that the transmission of veteran 'memory' is responsible for this omission: the *poilus* failed to engage with the subject and this oversight has not been addressed by veterans of later wars too reliant on - or bound to - the themes and language espoused by their predecessors. The startling near-absence of discussion relating to the symbolism of war memorials thus illustrates

[64] Ken Inglis believed the trend for 'democratic' naming, which often ignored rank, was appreciated by officials and members of the public. Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' p. 7.
[65] Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*, p. 97.
[66] Warne, 'The Mean(ing of the) Streets,' p. 226.
[67] Note that because the list of people *morts pour la France* was supplied after government officials had researched the circumstances of death and declared individuals worthy of the classification on a case-by-case basis, inscribing these words on the memorial echoed the official language of Paris rather than local initiative. Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 42.
[68] Bouillon and Petzold, *Mémoire figée, mémoire vivante*, p. 30.

the invariability of veteran discourse regarding mobilisation of the war dead on Armistice Day particularly clearly.

In a rare piece of veteran writing considering the war memorials as symbols in their own right, the *Réveil des Combattants* published a poem in 1933 damning the message of glory and sacrifice promoted by such constructions. Two verses refer specifically to the monument's symbols:

> Displaying symbols of exaltation -
> A sculpted laurel, medal or cross -
> It endeavours to make us have faith in
> The belief they have been recompensed.
>
> And among the symbols you find
> A book filled with funerary words.
> The names, line after line,
> Are like those of a barbarous verse.[69]

The sarcastic tone indicates the poet's disapproval of the attempt to swathe the barbarity and trauma of war in abstraction and patriotism. While espousing notions of glory and sacrifice promoted by state memorialists, the veterans have throughout the ninety years since World War One simultaneously attempted to underscore the horror of the war experience (resulting in an inherent tension within their narrative). The A.R.A.C. poet's interpretation of the monument's reliance on abstraction (and thus exaggeration of only one element of the narrative) is apt: Mosse believed that the majority of war memorials obscured the horrific reality of warfare and death,[70] a phenomenon which Annette Becker has labelled 'sterilising' the wartime experience.[71]

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[69] Germaine Sillon (de la F.O.P.C. Tours), 'Le monument,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 3e année, no. 34, octobre 1933, p. 1.

[70] George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 59.

[71] Annette Becker, 'Les monuments aux morts: des œuvres d'art au service du souvenir,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 144, novembre 2004, pp. 7-10, p. 9.

'Sterilisation' - which in reducing the war experience to a manageable abstraction constituted a powerful means of aiding survivors come to terms with the past - was also apparent in the graceful and poetic language usually employed in war memorial phraseology. This language masked the reality of war and had little in common with the language used by the soldiers themselves, much like veteran discourse published in the official associative press. The reasoning behind the employment of "high diction" was identical in both cases: the language was formulated to ease the pain of war. (Conversely, however, war memorial phraseology could render warfare even more horrific and difficult to accept, as with allusion to the deaths of children through the '*enfants*,' '*enfants de la Patrie*' or '*enfants de la France*' inscriptions,[72] which alluded to the reversal of normal generational codes engendered by war[73]). Inscriptions, with their many connotations, could also be used by veterans to mobilise the dead, and yet, as with other elements of the war memorials, this appropriation rarely occurs. Given the centrality of war remembrance to veteran 'identity,' this omission is interesting, but has continued through the generations of fire precisely because the original discourse-makers failed to engage with the possibility.

Of all the thousands of *monuments aux morts* across France, the Arc de Triomphe is the grandest and most famous, constituting the "symbol" of France according to one observer.[74] Napoleon had commanded the construction of the Arc to honour the armies of the Revolution and the Empire and to serve as a symbolic entrance to the capital.[75] Sculptures and inscriptions decorating the Arc echo this militarism: three-dimensional art worked into the Arc portrays Napoleon's victories and the names of 558 generals are inscribed on the walls.[76] With the inhumation of the Unknown

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[72] Pierrick Hervé, 'La mémoire communale de la Grande Guerre: l'exemple du département de la Vienne,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 48, no. 192, 'Souvenir de la Grande Guerre,' décembre 1998, pp. 45-59, p. 49.
[73] Becker, 'Deuils privés, deuils collectifs,' p. 175.
[74] Raymond Rudorff, *The myth of France*, London: Hamilton, 1970, p. 4.
[75] Maurice Agulhon, *De Gaulle: histoire, symbole, mythe*, France: Plon, 2000, p. 72.
[76] The victories occurred at Arcole, Abukir, Austerlitz, Iéna and Wagram. Marilène Patten Henry, *Monumental accusations: The monuments aux morts as expressions of popular resentment*, New York: Peter Lang, 1996, p. 111. While the Arc was actually inaugurated in 1836 under King Louis Philippe, the site is affiliated with the Emperor's military successes. Charles Péguy, for one,

Soldier in 1921, an additional memory was imposed on the physical space associated with France's imperial heritage.[77]

In particular Charles de Gaulle played upon the site's historical continuity: describing the feeling of marching down the Champs-Élysées in 1944 after four years of German occupation, he wrote that "with each step I take down the world's most glorious axis, it seems like the glories of the past join with today's."[78] The General appropriated the legitimacy and potency of the site constructed to commemorate French military proficiency, positioning himself as heir to these triumphs. The veteran Jacques Meyer also recognised the importance of the site's history, writing in 1972 that "it is natural that all the generations present here beneath the Arc de Triomphe - where we no longer notice the names of Napoleonic victories - […] believe that the ritual homage of this day is as well suited to such a great historical figure as to the Unknown Soldier."[79] Even though the Soldier of indeterminate rank lay beneath a monument bearing the names of France's most successful pre-World War One generals,[80] he was worthy of the grand setting. As the representative of all the Great War dead, and of the millions of later victims of war as well, the Unknown Soldier was awarded pre-eminence in imagined and mythologised veteran memories. Despite their 'distance' from the Soldier, a victim of a war that was not their own, *anciens combattants* of later conflicts have

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described the monument as the "perfect tribute to French imperial glory." Charles Péguy, *Notre Patrie*, Paris: Gallimard, 1948 [1905], p. 40. The *anciens combattants* share this view: contemplating the potential effect of restoration scheduled for 1990, the *Journal des Combattants* prophesised that "the Arc de Triomphe will rediscover its imperial youth." R. B., 'L'Arc de Triomphe retrouvera sa jeunesse… impériale en 1990,' in Anon., 'Des promesses aux réalités,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 71e année, nouvelle série, no. 2056, 7 novembre 1987, p. 6.

[77] The 'republicanisation' of the Arc supports Harrison's claim that burial of the dead not only founds but also appropriates physical space. The surest way to possess space, he continued, was to bury one's dead in it. Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 24.

[78] Charles de Gaulle, *Mémoires de guerre. II: L'Unité 1942-1944*, Paris: Plon, 1954, pp. 313. Bracher saw in this description a classic example of linking the Resistance struggle with the historical epic. Nathan Bracher, 'Remembering the French Resistance: Ethics and poetics of the epic,' *History and Memory*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2007, pp. 39-67, p. 47.

[79] Jacques Meyer, '11 novembre 1918 - 11 novembre 1972: espoirs et réalités,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 325, novembre 1972, p. 10.

[80] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 95.

continued to write to and of him with the same reverence and familiarity (in itself an odd combination of sentiments) as the men for whom he was a peer.

Originally, individuals had called for the Soldier's inhumation in the Pantheon, the revered resting place for the *grands hommes* of French national history.[81] However, as this site was closely associated with the Revolution and the Republic, it was deemed too divisive to house a symbol representative of the entire nation.[82] As scholars have remarked, disputes over where to inhume the cadaver were based on opinions regarding France's identity, especially its republicanism.[83] Containing the body within an enclosed space, accessible only to a small number of people, was also considered incompatible with the Soldier's intended universality.[84] All French people were encouraged to visit the Tomb in a tangible expression of the veterans' desire for unity; the purpose of commemoration is, after all, to enable communion between members of a community.

Inhuming the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe was intended to ensure the centrality of World War One and its trauma in France's national memory because the setting functioned as a focal point. As the S.G.A./D.P.A.-produced *Chemins de la mémoire* noted, the Eternal Flame, which "watches over an unknown

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[81] Inhuming an unidentified fallen soldier in the Pantheon was first suggested during a commemorative ceremony in November 1916 by Francis Simon, then President of the Rennes branch of the Souvenir français. This association had been founded during the 1870-1871 war with the intention of perpetuating the memory of the dead. For more information on the association, see for example Souvenir Français, <http://assoc.pagespro-orange.fr/memoiredeguerre/souvfranc/intro.htm> accessed 10 January 2011.

[82] Cohen, *Paris dans l'imaginaire national*, p. 22; Julian Jackson, *La France sous l'Occupation 1940-1944* [*France, The Dark Years 1940-1944*], trans. Pierre-Emmanuel Dauzat, France: Flammarion, 2001, p. 74. Veterans, too, were mainly opposed to the Pantheonisation of the Soldier. Ben-Amos, *Funerals, politics and memory*, p. 219. Note, however, that Claude Javeau has labelled the Unknown Soldier's Tomb a "branch" of the Pantheon, saying that while his name may be less famous than Victor Hugo, Jean Jaurès or Jean Moulin, the Soldier's glory is in a certain way greater than theirs as it represents the glory "of the entire *Patrie*." Claude Javeau, 'La cadavre sacré: le cas du Soldat inconnu,' *Frontières*, vol. 19, no. 1, automne 2006, pp. 21-24, p. 24.

[83] Historians who have proposed this argument include Volker Ackermann, '"Ceux qui pieusement sont morts pour la France." Die Identität des unbekannten Soldaten [à Paris],' *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1991, pp. 25-54, p. 37; Annette Becker, 'Les soldats inconnus,' *Historiens et Géographes*, no. 364, octobre-novembre 1998, pp. 135-139, p. 135.

[84] Jean-François Jagielski, *Le Soldat inconnu: invention et postérité d'un symbole*, Paris: Editions Imago, 2005, p. 61.

dead man, a sacred dead man," is situated "opposite the Champs-Élysées which leads to the Concorde, the Tuileries Gardens and the Louvre; it dominates Paris."[85] Almost fifty years earlier, then Veterans' Minister André Mutter had used similar terms to describe the Arc as the "majestic resting place of that anonymous dead soldier, whose silence dominates Paris."[86] The physical setting of the Soldier's Tomb was thus fundamental to his importance in the French memory of war, and conversely, the Soldier's importance guaranteed the site's pre-eminence. The interrelationship between the war dead and place was also ingrained in *ancien combattant* 'memory.'

As "the Elected One"[87] representative of all the war dead, the Unknown Soldier plays a special role in remembrance ceremonies. His Tomb provides a symbolic and physical focus for national rituals of mourning and externalisation of trauma: speeches are pronounced in front of it and wreaths are laid at its base. *Anciens combattants* and regular army troops parade along the Champs-Élysées on Armistice Day. This ritual action is often referred to in veterans' articles,[88] highlighting their affinity with the site. For one anonymous writer, the march up the avenue brought all the disparate meanings of Armistice Day commemoration together:

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[85] Anon., 'La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe,' *Les Chemins de la mémoire*, no. 93, octobre 1999, pp. 10-11, p. 11.

[86] André Mutter, 'Allocution au cours de l'émission "Magazine des Anciens Combattants de la Radiodiffusion Française (chaîne parisienne)" le 7 novembre 1953,' in Anon., 'La Flamme sacrée: émouvant symbole,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 38e année, nouvelle série, no. 392, samedi 14 novembre 1953, pp. 1 et 4, p. 1.

[87] Marcel Hachette, '11 novembre 1958: 40e anniversaire de l'Armistice,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 354, octobre 1958, p. 1.

[88] For example Etienne Nouveau, 'En remontant les Champs-Élysées: réflexions à propos de 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 32e année, nouvelle série, no. 90, samedi 15 novembre 1947, p. 1.

> Making truce with their worries, united in the memory of combats which they endured so that France might live, united in the homage to their brothers-in-arms who disappeared and who were animated by the common ideal of love for peace and respect for the independence of the *Patrie*, they [the *anciens combattants*] will walk up the triumphal route leading to the Tomb of the Immortal Unknown One.[89]

The Unknown Soldier, representative of the war dead, acts as the focus of both ritual and place in this quotation. The author clearly demonstrated how action and space relating to the dead can be used to represent and propagate certain values, illustrating the way in which veterans mobilise the fallen through space.

In writing of the power of the Champs-Élysées as a site of mass gathering, the veterans often make special reference to the students who on 11 November 1940 "brav[ed] the restriction [of 29 October 1940]" which had forbidden any public demonstration on the upcoming anniversary of the Armistice.[90] Encouraged by Radio Londres' pre-*11 novembre* appeals, Parisians clandestinely laid wreaths beneath the statue of Clemenceau and upon the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Overt protest occurred at the Etoile in the early evening, prompting mass arrests and injury. Considered the first unconcealed act of resistance against the Nazi occupiers, the demonstrations marked 11 November 1940 as a key anniversary celebration. For many *anciens combattants*, this action continues to represent the archetypal display of French national spirit. One proponent of this belief is the World War One veteran Jacques Meyer, author of a book devoted to the story of *11 novembre*[91] and a frequent contributor to the veteran press:

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[89] Anon., 'Les célébrations du 11 Novembre dans la région parisienne: les cérémonies des Flambeaux,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 189, samedi 5 novembre 1949, p. 1.

[90] Hugues Dalleau, 'Le 11 novembre: commémoration de l'Armistice de 1918: jour national du souvenir,' en supplément 'Guerre 14-18,' p. xvi, *La Voix du Combattant/La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1538 octobre 1988; Hugues Dalleau, 'Résistance: le 11 novembre 1940,' *Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1559, novembre 1990, p. i.

[91] Jacques Meyer, *Le 11 novembre*, Paris: Hachette, 1960.

> … These two texts [‘Here lies a French soldier who died for the *Patrie*’ and, ‘On 11 November 1940, in front of the Unknown Soldier’s Tomb, French students manifested en masse, the first resisters against the occupier,’ plaques laid beneath the Arc de Triomphe] sum up the mystique of Armistice Day, of all past and future Armistice Days, for as long as the date is celebrated.[92]

In choosing the commemoration of *11 novembre* to stage their protest, the students drew on ‘memories’ of World War One - particularly the idea of national unity inherent in both France’s 1914-1918 experience and its post-war services to the dead - in an attempt to recreate this sentiment as a tool of dissent. The sacred site enhanced the symbolic element of the protest: “This lesson of Armistice Day 1940 shows that the Arc de Triomphe de l’Etoile is a privileged site, the symbolic crucible of French unity and identity,” claimed Hughes Dalleau in 1990.[93] Four years after the protest of 1940, in a recently-liberated Paris, an immense swell of people paid homage at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The Arc and the Soldier thus provide a space in which people can come together and communicate, particularly in memory of France’s fallen soldiers. Space here facilitates the enactment of unity, inherent to veteran discourse throughout the ninety years since 1918.

Although the Tomb serves to unite all French citizens, it has maintained a special sense for the veterans, whether of World War One or later wars. According to one *Journal des Combattants* contributor in 1987, the Tomb has become a secular national altar for the *anciens combattants*.[94] The veterans’ profound connection with the physical environment of the Unknown Soldier was demonstrated in 1969 when

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[92] Jacques Meyer, ‘La symbolique du 11 novembre,’ *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l’Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 229, novembre 1964, p. 12. This article was reprinted in the *Cahiers de l’Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d’Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l’Union Fédérale*, novembre-décembre 1968.

[93] Hugues Dalleau, ‘Résistance: le 11 novembre 1940,’ *Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1559, novembre 1990, p. i.

[94] R. B., ‘L’Arc de Triomphe retrouvera sa jeunesse… impériale en 1990,’ in Anon., ‘Des promesses aux réalités,’ *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 71e année, nouvelle série, no. 2056, 7 novembre 1987, p. 6.

M. Grimaud, then Parisian Préfet du police, suggested transferring the Tomb from the Arc to the Hôtel des Invalides given the amount of traffic during commemorative services. The U.F. joined the U.F.A.C. in protesting this proposition, citing the Etoile as an "important site of memory"[95] (although the writer called it a '*lieu de souvenir*' rather than a '*lieu de mémoire*,' as journalists writing after the publication of Nora's work probably would have done). Despite the passing of more than half a century, and the advent of different sites for war commemoration, veterans remained attached to the Arc de Triomphe. Its pre-eminence in the imagined memory of World War One combatants ensured its importance; later veterans absorbed this narrative in the form of mythologised memory. While the Invalides hosted the bodies of Napoleon, Foch and other great military leaders, the Unknown Soldier needed to be displayed in an open, universally-accessible area. Another solution was adopted: the Champs-Élysées was "'neutralised' of traffic [and] became silent, almost muffled"[96] during future Armistice Day commemorations.

In addition to physical and geographic space, veteran commentary published by members of different associations and generations of fire implies that the Unknown Soldier occupies another, more esoteric, form of space. Due to the unique and powerful role he fulfils, the Soldier is not bound by normal codes of spatial occupation. The U.F.A.C.'s General Secretary Maurice de Barral, in a 1946 soliloquy debating the Soldier's story and future, addressed him "wherever you rest, beyond time and space."[97] Similar sentiment was expressed in a U.N.C. article published just after World War One, in which the author posited that the war dead

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[95] Anon., 'Le Soldat Inconnu,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 210, mai 1969, p. 2.

[96] J. R., '11 novembre 1991,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 610, novembre-décembre 1991, p. 14.

[97] Maurice De Barral (Secrétaire Général de l'U.F.A.C.), 'La prescription d'une victoire,' 'Le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 42, samedi 9 novembre 1946, p. 1. In illustrating the 'non-nationalism' of Armistice Day ceremonies, Prost has argued against the idea of war memorials as '*autels de la Patrie*,' indicating instead their function as symbolic tombs. Prost, *III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, p. 61.

render accepted limitations irrelevant: "they [the dead] have now crossed to the other side, the side of eternity, where time and boundaries no longer exist," he claimed.[98] Pierre Para, writing in 1970 for the A.R.A.C., also highlighted the dissolution of normal spatial divisions in relation to the soldiers:

> When they return from the great war,
> Haversacks at their powdery sides;
> When they will arise from beneath the earth,
> The great sky will be too small for their size.[99]

Neither earth nor sky is great enough to contain the soldiers' grandeur. The comments of all three veteran-writers could allude to Heaven, another space which the war dead can access. The persistence of the belief that the Unknown Soldier, and the war dead in general, are not restricted to normal physical spatiality reflects the *ancien combattant* assertion of wartime martyrdom. This conviction fills a need: celebrating the exceptionality of men fallen in battle - aptly illustrated by the ability of these men to 'occupy' forms of space beyond ordinary comprehension - is an extension of the veterans' desire to see a positive in the war experience in the hope of minimising their trauma.

For veteran observers such as André Lamandé, the Arc de Triomphe was the physical representation of the particular space occupied by the dead:

> The dead are not those whose cold, naked bodies
> Lie on the ground. Their perfect souls
> Weave a winged crown at the Arc de Triomphe
> And the flame watches over the Unknown Soldier.[100]

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[98] Marc Sangnier (Député Paris), 'La Fête de la Paix et la Commémoration des Morts de la Guerre,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 2e année, no. 66, dimanche 31 octobre 1920, p. 1.
[99] Pierre Paraf, 'Quand ils reviendront,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 301, novembre 1970, p. 15.
[100] André Lamandé, 'Anniversaire,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 6e année, no. 275, samedi 8 novembre 1924, p. 1.

Lamandé's poem, published in 1924 in the U.N.C.'s *Voix du Combattant*, emphasises the relationship between the Arc and the war dead, especially the Unknown Soldier. Again, the dead are assumed to occupy an otherwise-inaccessible space reserved uniquely for them. This esoteric spatial occupation is interesting in light of fact that the Soldier's entire symbolic potency is derived from his realness - he was once a living human, whose cadaver is a physical object which can be exhumed, moved, reburied and visited, and which serves as the physical focus for veteran musings on the dead. Undoubtedly, the veterans' insistence that the fallen can be found in special places - an extension of the myth of the 'living dead' - helped them accept the untimely disappearance of their former comrades.

Unlike war memorials, which have long been a feature of the physical landscape, the construction of distinctly military burial spaces is a recent phenomenon. During the nineteenth century, soldiers had been buried either in civilian cemeteries or in mass graves.[101] While the Franco-Prussian War saw some improvement in the treatment of the war dead, with Article 16 of the 1871 Frankfurt Treaty stating that the French and German governments were bound to maintain military graves within their respective territories,[102] it was the unprecedented mass death of World War One and its resultant survivor trauma that led to the creation of separate military cemeteries. Clauses were included in the Treaty of Versailles which declared nations responsible for the dead on their territory, although cemetery design was the business of each individual nation.[103]

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[101] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 38.

[102] Luc Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, *Nos morts: les sociétés occidentales face aux tués de la guerre XIXe-XXe siècles*, Paris: Payot, 2002, p. 70. The Frankfurt Treaty was signed on 10 May 1871 at the end of the Franco-Prussian War. Among other issues, the Treaty detailed the new frontier and outlined provisions for residents of Alsace-Lorraine regarding the possibility of French or German citizenship. Article 16 stated: "The French and German governments are reciprocally responsible for respecting and maintaining the tombs of soldiers buried in their respective territories." A full copy of the text is available at M.J.P. Digithèque, <mjp.univ-perp.fr/traites/1871francfort.htm> accessed 10 January 2011.

[103] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 82.

After the Great War, families in France could choose to leave their fallen buried at the battlefield or transferred to their local cemetery at the government's expense.[104] Between 1921 and 1923, approximately 240 000 bodies were exhumed and returned to their families, equating to thirty percent of all identified bodies.[105] The unclaimed or unidentifiable soldiers were buried in military necropolises and cemeteries along the former front lines. In 1931, the U.N.C.'s Paul Galland understood the importance of these physical sites in remembering the dead:

> All they [the dead] have on earth is a tomb, when they have one. All they have is a cold name on civil documents and on a wooden cross, when the sun and the rain have chosen to respect the clichéd letters painted upon it. They live on only in our memory which sometimes evokes them and finds them there, and in the affections of those they left behind.[106]

Specifically created to remember the fallen, these spaces were physical evidence of Mosse's Myth of the War Experience, particularly the cult of the fallen.[107] Military cemeteries were, in other words, testament to the need to memorialise World War One in a way which rendered its horror acceptable.

As cemeteries bear witness to the dominant interpretation of the wartime experience,[108] World War One cemetery design and organisation visually displayed messages promoted by the prevailing memory of war, and physically embodied the trauma of World War One and the new view of death it engendered.[109] Foremost

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[104] For an account of this occurrence, see Yves Pourcher, 'La fouille des champs d'honneur,' *Terrain. Revue de l'ethnologie de l'Europe*, no. 20, 1993, pp. 37-56.

[105] Capdevila and Voldman, *Nos morts*, p. 89; Serge Barcellini, 'Un demi-siècle d'action commémorative,' in Gérard Canini (ed.), *Mémoire de la Grande Guerre: témoins et témoignages. Actes du Colloque de Verdun 12-14 juin 1986 à Nancy*, Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1989, pp. 17-30, p. 20. Both Jay Winter and Annette Becker put the number of returned bodies at 300 000: Becker, *La guerre et la foi*, p. 107; Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning*, p. 26.

[106] Paul Galland, 'Quand même!' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 12e année, no. 640, mercredi 11 novembre 1931, p. 1.

[107] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 80.

[108] Ron Robin, 'Diplomatie et commémoration: les cimetières militaires américains en France 1918-1955,' *Revue d'histoire moderne*, vol. 42, janvier-mars 1995, pp. 126-141, p. 127.

[109] The design of World War One cemeteries suits Howard William's attestation in his consideration of the intersection of archaeology and death that cemeteries are used to create and negotiate both origin myths and community identities. Howard Williams, 'Introduction: The Archaeology of death,

among these attitudes were the myths of wartime camaraderie and equality in death: at the beginning of the war, officers were buried separately[110] but were later buried alongside their men, often without record of rank.[111] These soldiers were normally buried beneath the identical "wooden crosses" referred to in Roland Dorgelès' prize-winning novel.[112] The crosses were impeccably arranged, reminiscent of military regularity. In the words of Marc Sangnier, a decorated Great War veteran who was both a fervent Catholic and republican: "In the immense military cemeteries, the small wooden crosses are straight and lined up like at a review."[113] Much like the 'sterilised' inscriptions on war memorials, the symmetry and order of cemeteries were means of sanitising the horror of war,[114] which rendered the experience more tolerable for survivors.

The homogeneity of cemeteries, which promoted collective rather than personal suffering and sacrifice, represented for Ron Robin in his study of American military cemeteries in France the antithesis of individualism. He believed such uniformity could only be appreciated by modern, industrial societies, a notion which evokes the supposed de-humanisation of *fin-de-siècle* Europe.[115] However, promotion of the ideal of the collective potentially helped survivors come to terms with their trauma in promoting war remembrance as a communal, shared phenomenon. In 1966, one

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memory and material culture,' in Howard Williams (ed.), *Archaeologies of remembrance: Death and memory in past societies*, New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003, pp. 1-24, p. 8.

[110] George L. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 4, October 1986, pp. 491-513, p. 500.

[111] While identical tombstones served to physically symbolise certain ideals, contemporaries were fearful of mass-producing war graves or memorials which could trivialise the sacrifice. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 90.

[112] Roland Dorgelès, *Les Croix de bois*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1919. For this novel, Dorgèles was awarded the Fémina-Vie Heureuse Prize in 1919. Mosse pointed out that these crosses, along with constructed chapels and pious tombstone inscriptions, were representative of the Christianity inherent in the Cult of the Fallen Soldier. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 49.

[113] Marc Sangnier (Député Paris), 'La Fête de la Paix et la Commémoration des Morts de la Guerre,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 2e année, no. 66, dimanche 31 octobre 1920, p. 1. Sangnier was elected to the 'Blue Horizon' Chamber of Deputies following World War One, before abandoning politics in 1929. He advocated Franco-German rapprochement The planting on honour avenues also projects the appearance of a review. John Stephens, 'Remembrance and commemoration through honour avenues and groves in Western Australia,' *Landscape Research*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2009, pp. 125-141, p. 135.

[114] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 112.

[115] Robin, 'Diplomatie et commémoration,' p. 135.

veteran-writer interpreted the neutrality and equality of the military cemeteries as essentially positive:

> Our people lie there; the earth has accepted them.
> The cemetery is not a desolate landscape. Made by man, the forest reclaims its place, symbolic. Nature reclaims its rights. Our comrades died so that life could continue. Life continues, and France is free once more, mistress of her destiny.
> The homage to those who won and paid for this freedom with their bodies is simple, grandiose, moving.
> The area is rectangular and slightly declining - all its corners catch the sun's rays. It represents justice, and this justice is geometric and absolute: the crosses are all the same and ordered in rigorously parallel lines, not long enough that the perspectives blend on the horizon. […] Total communion!
> […]
> It is necessary that every Frenchman visit such a place once in his lifetime. Then nobody would pronounce the word 'war;' would not hear it without shaking, without realising the terrible connotations which are contained within this word. Heart and spirit would unite in gratitude and piety. […] These crosses would clarify everyone's duty: no matter where you are, always work for Peace.[116]

Thus for this writer, the cemetery served as more than a resting place for the fallen; messages were buried alongside the bodies. Firstly, the specific spatial manipulation of the setting with its identical, geometrically-aligned crosses is the physical representation of democracy and "justice." The use of the phrase "total communion" is telling in its implications of unity: the dead are united beyond the divisions to which the living sometimes succumb and are thus the purest examples of the veterans' yearning for unity. Secondly, just gazing upon the mass of crosses ignites anti-war sentiment within observers. In this way, the cemetery design itself embodies and endorses certain readings and memories of war. The dead are mobilised through specific spatial manipulation.

[116] P. F., 'Cimetière,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 188, juillet-août 1966, p. 45.

According to the author, visiting military cemeteries and confronting the immensity of wartime death constitutes a lesson in pro-peace sentiment to which all people should be exposed. Witnessing the seemingly-endless, uniform rows of crosses reiterates the fact that war kills - in large numbers - and the physical demonstration of this truth should serve to deter future conflict. Avoiding future warfare is not merely a *devoir* for the *ancien combattant* community, according to the author, but a duty to which "everyone" is bound. The power of cemeteries as sites of anti-war sentiment was also elucidated by Henri Pichot in early 1939. A tireless advocate of Franco-German reconciliation during the interwar years,[117] Pichot was well aware of the tense international situation.[118] In light of this knowledge, his placement of the peace-winning (and by extension, peace-loving) war dead in opposition to warmongers through reference to cemeteries is particularly poignant:

> The Dead are the saviours and victors.
> The fields of monuments and crosses are still there along all the fronts. Politicians who care nothing for the price of life except their own, as well as international players in the finance, petrol and steel industries, are not yet strong enough to relieve the cemeteries of their meaning. And these people are not powerful enough to excommunicate people or stir up hatred. Killing the Dead is harder than you think!
> 1938, year without war.
> Peace was saved at the cemeteries of all the fronts.[119]

For Pichot, the dead and their ideal of peace are physically symbolised by the cemeteries. He celebrated the fact that people seeking to "kill the dead" by disregarding aspirations for peace exerted only minimal influence over the populations they wish to steer towards war - they are unable to undermine the symbolism of cemeteries. Of course, less than a year after these words were penned,

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[117] Claire Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne de 1930 à 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004, p. 53.

[118] The Comité France-Allemagne, created with the purpose of facilitating Franco-German cultural and intellectual relations and of which Pichot had been a significant supporter, met for the last time in May 1939. Barbara Lambauer, *Otto Abetz et les Français, ou l'envers de la Collaboration. Préface de Jean-Pierre Azéma*, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001, p. 119.

[119] Henri Pichot, 'Les Morts, c'est eux, les Saveurs et les Victorieux,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 158, 10 janvier 1939, p. 3.

war had broken out and Pichot's optimistic predictions were crushed; the dead had once more been killed, to continue with his metaphor.

The sentiment of peace which emanates from the cemeteries was also echoed by Gabriel Lepeme of the A.G.M.G.-U.N.M.R.A.C., writing about a trip to Flanders sixty years after the Armistice:

> What hits you first is the cemeteries.
> At random distances, razed villages… Some are rebuilt but always next to the one that was destroyed.
> All this is poignant, revolting even; and in the light of history one question is raised: Why?[120]

The rhetorical question highlights the futility and uselessness of war, epitomised for Lepeme in the destruction of the landscape and especially in the poignant existence of the military cemeteries. As one historian of war culture remarked, the cemeteries along the Western Front constitute the most powerful means of making the human mind comprehend the magnitude of so much death;[121] the trauma of war was configured spatially and remains a potent reminder of erstwhile suffering.

The continued existence of World War One military cemeteries, and their continued use in ceremonies of remembrance, ensures their centrality to *ancien combattant* discourse. Yet, cemeteries are not only described by veterans but also interpreted. The fact that comparable readings have been put forward by veterans writing in the aftermath of World War One, whose comrades lay buried in the cemeteries, and by veterans of later wars, who have visited the sites without necessarily knowing the soldiers, attests to the survival of a distinct version of the war experience in veteran 'memory.' For example, although Lepeme visited the cemetery with greater

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[120] Gabriel Lepeme (Vice Président National), '11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (A.G.M.G.-U.N.M.R.A.C. et A.F.N.)*, no. 543, décembre 1979, p. 1.

[121] Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Memory and naming in the Great War,' in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The politics of national identity*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 150-167, p. 161.

temporal and emotional distance from the Great War than his forebears, he reached a very similar conclusion regarding the message of the site, dictated to him by the mythologised memory he had adopted in joining a pre-existing association. Messages are thus contained in the specific spatiality of military cemeteries. Space itself exerts power, aiming to convey a particular interpretation of the war experience to the visitor, a message which veteran 'memory' interprets as essentially anti-war. The veterans capitalise upon the symbolism of such sites by mobilising the dead who inhabit them.

However, although in the words of a French veteran, sites of military burial provide "eloquent testimony" of French attachment to the memory of her fallen,[122] Ron Robin illustrated the limitations of war cemeteries as political statements given the limited numbers of people who visit.[123] Precisely because the veterans see military cemeteries as visible proof of the cult of the dead (and perhaps partly because of their fear that few people visit), they deem it necessary to invest in these sacred spaces. In 1955, for example, a veteran complained that the government's lack of spending was reducing cemeteries to a "pitiful" state.[124] Even ten years earlier, with the country in financial strife following World War Two, the veterans argued that the country's "poverty" did not excuse the poor standards of some burial grounds.[125] Only properly caring for the tombs of the fallen could effectively honour those who lay beneath them and fulfil the veterans' *devoir de mémoire* to ensure their comrades' sacrifice be respected. In the case of military cemeteries, imagined and mythologised veteran memory position this sacrifice as given for the cause of peace.

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[122] E. Delvigne, 'Le Culte des Morts pour la France pose d'émouvants problèmes,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 40e année, nouvelle série, no. 488, samedi 15 octobre 1955, pp. 1 et 2, p. 1.
[123] Robin, 'Diplomatie et commémoration,' p. 140.
[124] E. Delvigne, 'Le Culte des Morts pour la France pose d'émouvants problèmes,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 40e année, nouvelle série, no. 488, samedi 15 octobre 1955, pp. 1 et 2, p. 1.
[125] Anon., 'Que les morts soient honorés,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1107, 15 décembre 1947, p. 2. Cemetery upkeep is an ongoing concern of the veteran community. For example, in his history of the U.N.C. François Malval made mention of the 1925 press campaign against the progressive abandonment of military cemeteries. François Malval, *Onze ans d'action: histoire de l'U.N.C. 1919-1930*, Malakoff (Seine): Imprimerie Durassié et Co., La Voix du Combattant, 1930, p. 24.

Veterans often refer to gravesites because of their deeply-felt affiliation for the land which shelters the fallen. Using a large amount of religious terminology (characteristic of the immediate post-World War One era but unusual for journalists of the U.N.C.), one writer explained:

> Among the villages left in ruins, among the devastated fields, families have knelt piously. The souls of our heroes seemed to leave these anonymous tombs, wanting to fill the space. Our beings, infused with these supernatural surroundings, again saw the painful but oh so glorious agony met with stoicism and resignation by the legions of brave men accomplishing the most beautiful of aims: that of seeing fraternity reign on earth.[126]

Just being in the same "supernatural" vicinity as the buried soldiers imbued survivors with a particular sentiment. Induced to imagine the bloodshed which took place, onlookers also related to the reasons why such slaughter occurred. In other words, radiating from the place where the soldiers lay buried were their memories of battle but also their resolutions and hopes. Such descriptions clearly demonstrate how veterans, as self-appointed spokesmen for the war dead, have a duty to mobilise the dead to promote certain causes, thus turning personal tragedy into collective good.

In the interwar period, remembrance groups organised visits to battlefields and cemeteries. The benefits of such trips included helping ex-servicemen accept the past, raising money for war victims and satisfying nostalgic yearnings.[127] Although according to George Mosse such voyages also contributed to the "banalisation" of the war experience,[128] revisiting sites of combat was important for many veterans.[129] Over time, the numbers of World War One veteran visitors declined and

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[126] Edouard Hannecart, 'La Voix des Tombes,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 1e année, no. 17, dimanche 5 novembre 1919, p. 1.
[127] Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' p. 501.
[128] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 7.
[129] To reformulate Maria M. Tumarkin's insightful questions about soldiers' return: Does this action constitute reconciliation or confrontation with the past? Does is lead to closure or not? Is it less painful to return than to never visit? Tumarkin, *Traumascapes*, p. 133.

the act of 'battlefield tourism' was transformed into a "moving pilgrimage of brothers, fathers, sons and grandsons to the graves where they [the dead] lie and to monuments where the names of these heroes are engraved."[130] In other words, the tradition of visiting sites of war remembrance has been passed on from war's participants to their descendants and curious individuals, reflecting the landscape's centrality to memory and commemoration of warfare.[131] The continuing war cemetery pilgrimages suggest that, through the very fact of having died, the dead who lie buried there mobilise the living.

Rather than being deliberately created to perpetuate (a certain) memory of war, battlefields are memorials to fighting, death and trauma simply by virtue of the events which took place there.[132] During conflict, the natural landscape is at once actor, spectator and product of the conflict it harbours:[133] it can host adventure, provide real or imagined protection from enemy attack, respite from the fighting, or hinder military manoeuvrability. During the course of war, landscape is manipulated

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[130] L. Karrer (Secrétaire Général), '11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 494, octobre 1971, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1. For a discussion of the use of the word 'pilgrimage' in relation to battlefield visits, see Sam Edwards, 'Commemoration and consumption in Normandy 1945-1994,' in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds.), *War memory and popular culture: Essays on modes of remembrance and commemoration*, Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland and Co. Inc. Pub., 2009, pp. 76-91, pp. 85-86. For a masterful account of tourism as a means of remembering the traumatic past, see Alon Confino, 'Traveling as a culture of remembrance: Traces of National Socialism in West Germany, 1945-1960,' *History and Memory*, vol. 12, no. 2, Fall 2000, pp. 92-121. Battlefield tourism by former soldiers is considered pp. 107-111.

[131] On the 'pilgrimages' of modern-day Australians to World War One sites, see Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the battlefields of the Great War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. As he noted elsewhere, pilgrimage to Gallipoli has in fact been infused with new impetus as the World War One soldiers die, contrary to expectation. Bruce C. Scates, 'Manufacturing memory at Gallipoli,' in Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (eds.), *War memory and popular culture: Essays on modes of remembrance and commemoration*, Jefferson, N.C.; London: McFarland and Co. Inc. Pub., 2009, pp. 57-75, p. 62.

[132] As Yves Pourcher remarked in his study of battlefield excavations, soldier death automatically charged sites with meaning: French civilians treated the earth with indifference or disdain if Germans were buried there, whereas French soldiers rendered earth sacred. Pourcher, 'La fouille des champs d'honneur,' p. 6 [online version].

[133] Jean-Paul Amat, 'L'arbre et la forêt, témoins du champ de bataille,' in Gérard Canini (ed.), *Mémoires de la Grande Guerre: témoins et témoignages. Actes du colloque de Verdun 12-14 juin 1986*, Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, pp. 300-312, p. 300. See also Chris Pearson, '"The Age of Wood": Fuel and fighting in French forests, 1940-1944,' *Environmental History*, vol. 11, no. 4, 2006, pp. 775-803 for a case study of the abuse of forestry during World War Two.

by armies which seek to make use of its advantages and negate setbacks produced by uncooperative terrain. The purity of nature contrasted with the devastation caused by war.[134] Violence against landscape psychologically affected soldiers,[135] as testified by comments on the region's natural environment prevalent in *ancien combattant* Armistice Day discourse. For example, while ruminating on the terrifying battles which had produced the corpses now buried in the vast Notre-Dame-de-Lorette military cemetery spread before him, one *ancien combattant* marvelled that "it all takes place in a profound and impressive silence broken only by birdsong and the melancholic murmur of the breeze."[136] The natural beauty seemed at odds with the destruction and noise of the battles which had raged there only a few short years before.

The explosions and drawn-out fighting of World War One trench warfare eventually destroyed the natural environment of much of northern France and Belgium.[137] Today, decades after the Armistice, evidence of the fighting remains visible[138] as testified by a recent collection of black and white photographs entitled *Traces of the Great War*. In prefacing the volume Philippe Mestre, then Minister for Veterans, astutely noted that

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[134] As for example in John McCrae's famous poem: "In Flanders fields the poppies blow // Between the crosses row on row, // That mark our place; and in the sky // The larks, still bravely singing, fly // Scarce heard amid the guns below."

[135] Ian Ousby, *The road to Verdun: World War I's most momentous battle and the folly of nationalism*, New York: Doubleday, 2002, p. 340.

[136] Edouard Vandendriessche, 'Notre Dame de Lorette,' *Le Mutilé des Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 26, 15 juillet 1925, p. 1.

[137] One German song explicitly described the transformation of the land: "Wood of the Ardennes! Wood of the Ardennes! // You will soon be a quiet cemetery // In your deep earth lies // The blood of brave soldiers." From the recollections of French soldier Léon Nonnenmacher. Léon Nonnenmacher (99 ans), 6 et 12 février 1995, in Jean-Noël Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles: paroles des derniers survivants de la Grande Guerre*, Strasbourg: Editions La Nuée Bleue, 2006, p. 68.

[138] Verdun, for example, still bears traces of the physical damage inflicted during the War. Amat, 'L'Arbre et la forêt,' p. 300. Vimy is another noticeable example of how the natural landscape bears scars of the conflict but also serves as a monument to the horror. Vimy marks the strategic hill behind Arras, capital of Pas-de-Calais. It is now a tourist site operated by the Canadian government in recognition of the nation's many servicemen who fought and died there. An impressive memorial dominates the hill, with cemeteries and other, smaller memorials scattered around the site. Visitors are welcome to peruse the information centre and wander through reconstructed trenches. Certain sections of the site are roped off, however, with red signs warning against entering due to unexploded devices. Although now covered in dense, lush grass and young trees, the unnatural hillocks and pockmarked land testify to former bombardments.

> eighty years after the hostilities of the First World War began, and as the ranks of the *anciens combattants* begin to thin out, the Memory of that terrible conflict is still very much alive. Apart from the war memorials in our *communes* and the great national necropolises which my Ministry takes care of, the landscape itself remembers these tragic conflicts, and what was for millions of combatants life in the trenches.[139]

In recognition of the destruction and horror which citizens of these areas endured, 274 of the 907 *communes* in the Pas-de-Calais *département* were decorated with the 1914-1918 Croix de Guerre.[140]

The rituals and symbols of Armistice Day ceremonies have also occasionally recognised and paid tribute to the landscape destroyed by war.[141] The U.F.A.C.'s 2002 Armistice Day message acknowledged the ravaging effects of war on the natural landscape, stating that "for the most part, this conflict took place on national territory, sowing ruin and devastation on the industrial and rural regions of the North and East."[142] Fourteen years earlier, in celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the Armistice, the government concentrated on "respecting those who fell for France during the Great War, honouring the approximately 600 survivors; and finally, paying homage to the land of the Artois region so cruelly destroyed during this terrible war."[143] Even long after the fighting, the land was thus

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[139] Philippe Mestre (Ministre des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre), 'Préface,' in J. S. Cartier, *Traces de la Grande guerre: vestiges oubliés en Belgique, Nord Pas-de-Calais et Picardie*, Paris: Marval: Ministère des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre, 1994.

[140] Anon., '11 novembre 1988: 70e anniversaire exceptionnel,' *Sirpa-Actualités*, nos. 38 et 39, in *Le Combattant du Pas-de-Calais et du Nord (Journal trimestriel de la Fédération départementale de l'Union Fédérale des AC, de Résistants, de Victimes de Guerre (Mutilés - P. G. - Déportés - Orphelins - Veuves - Ascendants)*, no. 248, quatrième trimestre 1988, p. 5.

[141] In fact, Janine Bourdin perceived in *11 novembre* rituals an "almost physical" expression of devotion to the land. Janine Bourdin, 'Les anciens combattants et la célébration du 11 novembre 1938,' in René Rémond and Janine Bourdin (eds.), *La France et le Français en 1938-1939,'* Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1978, pp. 95-114, p. 109.

[142] U.F.A.C., 'Message du 11 novembre 2002,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 666, juillet-août-septembre 2002, p. 11.

[143] Anon., '11 novembre 1988: 70e anniversaire exceptionnel,' *Le Combattant du Pas-de-Calais et du Nord. Journal trimestriel de la Fédération départementale de l'Union Fédérale des A.C., de*

"one of the privileged theatres of this commemoration,"[144] remembered and celebrated for its role in the conflict just like the men who had fought there. This homage was evidence of the survival of a veteran 'memory' which recognises war's destructivity. Reports boasted that "one thousand men and more than 150 military vehicles criss-crossed the region, visiting Arras, its sub-prefectures [*sous-préfectures*] and 180 communities. One community in five had a military ceremony."[145] In this celebration, therefore, the dead were mobilised specifically through reference to the places where they had fought and died.

During World War One, land, earth and soil took on symbolic significance. Soldiers interacted with nature in new ways, living in trenches hollowed from the earth, fighting to gain territory, and burying comrades.[146] The affiliation between soldiers and the land was expressed by Henri Lévèque, long-term President of the A.G.M.G., who acknowledged that "for more than four years, they [the soldiers] embodied the earth of France of which they were the rampart."[147] The wording is ambiguous, referring to the soldiers' physical and symbolic relationship with the land: literally close to the earth whether fighting or dead, the men personified and simultaneously defended the spirit of 'France.' In this way, soldiers embodied the land just as the land swallowed the soldiers, alive in trenches or dead in graves. The land itself is thus testament to the combatants' sacrifice, and can be used to mobilise the dead.

The soldiers' affinity for the natural landscape was confirmed when advocates designated the tiny *bleuet* [cornflower] as the French equivalent of the British Legion's poppy. Selecting the cornflower was emblematic on many levels. As one

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Résistants, de Victimes de Guerre (Mutilés - P.G. - Déportés - Orphelins - Veuves - Ascendants), no. 248, quatrième trimestre 1988, p. 5.

[144] Anon., '11 novembre 1988: 70e anniversaire exceptionnel,' p. 5.

[145] Anon., '11 novembre 1988: 70e anniversaire exceptionnel,' p. 5.

[146] For Leed, an ambivalent relationship developed between soldiers and the land: burying comrades' bodies made the land seem threatening. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 20.

[147] Henri Lévèque, 'Soldat Inconnu, pardonne-nous, soutiens-nous!' *Intransigeant*, 13 novembre 1938, in *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 23e année, no. 253, décembre 1938, pp. 300-302, p. 300.

veteran wrote, the cornflower was related to the poppy, young conscripts were often labelled '*bleuets*' and the flower's blue colour matched the uniforms of French World War One troops.[148] Another veteran deemed the flower's colour representative of France in general, and also noted that the cornflower was the most common wildflower on the battlefield apart from the poppy.[149] As in Britain, "*grands mutilés* and unemployed veterans" produced artificial flowers throughout the year for sale on Armistice Day.[150] Proceeds aided financially-challenged survivors; symbolically, the action was conceived in order to remember and honour the war dead.[151] The sale of *bleuets* thus alleviated the trauma of survival by turning the war experience into a means of both practical and moral benefit, a *devoir de mémoire* not only to fallen comrades but also to struggling survivors.[152] Through the sale of *bleuets*, Armistice Day activity used the battlefield to resurrect the fallen. Alternatively, it could be argued that the pressure exerted on citizens to conform and purchase the flowers constitutes an instance in which the living mobilise the living.[153] The manufacture and sale of the *bleuets* highlights ongoing attempts to perpetuate their post-World War One significance through layers of memory.

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[148] Anon., 'Le Bleuet de France,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 190, samedi 12 novembre 1949, pp. 1 et 3, p. 3. *Bleu-horizon* (horizon-blue) was the colour of the uniforms adopted in late 1914/early 1915 by the French Army upon realizing that the traditional uniforms were far too visible and hence unsuited to the trench warfare of World War One. These horizon-blue uniforms became one of the symbols of the French *poilus*.

[149] Avit Leweurs, 'Le Bleuet de France, fruit de l'U.F.?' *Cahier-Journal de l'Union Fédérale des associations*, no. 96, septembre-octobre 2001, p. 3.

[150] Anon., 'Le Bleuet de France,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 21e année, no. 238, octobre-novembre 1936, p. 229.

[151] For Fussell, the sale of poppies was both a gesture of remembrance and oblivion - remembrance of the soldiers' sacrifices but ignorance of the agony. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 248.

[152] Maurice Geandre, 'La vente du Bleuet,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 156, octobre 1958, p. 4. As Jay Winter so eloquently described of the situation in Britain: wearing a poppy is the equivalent of "a little war memorial on their lapel." Jay Winter in Jay Winter and Robert Wohl, 'The Great War: Midwife to modern memory?' in Jay Winter (ed.), *The legacy of the Great War: Ninety years on*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009, pp. 159-184, p. 160.

[153] Adrian Gregory, in his study of Armistice Day in Britain, cited some examples of public pressure to buy and wear a poppy. Adrian Gregory, *The silence of memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946*, Oxford; Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994, p. 108.

For France, the First World War - and particularly its trauma - is synonymous with Verdun.[154] The 1916 battle is associated in national mythology with resistance against the invading army to such a degree that for many observers the soldier of Verdun embodies the Great War *poilu* and Verdun represents the heroic town *par excellence*.[155] Describing the battle soon after World War Two, Paul Lemoine's writing is an example of veteran discourse which perpetuates this philosophy: "It would be impossible to cite leaders' or soldiers' names or to distinguish one unit over another, because in front of Verdun everyone was equal in value, in endurance, in persistence. Each citizen was a wall!"[156]

Attributing to Verdun's inhabitants wall-like fortitude, Lemoine unwittingly underlined how the town has manipulated spatial symbolism. The Monument to Victory and the Soldiers of Verdun was erected in the centre of town, a location which symbolically declared the importance of the town's self-imposed role as guardian of memory. For the historian Gérard Canini, the Monument mirrors Verdun's appropriation of the battlefield to formulate its contemporary identity.[157] The town also grasped the centrality of commemoration in formulating memory and identity, holding annual commemorative services for its military and civilian victims.[158]

The decision to celebrate the Battle of Verdun[159] was put forward at the beginning of 1920, and the first ceremony was held amid the rubble of the ruined town on 23 June of that year. Despite practical constraints and poor organisation, the annual

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[154] Ackermann, '"Ceux qui pieusement sont morts pour la France," p. 26.
[155] Verdun occupies a "unique place" in French national history, argued Cochet. François Cochet, 'Verdun: les évolutions de la mémoire d'une bataille symbolique,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 160, avril 2006, pp. 7-10, p. 7. The town has become a symbol of national unity and strength. Ousby, *The road to Verdun*, p. 335.
[156] Paul Lemoine (Membre du Conseil National, Président du Groupe de l'Aisne), 'Verdun!' *La Voix du Combattant*, 23e année, no. 1122, 15 mars 1949, p. 1.
[157] Gérard Canini, 'Verdun: les commémorations de la bataille (1920-1986),' *Revue historique des Armées*, no. 3, 1986, pp. 97-107, p. 105.
[158] Canini, 'Verdun: les commémorations de la bataille,' p. 104.
[159] Fussell saw in the labelling of conflicts as "battles" a desire for historical continuity and legitimacy. Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, p. 9.

ceremonial programme was established, mixing republican and religious rituals.[160] However, while the festive liturgy remained relatively constant, the commemorative space altered over the years such that the once-grandiose ceremonies held at the national cemetery of Faubourg Pavé in Verdun town eventually declined into little more than a simple wreath-laying.[161] The first reason for this spatial change was the *anciens combattants*' desire to pay homage to the dead on the land which sheltered them. The affinity which many veterans felt for the area was made apparent in this 1927 Armistice Day account from northern France:

> The bugle call heralded the minute of silent contemplation. A heavy silence hung over the wooden crosses which make us think of the countless soldiers laid out across the hillsides of Lorette and Douaumont. What a poignant vision! The veterans remember, and suddenly see their comrades jumping full of life from the trenches and falling motionless and bloody onto the parapet.[162]

The land itself thus mobilises the fallen, and during the minute of silence veterans relive the war experience through connecting with the land. A second reason for the decline of ceremony in Verdun town was the 1932 completion of the Douaumont Ossuary, which contained the remains of 130 000 soldiers divided into 46 vaults to represent each of the major battlefield sections, and its nearby military cemetery.[163] Built in the centre of the most contested section of the battlefield, the Ossuary became a pre-eminent site of French memory of World War One. Commemorative activities today are still held within this physical space devoted to remembering the fallen, demonstrating the continuing importance of Great War battlefields in ceremonies of war even ninety years later.

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[160] For more detail, see Gérard Canini, 'Verdun [Meuse]: les commémorations de la bataille 1920-1986,' in Gérard Canini (ed.), *Mémoires de la Grande Guerre: témoins et témoignages. Actes du colloque de Verdun 12-14 juin 1986*, Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, pp. 355-374.
[161] Canini, 'Verdun: les commémorations de la bataille,' p. 101.
[162] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.
[163] Anon., 'L'ossuaire de Douaumont,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 160, avril 2006, p. 4. The figure of 130 000 unidentified bodies is also cited in Canini, 'Verdun: les commémorations de la bataille,' p. 100.

Hence as Jean-Paul Amat indicated in his work on landscape and war, physical setting plays an "almost obsessive" role in the memory of the Battle of Verdun.[164] In his proposed manifesto for 11 November 1956, the President of the U.F.A.C. seconded this point of view, drawing parallels between the importance of World War One commemorative sites and memory of war. That France honours "the sacrifice of all those who fell and continue to guard the cemetery at Douaumont or the Trench of the Bayonets"[165] contributes to the survival of the mythology of France's wartime experience; in turn, the physical existence of these two sites serves to enhance and perpetuate the myth. The primary reason for the development of this narrative of World War One was to help survivors accept the past; the continued importance of physical locations associated with the war dead to French national space demonstrates their potency. It also highlights the fact that veterans of later wars have appropriated the sites of Great War commemoration (whilst also celebrating spaces specific to their wars); such places are central to the imagined and mythologised memories prevalent within veterans' associations.

Given the importance of battlefield space in maintaining memory of war, the U.N.C.'s Claude Le Barillier illustrated the significance of holding the association's annual Conference in Caen in the year 2000. Close to the D-Day beach landings of 6 June 1944, the "heroic and martyred town"[166] was virtually levelled during the ensuing fighting.[167] Its embattled history prompted Le Barillier to recognise it as a

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[164] Amat, 'L'Arbre et la forêt,' p. 300.

[165] E. Pierret-Gérard (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste de l'U.F.A.C. A lire devant les Monuments aux Morts,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 41e année, nouvelle série, no. 542, samedi 10 novembre 1956, pp. 1-2, p. 1. The Trench of the Bayonets was a memorial created at the approximate site where, after heavy German bombardment, a trench collapsed. Several French soldiers were buried alive; the only evidence of their presence was the points of their bayonets protruding from the earth. Emile Pierret-Gérard, the author of this text, was not only President of the U.F.A.C. at this time, but also President of the Union Fédérale, a position he occupied from 1947 until 1974.

[166] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'La mémoire: mémoire vivante, mémoire collective,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 21-22, p. 21.

[167] For an account of Caen's obliteration during the Second World War, see Danièle Voldman, 'La destruction de Caen en 1944,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 39, July-September 1993, pp. 10-22.

"salient place in Second World War memory."[168] In hosting events at such places, the veterans pay tribute to - and (mostly inadvertently) mobilise - the combatants who once fought there. With the advent of subsequent wars, new spaces of commemoration have been created, yet the monuments, cemeteries and battlefields of World War One are still fundamentally important to veteran 'memory' and discourse.

The veterans acknowledge the power inherent in mass gatherings before memorials, and in particular demonstrate an infallible connection with the physical space of the Arc de Triomphe because it shelters the Unknown Soldier. They have, however, generally neglected to capitalise upon the symbolism inherent in war memorials when mobilising the dead. This omission is especially noticeable because it has rarely been addressed throughout the ninety year period under consideration in this thesis. In other words, veterans of all generations of fire have remained ignorant of the possibility of using such symbolism to mobilise the dead, a truth which clearly indicates the fossilisation of veteran discourse. Although most Armistice Day services are held at the *monuments aux morts*, other spaces associated with the fallen such as battlefields and cemeteries are also essential given their centrality to remembrance of war, and have remained important since 1918 despite the occurrence of later wars and their associated *lieux de mémoire*. All four of these key Armistice Day spaces obviously exhibit the relationship between dead soldiers, sites of war remembrance, and trauma, functioning as spaces where past ordeals can be remembered and memorialised - and used to create a more positive future. Having considered the two principle means by which veterans have mobilised the war dead on Armistice Day, it is to the causes for which veterans campaign that this thesis now turns.

[168] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'La mémoire: mémoire vivante, mémoire collective,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 21-22, p. 21.

Part III - Motivations

Chapter Seven

Once a soldier-citizen, always a citizen-soldier: Mobilising the war dead to inspire civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism

> Servicemen and -women "accepted that their personal destiny had little significance when compared with their principle duty to serve our country and people in defence of duty, honour and liberty."
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> - C. Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président de la C.N.A.C.), 'Mémoire et commémorations,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1651, janvier 2000, p. 11.

Part III outlines the three principal reasons for which veterans mobilise the dead on Armistice Day: to propagate the values of civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism; to appeal for unity; and, most fundamentally, to push for peace. These issues are incessantly brought up in *ancien combattant* discourse because they are crucial to the veterans' vision of post-war society, a vision which they consider themselves entitled to formulate and project by virtue of their past service to the nation. As well as constituting a veteran right, however, articulating their ideas for society is also a duty:

> The voices which seem to rise from the little tombs at the front […] come to tell them [the survivors] that their task is not finished: after having defended France against external enemies, it is necessary to defend her against those who wish to lead her to ruin. […] This duty is sacred; the voice of the combatants must mix with that of the dead to make reason heard.[1]

[1] Edouard Hannecart, 'La Voix des Tombes,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 1e année, no. 17, dimanche 5 novembre 1919, p. 1.

Writing in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, this veteran-writer mobilised the dead specifically to condemn the "odious" behaviour of profiteers.[2] Nonetheless, the ideas he promoted - union, the support offered by the fallen, and the defence and betterment of France - have remained intrinsic to veteran discourse throughout the ninety years since 1918, part of the veterans' "sacred" duty to translate the war experience into greater good.

The propagation of the three themes of values, unity and peace relies on the war dead. In the first instance, it is reflection on the wartime experience - and especially on the fallen - which rouses veteran-advocates to action. Secondly, it is only in referring to their former comrades-in-arms that veterans can invoke their *devoir de mémoire* and thus augment their sense of legitimacy. Thirdly, the powerful image of 'fallen soldiers' imbues veteran demands with symbolic potency. Fundamental to veteran mobilisation of the fallen are the key notions of 'sacrifice,' 'dying for,' 'blood debt' and 'dying in vain' (notions which can be expressed without using those terms) because they position the war dead within the contemporary moment. While the concept of 'dying for' a worthy cause is positive, 'dying in vain' indicates discontent. Soldiers' sacrifices, it is believed, are rendered 'vain' if the reality of post-war life falls short of the expectations and aspirations they supposedly harboured on the battlefield.

The *anciens combattants* believe that by virtue of their past military engagement, they are endowed with both a greater right and a greater duty than other citizens to comment on - and criticise, if necessary - the contemporary situation.[3] The primary

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[2] Eric Leed believed that encounters with profiteers led many veterans to position their war experience within a moral framework. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 206.

[3] Expecting certain rights, particularly citizenship rights, as payment for wartime duty is a feature of civilian armies. Alec Campbell, 'Where do all the soldiers go? Veterans and the politics of demobilisation,' in Diane E. Davis and Anthony W. Pereira, *Irregular Armed Forces and their role in Politics and State Formation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 96-117, p. 97. Campbell also noted that contention over these rights can cause friction between state powers and demobilised troops (p. 97).

reason for this belief is that, having risked their lives for France and fulfilled what republican doctrine outlined as their civic duty, veterans consider themselves both morally superior to, and more devoted to the nation, than other citizens.[4] As was written in 2002 (attesting to the survival of this idea), "the *ancien combattant*, from whatever generation of fire, is first and foremost a citizen like any other - but a 'greater' citizen who, at some time in his life, was mobilised or went voluntarily to serve our country, France."[5] Further, Great War discourse (absorbed into imagined and mythologised veteran memories) positioned French and Allied soldiers as saviours of certain values fundamental to 'civilised' peoples. For veteran commentators, preventing barbarous German thought and practice from entering French society was reason enough to celebrate soldiers' achievements and gave them moral superiority, often translated as an exceptional and privileged right to comment on society and state. In the veterans' view, the war experience not only entitles them to a greater say in post-war life, it also leaves the nation beholden to them; they expect their erstwhile physical and spiritual devotion to the state to manifest in unique privileges and rewards such as retirement pensions, financial assistance, medical services, prosthetic limbs and judicial representation.[6]

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[4] One manifestation of the veterans' belief in their moral superiority was the interwar suggestion of a veterans' political party, a suggestion which was not brought to fruition. Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 66. Such appeals were not unique to France: certain returned soldiers in Australia, for example, advocated combatant rule to quell internal dissent and work towards unity in response to perceived complacency or greed among wartime politicians deemed responsible for failing democracy. Stephen Garton, 'War and masculinity in twentieth century Australia,' *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 56, 1998, pp. 86-95, pp. 89-90.

[5] Jacques Goujat, 'Le rôle des associations d'anciens combattants dans notre société: la véritable image du monde combattant et sa modernité,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 666, juillet-août-septembre 2002, pp. 9-10, p. 9.

[6] Pensions are paid, it has been noted, both as a tangible expression of gratitude and as payment for sacrifices rendered. David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans and public welfare policy: Comparative and transnational perspectives on western states in the twentieth century,' *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*, vol. 11, 2001, pp. 77-106, p. 91. Veteran pensions have created two tiers of social welfare in many nations (p. 103). In the Australian case, returned 'diggers' fought for material rights equivalent to their privileged citizenship status as volunteer combatants. Their successful campaigns for repatriation benefits created what Stephen Garton has labelled "welfare apartheid," a situation in which ex-combatants and their dependents received advantages which far outweighed civilians'. Garton, 'War and masculinity,' pp. 89-90.

However, whereas the war dead are readily mobilised to demonstrate the moral superiority of ex-combatants and to support veteran visions for post-war society, they are almost never invoked to support veteran claims to material compensation.[7] This omission is striking because pension and retirement schemes have dominated veteran agendas across all generations of fire (explaining in part later veterans' adherence to the tactics and rhetoric employed by their forebears[8]) - and have been the greatest source of state-veteran conflict. One explanation for why veterans rarely appropriate the fallen to further their situation, despite the immense power of this action, is that arguing for better pensions does not fit the discourse of sacrifice as viewed through the lenses of 'dying for' or 'dying in vain.' The veterans cannot claim that soldiers died to ensure their surviving comrades were offered adequate financial security, despite the probability that the dead would have desired fair compensation for survivors. An even more compelling theory lies in the sacredness of the disappeared: while the fallen can be mobilised in defence of 'honourable'

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[7] The dead are only really mobilised for greater financial recognition using one tactic: underscoring soldiers' suffering and trauma, and the dangers to which they were exposed, whether they survived or not. Death divided the common adventure of warfare into two distinct experiences: "We suffered the inequality of war without complaint: we fought; we suffered one thousand ills; we fell at our posts. Fifteen hundred thousand were killed, while others survived sacrifice and death and waited for recognition." Anon., '11 novembre 1932: Quatorzième anniversaire de la victoire et de la paix. Manifeste de l'Union Fédérale,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants et de Victimes de la Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, 2e année, no. 23, 15 novembre 1932, p. 5. Emphasising the trials and traumas shared by soldiers - survivors and fallen alike - is a deliberate tactic designed to accentuate public and state compassion to veterans' suffering and strengthen appeals for financial repayment.

[8] During the late 1920s, Fagerberg's period of study, veterans applied pressure through direct lobbying, creating alliances with other groups to further their mutual interests, publicising in their press, securing access to centres of power through personal friendships and applying pressure on the legislature (letter-writing, rallies, and so on). Elliott Pennell Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' PhD thesis, Université de Genève, thèse no. 175, Ambilly, Annemasse: Imprimerie Les Presses de Savoie, 1966, pp. 257-268. These same tactics have been used throughout the nine decades since 1918; *anciens combattants* today still employ the methods they inherited from their forebears. Fabrice Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation du répertoire d'action des associations d'anciens combattants et de victimes de guerre. Des mutations pilotées par les représentants de l'Etat,' in N. Dahan and E. Grossman (eds.), *Les groupes d'intérêt au XXIe siècle: renouveau, croissance et démocratie. Colloque du Cevipof les 24 et 25 septembre 2004*, Paris: IEP Paris, 2004, pp. 2-3. In his consideration of disabled veterans, David A. Gerber has noted that groups were most successful in achieving their goals if they were able to gain recognition as voters. David A. Gerber, 'Introduction: Finding Disabled Veterans in History,' in David A. Gerber (ed.), *Disabled Veterans in History*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000, pp. 1-51, p. 13. Using their numbers to demonstrate a certain point of view has been a key element of veteran behaviour throughout the decades, whether the action be against the government or against another opinion prevalent within the veterans' community itself. As Fabrice Hamelin has recognised, demonstrations involving large numbers of veterans attest to their electoral power (pp. 8-9).

projects such as peace or national unity, the veterans refuse to drag the dead into the sordid world of political and financial battles. Avoiding bringing the dead into this arena is also a sign of the veterans' supposed apolitical ideology and general distrust of and contempt for politics.

No such qualms are expressed regarding mobilisation of the dead in order to promote values, unity or peace; in fact, the fallen are positioned as the reason why such issues need addressing. The veterans believe they have a duty - to the French people, to themselves, and, most fundamentally, to their erstwhile comrades - to promote their visions for post-war society. This first chapter in Part III focuses on veteran mobilisation of the war dead to promote the key value systems of civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism. It argues that these values are inherent to the horizontally- and vertically-invariant veteran discourse for two primary reasons: because they offer justification for the death and trauma resulting from war; and because the *anciens combattants* postulate the moral superiority of French soldiers, absorbing and building on mythology prevalent in French national space since the revolutionary wars and effectively regenerated by World War One rhetoric. These two factors also account for the perpetuation of a distinct veteran 'memory' and the discourse which relays it: veterans of different associations and different wars have found comfort in the promotion of certain post-war visions in which they can put past trauma to a constructive purpose, and in the duty to clarify war's lessons to warn against its renewal.

The three - inextricably interrelated - values of civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism are especially imperative to a healthy national community, veterans believe, for two reasons. Firstly, such values are considered inherent in the French 'national identity.' Secondly, following from this postulation, soldiers went to war to defend these values and ensure France remained 'French.' Such was the aspiration of the 'soldier-citizen' who, in defending France, its population and its ideals, carried out his duty. This figure has been lauded (and mobilised) by the veterans throughout the decades as the embodiment of selflessness and virtue. The

anciens combattants encourage the French public to emulate the moral qualities of the nation's soldiers, particularly when reflecting on the war dead, who in dying as soldiers of France exemplify devotion to the nation and its ideals. Veteran discourse and practice relating to French society thus takes the form of an ethical crusade, with activists spearheading campaigns for greater recognition of and respect for the values which they hold dear in order to learn from war and propagate their version of an ideal post-war society - and in doing so, fulfil another duty towards their fallen comrades.

The key reason why veterans highlight these three values is to make sense of wartime death by translating trauma and sacrifice into 'lessons' for the present and future - epitomising the positive element within the idea of 'dying for.'[9] In this way pedagogy, central to state-sponsored celebration at least since the French Revolution,[10] is vital to Armistice Day discourse seeking to educate the population about war. As representatives of France's future, young people are particular targets of moral moulding. Despite having limited control over public education, veteran-activists of all generations of fire exert much effort in promoting appropriate pedagogic instruction within French schools and homes. In addition, associations organise extra-curricular activities designed to engage young people in memorialisation of war, especially encouraging youth participation in remembrance ceremonies. In this way, veterans not only mobilise the war dead as a means of encouraging youth commitment, they also mobilise young people to ensure the 'survival' of the dead. In recent times, as veterans of World Wars One and Two have aged and died, *anciens combattants* of later wars, now responsible for associative leadership and activism, have mobilised the 'veteran dead' - ex-combatants who survived the conflict but died later in life - in order to motivate further connection to past conflicts and the values for which they fought.

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[9] There is a certain irony in veteran attempts to transform their war experiences into lessons for civilians. Firstly, veterans believe that civilians can never wholly comprehend their tales. Secondly, as Eric J. Leed has pointed out, even soldiers are not taught the lessons of war; they arise from experience. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 74.

[10] For information on the role of festival as a political tool during the Revolution, see Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire 1789-1799*, Paris: Gallimard, 1976.

The prominence of each of the three major value sets which the veterans propagate - civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism - fluctuates according to the contemporary domestic and international context. Separate veteran groups also tend to favour different values. As one example, during the 1930s, the A.R.A.C. and the U.F. were more concerned with promoting republicanism and fostering international relations than the conservative U.N.C., which instead advocated right-wing, pro-France policies. Yet despite such difference in opinions and wavering devotion to certain values, this study of four national associations, one independent national newspaper and numerous local groups demonstrates that the three values systems have all remained central to French veteran mobilisation of the fallen throughout the ninety years since the end of World War One, partly because they explain and put to use past trauma and partly because they have been absorbed into veteran 'memory' through their centrality to French national space and passed down through the generations of fire.

One vital component of the veterans' unique responsibility to perpetuate memory of war is the promotion of the values for which they fought - and for which their comrades died. Ruminating in 1974 on the future of French society, one Great War veteran underlined the self-imposed task of his community to continue their guardianship of moral standards, another veteran duty developed to transform the trauma of war into a positive lesson for the present:

> In this confused period in which we live - where selfishness reigns supreme, where too many families no longer observe morals, where our children no longer receive civic instruction - it is up to us, the large *ancien combattant* family, to provide a model to curb this trend which is harmful to the interests of the nation.[11]

The veterans' self-appointed role as protectors of French social morality leads them to encourage citizens to repay their debt to the fallen by aspiring to altruistic civic-

[11] F. Koehler (ancien combattant 1914-1918), 'Le présent et l'avenir,' *Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants*, no. 103, 1e trimestre 1974, p. 1.

mindedness and to fulfilling their aspirations through contemporary activity. As one veteran urged a decade after the Armistice, "People of France, be worthy of those for whom you weep with so much pride."[12]

Regardless of which form of moral behaviour (civic responsibility, republicanism or patriotism) is currently in favour, veteran-activists rely upon the same language and imagery to promote their points of view. One source which the veterans consistently lay claim to in propagating their opinions is the concept of 'France.' In 1928, the U.N.C.'s President Henry Rossignol argued that

> […] it is worthwhile to remind people who are indifferent or self-centred that, if Frenchmen gave their lives, it is so that France may continue, like in the past, to be the vigilant guardian of the highest moral virtues - the strength of races - and so that France may serve as an example for the whole world in obliging humanity to improve itself a little more each day in order to avoid recurrence of war.[13]

As the birthplace of the political doctrines of *liberté*, *égalité*, *fraternité* and the Rights of Man, France has not only traditionally been regarded by many domestic and international intellectuals as the centre of human freedoms, it has also been positioned as a crusader, destined through *rayonnement* to illuminate the way for nations less educated in the ways of democracy.[14] Championing human rights has thus been fundamental to France's national identity and veteran-activists have capitalised upon this mindset and heritage in a bid to strengthen their arguments for civic, republican and patriotic values. This appropriation is particularly interesting in the case of the communist-affiliated A.R.A.C., which at every opportunity

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[12] Anon., 'Pour le Monument Interallié,' *Le Mutilé de Cambrésis*, no. 59, novembre 1929, p. 2.
[13] Henry Rossignol (Président de l'U.N.C.), 'La leçon des tombes,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 473, samedi 28 juillet 1928, p. 2.
[14] Geoffrey Best, 'The French Revolution and Human Rights,' in Geoffrey Best (ed.), *The permanent Revolution: The French Revolution and its legacy 1789-1989*, London: Fontana Press, 1988, pp. 101-127, p. 101; K. Steven Vincent, 'National consciousness, nationalism and exclusion: Reflections on the French case,' *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, vol. 19, no. 3, Fall 1993, pp. 433-449, p. 439. On the reactions of left-wing Germans to the French Revolution, see Alan Ruiz, 'Un regard sur le jacobisme allemande: idéologie et activités de certains de ses représentants notoires en France pendant la Révolution,' in François Furet and Mona Ozouf (eds.), *The French Revolution and the creation of modern political culture. III: The transformation of political culture 1789-1848*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987, pp. 253-272.

illustrates its devotion to republican values and traditions (predominantly the Rights of Man and Bastille Day) while maintaining its left-wing stance.

However, despite the prominence of French democratic doctrine in promoting certain moral codes, the veterans' number one point of reference is undeniably warfare - most specifically, the fallen. Referring to war is not surprising given the veterans' unique and intimate relationship with the subject; however, in promoting desirable behaviour within contemporary communities, writers do more than merely relate war's sights, sounds and smells. Particularly World Wars One and Two are positioned as ethical conflicts in which French soldiers fought on the side of 'good' against an evil enemy. Veteran discourse promotes warfare as a moral enterprise, reviving the idea that soldiers went to war to defend France - and by extension, the values for which it stood - in its time of need. Such rhetoric echoes the propaganda of 1914-1918,[15] and also plays expressly upon the public's emotions.[16] This narrative is reiterated by all generations of fire, despite (or probably, because of) the fact that it does not correspond with the reality of many of the wars. Depending on the context, soldiers' selflessness and moral righteousness are cited to encourage sentiments of guilt, obligation or hero-worship among the French people, all with the ultimate goal of encouraging citizens to emulate the values of the *poilus* and soldiers of subsequent wars. Into this scenario come the war dead. While all soldiers are to be commended and emulated for their activity in defence of ideals considered intrinsic to France as a nation, even more important in terms of emotional weight are the fallen who gave their lives for these principles.

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[15] For a discussion of the role of the 'France as civiliser and civilised' idea in World War One propaganda, see for example Marc Ferro, 'Cultural life in France 1914-1918,' trans. Aviel Roshwald, in Aviel Roshwald and Richard Stites (eds.), *European culture in the Great War: The arts, entertainment and propaganda 1914-1918*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 295-307, esp. pp. 295-296. Ferro described this sentiment as "patriotic mysticism." On the demonisation of the enemy, see John Horne, 'Corps, lieux et nation: la France et l'invasion de 1914,' *Annales*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, pp. 73-109.

[16] Wartime propaganda meant people could be mobilised during times of peace. George L. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 4, October 1986, pp. 491-513, p. 507.

As the living inherit their ideals and institutions from the dead,[17] reflecting on fallen soldiers can engender consideration of their ideological and moral convictions. The transferral of value systems from past to present generations was noted by a northern French veteran who rhetorically queried, "Who among us has not evoked the virtues of the dead? // In front of this tomb, who has not thought to reproduce these virtues within himself?"[18] The three key value systems favoured by the *anciens combattants* - republicanism, patriotism and civic responsibility - are all obviously attributed to fallen soldiers. These characteristics are perpetuated by remembrance discourse since 1918, including that printed by the French veteran community. In 1993, for example, former Veterans' Minister Philippe Mestre remarked on Armistice Day: "May this seventy-fifth anniversary provide us with the opportunity to reaffirm our faith in these long-lasting values which they [the *poilus*] respected by giving the supreme sacrifice!"[19]

The veterans' insistent appeals for respecting values often position survivors as indebted to the dead. As an A.G.M.G. author explained, committing the fallen to memory was fundamental to retaining the significance of certain key moral beliefs, and vice versa: "In remembering their sacrifice, may we not fail to learn the great lesson of fraternity, solidarity and defence of justice which they left us."[20] Having given their lives defending certain principles, the fallen are forever associated with the values for which they fell.

In French tradition, war and the fulfilment of democratic principles are amalgamated in the image of the soldier-citizen. This myth proves an obvious and

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[17] Robert Pogue Harrison, *The Dominion of the Dead*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. ix. Harrison cited religion, matrimony, burial, law, language and literature as examples of transmitted legacy.

[18] P. Desorbaix, 'Novembre: Mois des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut*, no. 62, novembre 1930, p. 1.

[19] Philippe Mestre, 'Allocution de M. Philippe Mestre, ministre des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre pour la réception du 11 novembre 1993 à l'Institution Nationale des invalides,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 622, octobre-novembre-décembre 1993, pp. 11-12, p. 12.

[20] L. Karrer (Secrétaire Général), 'Souvenir et avenir,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 474, juin 1969, pp. 1 et 8, p. 8.

powerful point of reference for veterans seeking to extol - and encourage survivors to emulate - the moral superiority of the war dead. Besides linking republican values and soldiering through the supposed ethical integrity of the republican-minded warrior, the notion of the soldier-*citizen* emphasises the commonality of the role and serves to underscore its centrality to national belonging.[21] The fact that many veterans, especially from the world wars and the Algerian conflict, were not professional military men but rather civilians doing what republicanism promoted as their civic duty strengthens this argument.

The myth of the soldier-citizen originated in the early days of the French Revolution, when the fledgling Republic relied upon - and successfully mobilised - her citizens against internal and external enemies. This discourse of obligation to the state created a 'nation-at-arms' mentality which permanently transfigured the military-state affiliation. While prior to 1789 little concern had been spared for soldiers' welfare or individual points of view, the Revolution attempted to link soldiers to the aims of war through belief in the 'nation' and its symbolic representations.[22] Artists such as Jacques-Louis David extolled the connection between the military and civilian realms, and had their work displayed in galleries open to public viewing for the first time.[23] The presence of soldiers at official

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[21] This idea suits André Siegfried's 1930 observation that French 'citizenship' is defined through defence of libertarian ideals. André Siegfried, *France: A study in nationality*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 20.

[22] George L. Mosse, *Fallen sSoldiers. Reshaping the memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 18. For one historian of the *levée en masse*, the mystique of the soldier-citizen developed from the army's military successes and role in forging a patriotic vision. Alan Forrest, '*La Patrie en danger*: The French Revolution and the first *levée en masse*,' in Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron (eds.), *The People in Arms: Military myth and national mobilisation since the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 8-33, p. 13.

[23] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 17. For information on Jacques-Louis David and public art during the French Revolution, see the works of David Lloyd Dowd including David Lloyd Dowd, 'Art as National Propaganda in the French Revolution,' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 15, Autumn 1951, pp. 532-546; David Lloyd Dowd, 'The French Revolution and the Painters,' *French Historical Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1959, pp. 127-148; David Lloyd Dowd, 'Jacques-Louis David, Artist Member of the Committee of General Security,' *American Historical Review*, vol. 57, no. 3, 1951-52, pp. 871-892; David Lloyd Dowd, *Pageant-Master of the Republic: Jacques-Louis David and the French Revolution*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1948. An interesting parallel can be drawn between the 'democratisation' of art during the Revolution and as a consequence of World War One. As Jay Winter has commented, the Great War helped break down barriers between 'high' and 'low' cultures. Jay Winter in Jay Winter and Robert Wohl, 'The Great War: Midwife to modern memory?'

events, including festivals, imbued them with authority; society reflected the military realm just as conscripts brought society's values into the military.[24]

Most volunteers in the 1792 revolutionary wars came from the patriotic and educated bourgeoisie and fervently believed in the Revolution's libertarian ideals[25] (a trend which was repeated in the First World War[26]). From the 1792 recruitment drive developed the myth of the loyal and selfless soldier-citizen dedicated to republican ideology. In parallel arose the image of the soldier as hero, which developed over time so that participation in combat came to be viewed as both a personal challenge and a ticket to acceptance in society.[27] In other words, public and state opinion increasingly respected the soldiering profession, especially once universal conscription meant that the majority of eligible male French citizens had experienced military service.[28] This improving view of soldiers was combined with the commendable motivation for sacrifice: defending the nation's population and ideals was promoted by both state and popular myth as the ultimate selfless act.[29]

Following the inauguration of the Third Republic, dedication to the nation and its values was ingrained in French national space via state institutions including primary education and compulsory universal military service,[30] only suspended in

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in Jay Winter (ed.), *The legacy of the Great War: Ninety years on*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009, pp. 159-184, p. 178.

[24] Hew Strachan, 'The Nation in Arms,' in Geoffrey Best (ed.), *The permanent Revolution: The French Revolution and its legacy 1789-1989*, London: Fontana Press, 1988, pp. 49-73, p. 60.

[25] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 16.

[26] Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the birth of the Modern Age*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989, p. 177.

[27] Maurice Vaïsse, 'Aux armes, citoyens!' *L'Histoire*, février 1997, no. 207, pp. 28-39, p. 28.

[28] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 19. For an account of the development of 'citizenship' in France during and after the revolutionary era, see Charles Tilly, 'The emergence of citizenship in France and elsewhere,' *International Review of Social History*, vol. 40, supp. 3, 1995, pp. 223-236.

[29] Strachan, 'The Nation in Arms,' p. 60.

[30] Luc Capdevila, 'Mémoire de guerre,' *Le Temps des Savoirs*, vol. 6, 2003, pp. 69-92, p. 77; Xavier Boniface, 'Armée, République et traditions au début de la IIIe République,' *Revue historique des Armées*, vol. 3, 2005, pp. 4-19, p. 14. Hobsbawm saw in the standardisation of administration, law and especially public education the primary means of transforming individuals into state citizens. Eric Hobsbawm, 'Mass-producing traditions: Europe 1870-1914,' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 263-307, p. 264.

1996.[31] Fundamental to such citizenship training were the values of civic responsibility, patriotism and republicanism. The soldiers of World War One, the majority of whom had been raised in these republican institutions,[32] took such ideas with them into battle.[33] In this way, military myths both supported and were forged by political and ideological values.[34] Not surprisingly, therefore, these values were celebrated after the Great War to help justify the carnage, and were absorbed into veterans' imagined memory of the trench experience before being absorbed into mythologised memory.

The republican credo exalting soldiering well suited the language and imagery of heroism and sacrifice surrounding World War One. Veteran discourse also stressed the attributes of Great War French soldiers:

> In the anonymous mass of millions of combatants, the poor *poilus* were subjected to superhuman tasks. After being submitted to multitudinous and endless trials they had to fight against their bodies' inevitable weaknesses. They had to conserve conscious thought and free will while necessarily renouncing their own personalities. They had to develop the spirit of a conqueror in the middle of the bloodiest disappointments.

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[31] Vaïsse, 'Aux armes, citoyens!' p. 39. For an account of the decline of conscription since the 1960s, see Michel L. Martin, *Warriors to managers: The French military establishment since 1945*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981, pp. 118-164. Given that obligatory military service was inextricably linked to citizenship, Michel Winock pondered in 1997 whether love for the *patrie* would soon disappear. Michel Winock, 'Les Français, ont-ils encore une patrie?' *L'Histoire*, no. 207, 1997, p. 24-27.

[32] The oldest class of army reserves mobilised in 1914 (that of 1896) had passed through Jules Ferry's education system. Even older territorials had often had some primary schooling. John Horne, 'Entre expérience et mémoire: les soldats français de la Grande Guerre,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 60, no. 5, 2005, pp. 903-919, p. 905.

[33] As Martin Crotty noted in his preface to the November 2007 'When the soldiers return' conference proceedings, with the blurring of military-civilian lines during modern war troops have often brought their peacetime activities and ideals into battle zones. Martin Crotty, 'Preface,' in Martin Crotty (ed.), *When the soldiers return. November 2007 Conference proceedings*, Brisbane: School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, University of Queensland, 2009, pp. 1-2, p. 1.

[34] John Horne, 'Defining the enemy: War, law and the *levée en masse* from 1870 to 1945,' in Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron (eds.), *The People in Arms: Military myth and national mobilisation since the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 100-124, p. 116.

> The soldier-citizen must display all the virtues of men who momentarily and purposefully sacrifice their rights in order to make their aggressors respect them.[35]

Such language lauded the *poilus* as displaying psychological strength in the face of Herculean physical challenges and emotional traumas, as well as selflessness and consideration for others as dictated by their dual position as comrades and defenders. Particularly important is the final sentence, which reminds the reader that soldier-citizens bore the onerous task of giving up their own personal freedoms to protect these same rights for others. This is the crux of veteran arguments regarding the promotion of values: men fought - and died - to give survivors the chance to live in a democratic and free world, and this sacrifice ought to be respected by living out these values. In this way, the trauma of war can be put towards a constructive present and future.

It was not only memory of the Great War which was angled to display soldiers as the moral saviours of the nation; the idea of France as a 'Country of soldiers'[36] was resurrected for subsequent wars.[37] According to the well-known veteran Georges Pineau, writing soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, the army

> is made up of active professional soldiers and mobilised civilians. This mixture, which conforms to the spirit and the law of 31 March 1928 about the nation-in-arms,[38] gave excellent results from 1914 to 1918 - to the point where one could not say whether the soldier or the civilian contributed the most and the best to the victory of 11 November.

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[35] Léon Viala, 'Propos d'anniversaire,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*,' 7e année, no. 133, 20 novembre 1937, p. 3.

[36] To cite the title of an article published in the specially-created *Heures de la guerre* journal, produced by the U.F. for the first months of the Second World War. Anon., 'Pays de soldats,' *Les Heures de la guerre. Journal de Combattants pour tous les Français*, no. 6, 29 octobre 1939, in *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 177, p. 1.

[37] One observer thoughtfully queried whether members of the Resistance, partaking of a wholly-voluntary action, actually constitute the only real example of a soldier-citizen. Jean Boulègue, 'De l'ordre militaire aux forces républicaines: deux siècles d'intégration de l'Armée dans la société française,' in André Thiéblemont (ed.), *Cultures et logiques militaires*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999, pp. 261-288, p. 275.

[38] The law of 31 March 1928 outlined the terms of military service in France. For details, see Sénat, <http://www.senat.fr/rap/l98-355/l98-3554.html> accessed 10 January 2011.

It will be the same for the next victory, which we hope is close.[39]

The citizen's purported support for the war effort reflects the revolutionary ideal of the nation-in-arms, in which the entire population sacrifices its personal life for the good of the nation.[40] The soldier-citizen of the French Revolution was thus transformed into the soldier-citizen of World Wars One and Two. Believing themselves part of a historical continuity of soldiers contributing to the betterment of France and the world constituted one method by which the *poilus* and their disciples attempted to justify and come to terms with their wartime engagement.[41] The same reasoning underpinned the appropriation of the *poilus*' imagined memory by veterans of later wars; this established and successful narrative offered legitimacy.

While according to George Mosse, the legend of the enthusiastic volunteer became progressively less viable over time as the reality of war hit the home front (although he believed that the soldier-citizen ideal persisted until at least the end of World War Two),[42] the idea of 'the people in arms' nonetheless remains fundamental to modern war[43] and has continued to shape reactions to veterans and the war dead. Veteran discourse, at least, espousing the themes and language of earlier combatants' 'memory' but also ideas ingrained in French national space, has throughout the decades since 1918 continued to promote the myth of troops'

[39] Georges Pineau, 'Du Civil au Militaire,' *Les Heures de la guerre. Journal de Combattants pour tous les Français*, no. 12, 9 décembre 1939, in *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 183, p. 3.
[40] Daniel Moran, 'Introduction: The legend of the *levée en masse*,' in Daniel Moran and Arthur Waldron (eds.), *The People in Arms: Military myth and mass mobilisation since the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 1-10, p. 1.
[41] Luc Capdevila noted that Resistance fighters were inspired by great soldiers of the past. Luc Capdevila, 'L'identité masculin et les fatigues de la guerre 1914-1945,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 75, juillet-septembre 2002, pp. 97-108. Not only French combatants sought to insert themselves into a long soldiering tradition; combatants of many countries tried to equate their exploits with other episodes in their nations' martial histories. Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning: The Great War in European cultural history*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 82. In considering how Australian troops managed to accept the immensity of lost life, Stephen Garton recognised that one key method was imagining the sacrifice as contributing to an ongoing history of civilisation made rich through the exploits of its soldiers. Garton, 'War and masculinity,' p. 91.
[42] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, Ch. 10 'The Second World War, the Myth and the Postwar generation.'
[43] Moran, 'Introduction: The legend of the *levée en masse*,' p. 6.

selflessness and moral superiority in the hope of inspiring similar value systems within contemporary society.

Despite France's participation in wars subsequent to 1914-1918, the anniversary of *11 novembre* remains fundamental to displaying the moral and civic values of the nation's soldiers because it marks the victory of the men upon whose 'memory' later combatants have relied. This consistency stems partly from attempts to insert later wars into the mould of the Great War and its legacy, but also from the difficulty in detecting a coherent 'French' moral stance after World War Two and the conflicts of decolonisation, which divided the population along political and ethical lines. The *poilus*' imagined memory offered comfort for such soldiers, justifying the trauma through positioning soldiers (and especially the fallen) as examples of the purest moral behaviour and providing legitimacy. For these reasons, later veterans drew on this blueprint.

The persistence of the image of the republican-minded soldier-citizen in veteran 'memory' of war can be seen recently. Just ten years ago, Claude Le Barillier described servicemen and -women as people who, "responding to the call of the Nation, accepted that their personal destiny had little significance when compared with their principle duty to serve our country and people in defence of duty, honour and liberty."[44] Such discourse, drawing on a long tradition of French myth-making about the soldiering experience, presents military personnel as the ultimate embodiment of patriotic selflessness, individuals who put the interests of the country above their own personal welfare - and sometimes pay the ultimate price for their decision.

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[44] C. Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président de la C.N.A.C.), 'Mémoire et commémorations,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1651, janvier 2000, p. 11. Very similar rhetoric was employed by Veterans' Minister Massaret, who defined Armistice Day as a space "to pay homage to all those women and men who accepted that their individual destinies paled in comparison to the collective destiny of France." Jean-Pierre Massaret (Secrétaire d'État à la Défense chargé des anciens combattants), 'Message du 11 novembre,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 94, novembre 1999, p. 1. Remarkable in both Le Barillier and Massaret's passages is the recognition of servicewomen. In French, referring to women within a group requires specific terminology, as '*ils*' [them] or '*à ceux*' [to them] or even '*les combattants*' [combatants] refers to either a group of males or a group of men and women. Earlier *ancien combattant* discourse fails to make the distinction.

Remembering is important for societies, in part because knowledge of the past can be used to construct models for current and future situations. Included within these projections are notions of acceptable social behaviour, ideals which for veterans are based solidly in French republican egalitarian doctrine. Former Veterans' Minister Jean-Pierre Massaret recognised the role of the past in dictating contemporary behaviour, writing recently that "the memory and knowledge of our history gives body to the essential idea that every French person, regardless of the era in which he lives, is accountable for France's security and forms part of the collective engagement to preserve republican values."[45] Massaret here underscored the practical - and particularly the moral - resonances of remembering the past, as well as individual responsibility to contribute to the successful dissemination of appropriate values. Imagined and mythologised veteran memories bears testament to the importance of civic responsibility, republicanism and patriotism.

The issue of remembering and carrying through the ideals of the past into present life was explored in the 1960s by the prominent veteran-writer Edmond Bloch. In an eloquent and perceptive text about the significance of anniversaries, he pondered: "People's civic spirit comes from recognising the great actions of their past. It is still necessary that they be taught these actions. Is the best way not to evoke memories every once in a while, so that they do not disappear? Is an example needed?"[46] Undoubtedly, the veteran community would answer Bloch's rhetorical question in the affirmative. Society, they believe, requires regular reminding and instruction in order to keep its past at the forefront of national conscience. For the *anciens combattants*, this past is France's wartime engagements and the soldiers who perished, and Armistice Day constitutes the occasion through which this history - and its lessons - is kept alive.

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[45] Jean-Pierre Massaret (Secrétaire d'Etat à la Défense chargé des anciens combattants), [n.t.], *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 96, avril 2000, p. 1.
[46] Edmond Bloch, 'Anniversaires,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 48e année, nouvelle série, no. 893, samedi 9 novembre 1963, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

The power of associating Armistice Day with moral codes comes firstly from the date's initial meaning. Both state and veteran discourse advertise 11 November 1918 as a victory, not only over enemy armies but also over alien moralities. In this way, French and Allied troops saved the very values which their nations embodied, and veteran commentary incessantly urges its readers, "Let us not stop repeating it loud and clear: 11 November 1918 saw the triumph of Liberty over Slavery, of the Spirit over the Material, of Light over Night."[47] Describing World War One as a moral crusade contrasts markedly with other *ancien combattant* rhetoric which condemns the folly and meaninglessness of war. Despite the apparent contradiction - celebrating the values for which war was fought yet reviling war itself - the veterans confidently (and paradoxically) champion both points of view in line with their "patriotic pacifist"[48] persona. This tension is derived from a desire to accept the official state-produced version of events which glorify sacrifice (and thus offer justification for the trauma and death) and a desire to testify to war's misery. Both these elements are ingrained in imagined and mythologised veteran 'memory,' despite their seeming incompatibility.

In the context of war the word 'liberty' takes on two meanings: one, the traditional definition as a democratic ideal; two, freedom from the enemy. Ensuring the "triumph of Liberty" (in both its senses) was advertised to troops and the population as one of the key reasons for fighting. In its first sense, French soldiers acted upon state-promoted beliefs in notions of their nation's moral and ideological superiority as founder of republican democracy. This reading of 'liberty' refers to the notion of France as the ultimate model of libertarian values whose "exemplary contribution"[49] is considered fundamental to the construction of international peace and liberty. The

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[47] Maurice De Barral, '11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 37e année, nouvelle série, no. 339, samedi 1er novembre 1952, p. 1.

[48] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, Ch. 3.

[49] René Peyre (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Message de l'U.F.A.C. 11 novembre 1982,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 66e année, nouvelle série, no. 1825, 6 novembre 1982, p. 1.

second, more immediate and tangible sense attached to 'liberty' means that soldiers fought and died to protect their homeland.[50]

It was not only soldiers of World War One who were believed to have fought - and died - for liberty. For Louis Fontenaille of the U.F., writing in 1949, the generations of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 fought "the same combat for liberty."[51] The men of World War Two also contributed to the glory of the nation in terms of defending French ideals and culture; for the first *11 novembre* following the capitulation of Nazi Germany, the U.F.A.C.'s Manifesto clarified this point: "Like their elders, the young Combatants wholeheartedly contributed to saving the material and moral heritage [*patrimoine*] which France has accumulated throughout her centuries-old history."[52] The publication of these articles soon after the termination of World War Two suggests a need to link the conflict with its predecessor. Drawing on the moral superiority afforded by the 1918 victory, combatants of the second global conflict could claim some legitimacy.

The U.N.C. even made a point of underscoring liberty as basic to the war in Indochina, stating that "the soldier of Indochina will nonetheless remain - regardless of the failure for which he is not responsible - the most valorous soldier of Liberty."[53] The irony of framing this colonial enterprise in terms of liberty illustrates the difficulties which soldiers of unpopular and unsuccessful wars have faced in trying to give voice to their own unique experiences. In cases like Indochina, the language of liberty and sacrifice generated to describe and justify the

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[50] John Horne has admirably demonstrated how this second meaning of 'liberty' deepened following the invasion of France in 1914. Horne, 'Entre expérience et mémoire,' p. 910.

[51] Louis Fontenaille (Vice Président du Comité du Souvenir et des Manifestations Nationales), 'Anniversaire de l'Armistice: Compiègne, 11 novembre 1949,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, novembre 1949, no. 41, p. 2.

[52] L'Union Française des Associations de Combattants, Combattants de la Libération et Victimes des deux guerres, 'Onze Novembre : manifeste de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, novembre 1945, 30e année, nouvelle série, no. 2, p. 1.

[53] Henry-Jean Loustau (Président de la F.A.C.S. et de la section française de la C.E.A.C.), [n.t.], *La Voix du Combattant/La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1522, février 1987, p. 2.

trenches does not readily apply, yet the author employed the routine language of his Great War forebears to structure his comments. On the other hand, however, the employment of such standardised, familiar and acceptable rhetoric provided these soldiers with an avenue for legitimisation. Importantly, as the U.N.C. author recognised, this familiar language can not only legitimise warfare but also excuse defeat.

The double sacrifice for liberty - protecting the ideal and protecting France - left the nation indebted to her soldiers. For the veterans, this trauma debt could be repaid (in part, at least) through living out the values for which soldiers fought and died because in this way, the abhorrent past resulted in some valuable consequences. In this sense, behaving correctly was not only an *ancien combattant* responsibility but one for all French people. This collective accountability was underscored in Veterans' Minister Philippe Mestre's Armistice Day 1993 address: "It is France's duty to pay homage to all those who gave their blood so that the *tricolore* flag proudly flies in the wind of history, so that our country rediscovers her liberty and grandeur."[54] This interpretation adds yet another element to the interrelationship of liberty and warfare: for Mestre, liberty could only truly be understood through collective national remembrance of war and the sacrifices it engendered.

The element of communal gathering inherent in commemoration is a powerful tool in promoting certain values. The U.N.C.'s proposed oration for Armistice Day 1997 described how attending an Armistice Day service signifies adherence to its messages:

> The presence of the veterans around the war memorials in 36 000 French townships demonstrates their conviction that life makes sense when it is put to the service of its ideal.

[54] Philippe Mestre, 'Allocution de M. Philippe Mestre, ministre des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre pour la réception du 11 novembre 1993 à l'Institution Nationale des invalides,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 622, octobre-novembre-décembre 1993, pp. 11-12, p. 12.

> Let us not fear confirming that our ideal remains respecting Man and love for the *Patrie*.[55]

In other words, simply being present on Armistice Day sanctions the commemoration's underlying significance; in this case, the promotion and ratification of certain value systems. Republicanism and patriotism, two of the veterans' three key moral codes, are mentioned, providing evidence for the author's overarching belief that wartime death serves some greater purpose, a concept which provides comfort to those left behind. This dictum has remained constant in *ancien combattant* writing since World War One despite the passing of time and the apparition of other wars and veterans, absorbed into the different layers of veteran 'memory' because of its ability to put trauma towards a greater good and offer emotional 'safety.'

Central to *ancien combattant* visions of post-war France is a strong and independent nation. The reasoning is simple: soldiers went to war to defend their homeland, its people and its values, and veterans believe this sacrifice ought to be respected by ensuring France remains in charge of its destiny. The war dead prove fundamental in legitimising visions of national grandeur and its associated patriotism because they fought and died to save the nation and its doctrine from invasion. In this way, the dead comprise both an excuse and a reason for celebrating the nation.

The majority of French veterans, including the men and women representing the four national associations, one independent newspaper and associations from northern France under consideration in this thesis, can be described as 'patriotic' in the sense that 'patriotism' equates to "love of one's own country" and is associated positively with internationalism. For certain theorists, this ideology differs from nationalism, which is described as an expression of chauvinistic arrogance resulting from insecure ingroup identification and is negatively linked to internationalism.[56]

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[55] Michel Lartigue, 'Allocution pour le 11 novembre (proposition),' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1629, novembre 1997, p. 12.

[56] These definitions for 'patriotism' and 'nationalism' were advanced by Qiong Li and Marilynn B. Brewer in summation of the work of social psychologists on the phenomena. Qiong Li and Marilynn

Following this definition, very few *anciens combattants* (bar certain marginal ultra-nationalist groups during the interwar years[57]) can be considered nationalists;[58] the *anciens combattants* love and glorify France but do not advocate the use of force to dominate other countries.[59]

Yet the distinction between 'patriotism,' 'nationalism' and 'internationalism' is not always clear-cut: the phenomena exist in creative tension with each other and are not inviolable. In this way, an individual can validly express patriotic, nationalist and internationalist sentiments in response to different situations, or advocate a point of view bearing traits supposedly unique to each phenomenon. While recognising this fluidity is imperative in order to minimise the distinction between 'patriotic' versus 'nationalist' perspectives, most important for the purpose of this thesis is the veterans' unwavering rhetorical preference on Armistice Day for patriotism over nationalism. Although much of the pro-France language they employ seems reminiscent of fervent nationalism, rarely does the phenomenon receive mention in commemorative discourse. It is *patriotism* which the veterans incessantly laud and seek to inspire within their audience, and it is as *patriotic* citizens that the veterans position themselves. It is the *ancien combattants*' reliance

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B. Brewer, 'What does it mean to be an American? Patriotism, nationalism, and American identity after 9/11,' *Political Psychology*, vol. 25, no. 5, October 2004, pp. 727-739, p. 728.

[57] For example, the Union Patriotique des Français israélites (U.P.F.I.), established in 1934 in response to the increasingly-tense international situation. For information on this association, dominated by the personality of Edmond Bloch, see Philippe E. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs face aux défis des années trente,' *Archives Juives*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2003, pp. 10-24.

[58] As one example: Claire Moreau-Trichet described Henri Pichot as believing in the *Patrie* but not in nationalism. Claire Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne de 1930 à 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004, p. 42. David Bell warned scholars to consider the subtleties between the terms 'nation' and '*Patrie*.' David Bell, 'Recent works on early modern French national identity,' *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 68, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 84-113, p. 95. Note, however, that the designation as either 'patriotic' rather than 'nationalist' depends on definitions: K. Steven Vincent noted that the "striking characteristic" of French nationalism was its adherence to national defence against foreign invasion and commitment to the ideals of the French Revolution, both central to *ancien combattant* understandings of 'patriotism.' Vincent, 'National consciousness, nationalism and exclusion,' p. 441.

[59] For one theoretician looking at the moral agency involved in deciding whether to support political coercion, 'patriotism' constitutes "significant favouritism towards one's compatriots," while 'nationalism' constitutes "significant favouritism towards one's nationality or members of it." Richard W. Miller, 'Killing for the Homeland: Patriotism, nationalism and violence,' *The Journal of Ethics*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1997, pp. 165-185, pp. 166-167. In terms of going to war, the limits placed on the favouritism of patriotism make it difficult to justify going to war; the author even contended that "a central role of patriotic favouritism is to reduce the extent to which warmaking is permissible" (p. 176).

on patriotism - and refusal to incorporate the word 'nationalism' into their discourse - which is significant in this analysis of the reasons for which veterans mobilise the fallen.

Descriptions of patriotic bravery abounded in the aftermath of World War One. The *Patriote de Flandres* described the *poilus*' heroism:

> Old men with grey moustaches and smooth-cheeked young adolescents, all of you gave your blood without distinction of age, class or party. With the same ardour you cried "You will not pass!" to the Germans [*boches*] and by forming an impassable barrier with your chests you won the war and saved the *tricolore* flag.
> You created a glorious and triumphant France: we promise you that in peacetime we will maintain her halo of glory with God, Work and Fraternity.[60]

The sacrifice of countless men protected the *tricolore*, the red, white and blue flag which has symbolised France since the early days of the French Revolution.[61] Subsumed within the image of the national flag are all the elements which make France unique; in this respect, not only did the dead prevent the German army from physically occupying and destroying France (presumably the author is referring to Paris, as French troops proved unable to prevent enemy soldiers from invading the country's north and east), they also thwarted enemy attempts to challenge French values and symbols, including republicanism and civic duty.

As France emerged from World War One victorious, it could be asserted that the *poilus* sacrificed their lives so that France could count herself worthy of international respect. Directly quoting the fallen, another *Patriote de Flandres* article emphasised this aspect of sacrifice:

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[60] M. Henri Schacht (enfant de la commune Steenvoorde, ex-Lieutenant au 208e d'infanterie), 'Discours au pied du monument de Steenvoorde,' in G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1.
[61] As David Kertzer noted, flags embody nations. David I. Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 7.

> "Comrades," they tell us, "love the *Patrie* which we made so beautiful by turning it crimson with our blood and which we brought to first rank in the world's estimation. Keep her in this place; love her with all the energy of your heart and soul."[62]

The message from the war dead is twofold. Reminding survivors of the price it cost to earn such respect, the fallen instruct their erstwhile brothers-in-arms to maintain French grandeur on the world stage. Their advice for achieving this ideal is simple: "Love the *Patrie*." This recommendation has been absorbed into French veteran 'memory,' primarily as a means of coping with the traumatic war experience through justifying soldier death. The 1918 victory no doubt also constitutes one key reason why veterans of subsequent wars took on the *poilus*' memory: it offered a sense of glory which was missing from their experiences.

The notion of 'sacrifice for France' imposes certain duties on the population, and especially the *anciens combattants*, to fulfil the expectations of the fallen. In other words, propagating their ideas regarding the French national community is seen by veterans as not only a right which they earned on the battlefield, but also a duty which they owe to their departed friends. As Colonel Picot, leader of the Union des Blessés de la Face (U.B.F.), realised in 1922,

> it is up to you - to us - to carry out the ideal for which they sacrificed themselves. Our brothers fell so that a free France - but also a better France - could live.
> Our duty is laid out: may fraternity guide us![63]

This quotation underlines two important factors: that union constitutes a stepping stone on the road to national grandeur, as veterans sincerely believe; and that the dead are fundamental to the "free" and "better" France of the post-war era. Veterans are duty-bound to maintain these ideals in the contemporary world in order to 'validate' wartime sacrifice.

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[62] G. L., 'La Fête de la Victoire à Steenvoorde,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 558, dimanche 13 novembre 1921, pp. 1-2, p. 1.
[63] Colonel Picot, 'A propos d'un anniversaire,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 4e année, no. 172, dimanche 12 novembre 1922, p. 1.

Young people are especially significant targets for remembrance, with the notion of 'memory' often being so closely associated with 'youth' in veteran commentary as to be inseparable. One recent article suggests for example that "commemorating is simultaneously remembering and teaching the younger generations about events they did not experience,"[64] constituting a collective duty which can lessen private suffering. The centrality of pedagogy to veteran memory was articulated immediately after World War Two in an address to the Unknown Soldier, the symbol of the people in arms par excellence[65]:

> What would be considered a heart-wrenching and unbearable experience for you, like a second holocaust, would be to feel your comrades of the trenches and combat turning away from you, if you felt that they no longer perpetuated the sacred cult of your memory to their children and grandchildren.[66]

Encouraging the cult of memory among young people is thus a self-imposed duty - a "mission," according to the A.G.M.G.'s General Surville[67] - of veterans and war victims' groups.[68] The concept of educating youth about past warfare is intensely

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[64] Miléna Vuillerme (Déléguée de la Savoie), '11 novembre - 8 mai,' *Flamme. Association et Entraide des Veuves et Orphelins de Guerre*, novembre 2001, in *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1669, novembre 2001, p. 37.

[65] Volker Ackermann, '"Ceux qui pieusement sont morts pour la France." Die Identität des unbekannten Soldaten [à Paris],' *Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1991, pp. 25-54, p. 37.

[66] Maurice De Barral (Secrétaire Général de l'U.F.A.C.), 'La prescription d'une victoire,' 'Le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 42, samedi 9 novembre 1946, p. 1.

[67] D. Surville, 'La mémoire,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 653, janvier-février 2000, p. 7; F. G., '14 juillet: la jeunesse reprend… le drapeau,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 91e année, nouvelle série, no. 2858, 21 juillet 2007, p. 4.

[68] The French state, too, emphasises the importance of educating youth about war. Karine Gueritat, 'La politique de mémoire de l'Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre (O.N.A.C.): à travers l'exemple de la Commission Départementale de l'Information historique pour la Paix (C.D.I.H.P.) du Loiret (1983-1996),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, vol. 52, no. 205, janvier-mars 2002, pp. 85-95, p. 90. The introduction to the 1985 *Information historique pour la paix* declared its objective was to "allow each French person to rediscover his or her

ideological, allowing memorialists to perpetuate the messages inherent in *their* reading of the conflict. Although veterans exercise relatively little control over public education, they try to engage children and adolescents in memorialisation of war through extra-curricular activities, particularly participation in commemorative services. Engaging youth in memorialisation serves as a guarantee against the disappearance of war (and its lessons), fulfilling the veterans' *devoir de mémoire*.

Several elements of veteran-youth relations are significant. For one, veteran eagerness to engage with youth contrasts powerfully with their general bitterness towards and distrust of the 'older generation.' Particularly following the Great War, many war-weary ex-combatants blamed politicians and people in other socially responsible roles for the failings of society. The injustice of this situation was underlined by Amédée Chivot in 1961 with the Algerian War currently underway:

> This date [*11 novembre*] makes the hearts of all the survivors of this great and bloody epic shudder …
> Those who wage war are not those who unleash them. If those who unleash them were to themselves participate, they would undoubtedly hesitate to give the start signal.[69]

Feeling towards the older generation was further embittered by the fact that these men, perceived as comfortably profiting from the fighting and the trauma

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collective roots" and "teach history to the youth." Secrétaire d'État auprès du Ministère de la Défense, chargé des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre, *L'Information historique pour la paix en 1985*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1985, p. 6. For example François Mitterrand, in a speech commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the murder of the *Résistant* Pierre Brossolette, drew attention to the fact that "because we find ourselves here in this college [*lycée*], in concluding I would like to address this youth, young people who did not know this era and who could be tempted to forget it." He continued by stating that, while 70% of French citizens in 1994 had not been born at the time of the Liberation, remembering the past remained important to construct the future. François Mitterrand, 'Allocution de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, en hommage à Pierre Brossolette, sa vie de Résistant et à la Résistance, au Lycée Janson de Sailly, Paris le 23 mars 1994.' Collection des discours publics, <http://lesdiscours.vie-publique.fr/pdf/947004900.pdf> accessed 10 January 2011.

[69] Amédée Chivot, 'Fraternité des générations du feu,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 46e année, nouvelle série, no. 793, samedi 11 novembre 1961, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

experienced by others behind the front lines, were also key protagonists in constructing verbal (but not practical) acclaim for soldiers and the fallen.[70]

In official and popular discourse, World War One was glorified as the triumph of youth.[71] The superficiality of such thinking was a cause for scorn among returned servicemen; at the same time, however, they were eager to accept and contribute to the proliferation of the rhetoric of sacrifice because the construction of a 'greater cause' provided justification for the death and suffering of their experience and lessened the burden of survivor guilt and loss. Reference to men who fell in "the spring of their life,"[72] or discussion of a "beautiful youth cut down so early,"[73] are examples of veteran writing which adopt the clichés of youthful sacrifice to describe the deaths of millions of soldiers. Stressing the youthfulness of war's victims is a tactic designed to both trigger an emotional response among the audience and reiterate the folly of war. Yet precisely because such phrases form part of the standard discourse of war remembrance, and are thus constantly reiterated, veterans need to distance themselves from such over-used language when attempting to portray genuine mourning for the loss of their comrades.

Avoiding the clichés of war remembrance and reaching for a language which genuinely expresses their emotions constitutes an inherent difficulty for veterans because it is precisely such clichés which have been fossilised in layers of veteran 'memory' and which are continually mobilised to 'remember' the war experience. Thus while veterans stress the horror of warfare - an element which is central to veteran 'memory' although less commonly advanced in commemorative discourse - such rhetoric is almost always balanced with reference to the positive notion of 'dying for' and the official rhetoric of sacrifice. In addition, utilising this language actually prevents veterans from accurately expressing their emotional responses to

[70] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, pp. 68 and 73.
[71] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 73.
[72] Paul Manet (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 54e année, nouvelle série, no. 1190, samedi 1er novembre 1969, p. 1.
[73] André Lamandé, 'L'Appel des Morts,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut*, no. 27, novembre 1927, p. 1.

war and its legacies; the language is so over-used, stilted and wooden that very little meaning remains.

A sentence from the U.F.A.C.'s 1992 message well illustrates the problems associated with the language of veteran 'memory': "We forget neither the courage and patriotism nor the losses and suffering endured by the youth of that era."[74] As well as countering allusions to torment with official rhetoric, the phrase is so standard and regimented as to mask any true feeling. Such rhetoric exemplifies the invariability of remembrance discourse and the impossibility of its manipulation: the ideas of glory and sacrifice are so thoroughly embedded in imagined and mythologised memory that veterans cannot talk or write of World War One or its commemoration without drawing upon standardised phrasal patterns. Even reference to the "suffering" of war is thus structured around the same continually-evoked images of the horror and misery of front-line combat (such as mud and fear) - and almost always validated by reference to sacrifice.

Another aspect of the veteran relationship with France's young people is the fact that the soldiers' youthfulness can aid veteran interaction with younger generations. For example, in March 2007 former Resistance fighters greeted secondary school students at the *puits de Célas*, a mine shaft into which the Waffen SS had thrown 29 bodies (including those of two German women) in 1944. Reporting on the encounter, the A.R.A.C. described the students as being "moved" by two facts in particular: the relations which once existed between the erstwhile *résistants* and their martyred comrades; and the fact that most of them had been about secondary school age when they had engaged in clandestine activity.[75] In this instance, the veterans mobilised the dead to successfully generate youth interest in the past. The pedagogic benefit of such discussion justified their past trauma to an extent.

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[74] René Peyre, '11 novembre: le message de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, no. 564, novembre 1992, p. 21.

[75] Anon., 'Mémoire vivante: "Plus jamais ça,"' *Le Réveil des Combattants*, no. 729-230, avril-mai 2007. Accessed online at A.R.A.C. 51, <http://www.arac51.com/Le-Reveil-des-Combattants-No-729.html#i> accessed 10 January 2011.

The final element of veteran-youth relations is the passing of time. As with society in general, veterans try and encourage youth interest in the nation's past, particularly moments of conflict, in order to counter the detrimental effects of time on memory of war and its messages of trauma and sacrifice. Yet despite acknowledging that the World War One experience is "so alive and close" for veterans but "so far away and confused" for their grandchildren,[76] veterans are disappointed and hurt when young people fail to relate to them, their 'memory,' and especially the men and women who died. The degree of interest and knowledge displayed by France's youth towards the past has waxed and waned throughout the ninety years since the Armistice.[77]

The concept of pedagogy has long been central to French veteran consideration, as demonstrated by this 1937 comment in which the journalist warned ex-soldiers of their duty to pass on memory of war (and thus translate their sacrifice into something constructive):

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[76] L. Karrer (Secrétaire Général), '11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 494, octobre 1971, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1.

[77] On 10 November 1963, for example, twelve youths were interviewed on television about the upcoming public holiday. When asked what past event *11 novembre* commemorated, eleven of them had no idea and one thought it possibly observed the Armistice of 1945. As expected, the *ancien combattant* community responded to this survey with panic. The well-known veteran-writer Pierre Chanlaine worried that "it is scary, because people of good heart and sense clearly feel that a country whose youth ignores the meaning of such a date in its prestigious History, is a country in the middle of moral and intellectual decadence." Pierre Chanlaine, 'Que signifie pour les jeunes la date du 11 novembre? A propos d'interviews au journal télévisé,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 48e année, nouvelle série, no. 895, samedi 23 novembre 1963, pp. 1 et 3, p. 3. The results of the interviews were particularly surprising given that the ceremonies of 1963 - which celebrated the forty-fifth anniversary of Armistice Day - actually encouraged high levels of youth participation. In the evening, representatives of military schools, scout groups and war orphan organisations watched over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier alongside the A.E.C. and the Association Nationale des Journalistes Combattants, whose presence marked the fortieth anniversary of the Eternal Flame, attributed to their colleague Gabriel Boissy. After such a demonstration, the veterans fervently hoped that the young people interviewed the day before "no longer ignore what happened on 11 November 1918." Marcel Hachette, 'Le 45e anniversaire de l'Armistice de 1918,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 411, novembre 1963, pp. 1 et 8, p. 8.

> While we still live and while we can still act, while we can leave instructions and while we can transmit our *esprit* to the youth, it is increasingly necessary that we cross the boundaries and take the message of the French veterans to the other side.
> In ten years it will be too late. In ten years, it will be finished.[78]

Yet despite the veterans' long-term devotion to pedagogy, the urgency (and perhaps importance) of youth instruction has augmented with increasing temporal distance from the significant moments of French history, particularly World War One.[79] As veterans have aged, they have often more avidly recounted their stories, firstly because normally-repressed memories often surface later in life (for example following retirement when individuals have more time to reminisce)[80] and secondly because recognition of their impending disappearance has prompted more engagement in the memorialising endeavour. In 2000 Jean-Pierre Massaret, then State Secretary charged with Veterans' Affairs, eloquently summed up society's contemporary dilemma:

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[78] Bernard Secret, 'Le 11 novembre ou à l'occasion de toute fête, réunion, manifestation, quêtez pour le sou de la paix de l'U.F.,' *Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses*, 3e année, no. 23, novembre 1937, p. 3. Note that Michael Martin called the element of pedagogy inherent in commemoration, particularly from the 1980s, a '*devoir*.' Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, p. 183.

[79] This phenomenon is unique neither to France nor to war veterans, as demonstrated by Lipgens' research into memory of war across Europe and Lalieu's work on Holocaust survivor memory in France. Walter Lipgens, 'Le rôle des Associations d'anciens combattants et victimes de la guerre dans le mouvement européen,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 99-109, p. 105; Olivier Lalieu, 'L'invention du "devoir de mémoire,"' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 69, janvier-mars 2001, pp. 83-94, p. 89. Michael Martin believed that by the 1980s, former combatants were less desirous of using commemoration to display their "numerical or moral strength" than of passing knowledge to younger generations. Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 179. This thesis would tend to argue that while pedagogy became increasingly important, veterans continued to rally together on anniversary dates with the express purpose of putting across their points of view (to which education was primary).

[80] See Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, 'Telling stories of the war: Ageing veterans coping with their memories through narrative,' *Oral History*, vol. 26, no. 2, Autumn 1998, pp. 57-64 for the effect of retirement on veteran memory of war. Barbara Keller, however, did not believe that the elderly reminisce more; rather, that different ages and generations remember different events at different times and for different reasons. Barbara Keller, 'Personal identity and social discontinuity: On memories of the "war generation" in former West Germany,' in Jeffrey Dean Webster and Barbara K. Haight (eds.), *Critical advances in reminiscence work: From theory to application*, New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2002, pp. 165-179, p. 168.

> The duty of remembering contemporary wars and conflicts is today especially acute. The progressive disappearance of the *anciens combattants*, who were actors and witnesses of essential moments in our national history, makes transmitting the heritage of their engagement to new generations all the more necessary. Their deed was based on the values of courage, selfishness, solidarity and citizenship.[81]

Instructing youth in the history of war stems from the belief that remembering the past is necessary for society's present and future well-being. It also allows veterans to pass on knowledge of their community's trauma as a deterrent against future conflict and to engender a certain mode of (patriotic, republican or civic) behaviour. Education allows veterans "to pass on the baton of memory so that they [young people] can in turn explain to their children what they owe those who lived before them so that they may know a free world."[82]

This dialogue of passing on memory before it is too late relies less on mobilising the war dead (although the fallen of course remain central to any discussion of war) than on mobilising 'the veteran dead.' Exactly the same dictum applies: the veterans are lauded as model citizens who sacrificed themselves for their nation and its people. While they may not have died on the battlefield, as soldiers they defended certain rights and embodied certain ideals just like their fallen compatriots. An additional point can be made relating to the veteran dead: by virtue of the legacy of wartime participation, ex-servicemen and -women have (supposedly) lived lives devoted to the moral codes for which they fought. Young people are encouraged to engage with war - and predominantly the values for which wars have been waged - not only through remembrance of the fallen but also through individuals who are worthy of commemoration precisely because they survived.

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[81] Jean-Pierre Massaret (Secrétaire d'Etat à la Défense chargé des anciens combattants), [n.t.], *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 96, avril 2000, p. 1.

[82] Claude Le Barillier (Vice Président National, Président Commission Nationale d'Action Civique), 'La mémoire: mémoire vivante, mémoire collective,' *La Voix de Combattant*, no. 1656, juin-juillet 2000, pp. 21-22, p. 21.

The most obvious way to influence French youth is through schooling. As the single universal authority in the lives of the nation's children, education bears much responsibility for promoting the past and particular interpretations of it. In considering the role of conflict memory in formulating civic education in France, Louis-Pascal Jacquemond reflected that the French school system integrates and relays what the state ordains.[83] The prominence of World War One in French state schooling therefore reflects the event's significance in legitimising the Republic and its ideals. In 1946 the U.F. recognised the role which educational institutions play in perpetuating memory of war, declaring that "as long as our schools maintain the patriotic flame, the date *11 novembre* will be cited and retained as one of the great landmarks in French history."[84]

Gaining knowledge of past conflict through education guards against its eventual loss and can thus be used to warn others about its horrors. According to current U.N.C. President Hugues Dalleau, such council is "why teaching the history of France in school is of primary importance in educating the citizenry." His commentary continued: "But it is later, as an adult, that we realise we need to know about times before our own lives in order to better understand reality in its entirety, its complexity and its truth."[85] Dalleau's astute remarks recognise the links between education, citizenship and the past. Schooling has been fundamental to French

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[83] Louis-Pascal Jacquemond, 'En quoi l'histoire et la mémoire des guerres et conflits du XXème siècle fondent-ils une éducation à la citoyenneté?' in Dominique Vian (ed.), *La mémoire des guerres et conflits contemporains: un socle pour construire sa citoyenneté, des racines pour éduquer, un enjeu universel au service de la paix. Actes du Colloque d'Aubenas le 10 décembre 1999, organisé par la Direction Départementale de l'Ardèche de l'Office National des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, Aubenas: Imprimerie Fombon, 2000, pp. 35-46, p. 39.

[84] Anon., 'Manifeste du 11 Novembre,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 9, novembre 1946, p. 3. For this reason as well, in its report on the tenth anniversary commemoration of a monument dedicated to the left-wing prisoners interned at Rivel (in Aude, in the Languedoc-Roussillon region), the *Réveil des Combattants* made special mention of the principal and teacher from nearby Chalabre College who had attended the ceremony with ten students, thanking them "for having allowed these youngsters to learn about this period in our history." André Zdrojower, 'Cérémonies du souvenir organisées par l'A.R.A.C. et l'Association des résistants, déportés, internés politiques en A.F.N. (1940/1944): Rivel, Aude,' *Réveil des Combattants*, vendredi 15 septembre 2006. A.R.A.C. 51, <http://www.arac51.com/Ceremonies-du-souvenir-organisees.html> accessed 10 January 2011.

[85] Hugues Dalleau, 'Editorial: commémorations obligent,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1597, août-septembre 1994, p. 2.

national self-perception since Jules Ferry's implementation of free and compulsory primary education in the early 1880s, which provided the fledging Third Republic with a foyer for moulding model citizens.[86] The success of such institutionalisation is apparent in the second part of Dalleau's article: learning about the past may not seem relevant to young people, but life experience demonstrates its necessity.

A fundamental aspect of the link between education, citizenship and past warfare is the promotion of certain moral codes, as noted on Armistice Day 2004:

> [The U.F.A.C.] wishes that the republican and secular values of tolerating and accepting difference be taught during civic instruction classes at primary school, junior high school and high school [*à l'école, au collège et au lycée*]. Adults, who too often ignore them, must also be reminded of these values. The *anciens combattants* have a duty of memory and truth to fulfil towards the young generations so that they remain vigilant and may not be condemned to live through comparable dramas.[87]

Educating youth about war serves to reiterate the moral principles embodied in the soldiers' sacrifice and teaches them to respect and aspire to such ideals. Here again is the notion that veterans are duty-bound to perpetuate memory of war as a way of transforming past trauma into a positive outcome, an element of the veteran 'memory' transmitted to later generations of fire.

Despite their fervent desire to see history taught at schools (and taught correctly), direct veteran involvement with public education is usually limited to occasional school visits.[88] To counter this restriction, their press appeals to individuals who

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[86] For Olier Mordrel, primary schools were the "temples" of national mythology. Olier Mordrel, *Le mythe de l'Hexagone*, Paris: J. Picollec, 1981, p. 55. For information regarding the implementation of the Third Republic's education system, see Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, politics and society*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 36-38.

[87] U.F.A.C., 'Message pour le 11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 674, juillet-août-septembre 2004, p. 11.

[88] An anecdote was recounted to Jean-Noël Grandhomme when he interviewed an elderly World War One veteran. Upon the veteran's visit to a school in the twentieth arrondissement of Paris, the headmistress told him, "You are going to talk to us about the 1914-1918 war." The veteran replied

hold sway over the nation's youth, especially teachers.[89] The Ministry of Public Instruction issued these guidelines for post-World War One teaching practice, which were published in the *Voix du Combattant* in 1926:

> Through their love for the Homeland, their feelings of humanity and their devotion to the great causes for which the older generation died, they [teachers] will stimulate children's generous souls with the desire to be worthy of such models.
> It will also be necessary to bring France's efforts to light in order to avoid a repeat of similar catastrophes.[90]

The notions of republicanism, civic values and patriotism are evident in this passage, with the author referring to the moral compass of civic-minded, republican teachers, their devotion to the "great causes" of the fallen, and the potential for instilling similar fidelity in children. Linking the fallen, teachers and youth through the value systems of the war dead, this piece of writing lauds teachers and encourages others to respect and follow the example set by two generations of noble republicans - yesterday's fallen and today's educators. It also illustrates the necessity of transmitting memory of war to warn against its recurrence.

Parents, too, were expected to teach their children about the *poilus*' exploits. The northern French *Patriote de Flandres* forcefully reiterated this idea, condemning the construction of "visible evidence" of the Great War and its sacrifice - in this case, war graves - without sufficient pedagogic explanation of its existence. Children needed to be taught exactly what had happened:

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with, "Madame, the 1914-1918 war is so huge that I would prefer to answer questions." Edmond Masson (101 ans), 29 mars 1995, in Jean-Noël Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles: paroles des derniers survivants de la Grande Guerre*, Strasbourg: Editions La Nuée Bleue, 2006, p. 99.

[89] As has been noted, teachers have to choose which version of 'history' and which 'memory' to transmit to their classes. Maurice Crubellier, *La mémoire des Français: recherches d'histoire culturelle*, Paris: Henri Veyrier et Kronos, 1991, p. 5.

[90] Ministre de l'Instruction Publique, 'Le 11 novembre dans les écoles,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 7e année, no. 328, samedi 14 novembre 1926, p. 1.

> Visible evidence of our piety towards the glorious dead does not count if we do not know to raise our children to respect and admire the heroes of the War.
> Fathers and mothers, remind your children that the Prussians invaded our land and that remembering the men who lie there is inspired by our condition as free and independent citizens of a great and victorious nation."[91]

Patriotism is the overriding value system espoused in this quotation, reminding the French population of their obligation to the soldiers who died so they might remain "independent citizens." In teaching this information, the dead are mobilised both in the physical space of the gravesites and in the children's thoughts.

Such dynamic rhetoric is perhaps justified in the case of the Nord, which had been under German occupation; however, veteran writing across France and throughout the decades has absorbed and reiterated the terminology and themes of Great War propaganda. As recently as 1998 Charles Dubois of the *Journal des Combattants* evoked society's blood debt by resurrecting propaganda extremes from the Great War:

> Let us imagine what this country would have become without these men [the *poilus*]. We would have lost our liberties. Our language. We would have re-read 'The Last Class' in French at a school in Alsace reported by A. Daudet.[92] Our culture would have to have been erased in favour of that of the Germans. […] Let us teach the young generations what we owe the soldiers of the Great War. And let us stand up against those who want people to forget.[93]

Veteran memorial discourse can be quite forceful in struggling against public amnesia and general lethargy; society's debt towards the veterans is too great to consign to oblivion, they believe. In campaigning against forgetfulness, authors

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[91] M. Coudeville (Président des poilus à Steenvoorde), in G. L., 'La Fête de la Victoire à Steenvoorde,' dimanche 13 novembre 1921, p. 1.
[92] 'La dernière classe' is a short story by French author Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897).
[93] Charles Dubois, [n.t.], *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 82e année, nouvelle série, no. 2578, 7 novembre 1998, p. 1.

draw on the powerful imagery and emotive language of wartime propaganda without considering the falsehoods imbedded within it. Dubois, for example, ignored the near-impossibility of leaders of Imperial Germany actually implementing severe policies of cultural destruction. In employing such rhetoric, the veterans contribute to the formation of a stereotyped experience, or mythologised memory, of war.

Constructing an alternative history around the idea of 'what if France had lost?' is a method which veterans employ to further highlight the benefits of today's society and the debt which French people owe to war's victims. Powerful in its depiction of a defeated France, this technique is particularly pertinent to youth education by virtue of its shock value. Wondering about the perpetuation of World War One history as the *poilus* disappear, the U.N.C. angled the concept of hypothetical defeat to most affect young people's sense of self. In the words of its erstwhile President, "when the eyes of the last Combatant of 1914-1918 close, young people need to know that we are still affected by *11 novembre*, because if we today speak French in a free and prosperous country, it is because a lot of men before us fought to construct and defend it."[94] The use of the hypothetical 'if' highlights the potential for an alternative pathway, one in which language and freedoms - taken for granted by the majority of contemporary citizens - would have been obliterated. While not strictly critical of the current situation, such rhetoric uses war and the war dead to draw attention to waning adherence to the values which veteran 'memory' promotes as fundamental to a healthy nation.

Dissatisfied to merely preach the importance of History and civic instruction at school, many *ancien combattant* groups also take a more active role in youth education. In addition to programmes designed and coordinated by local and state bodies, individual patriotic associations organise extra-curricular projects designed

[94] F. Porteu de la Morandière (Président Général Adjoint de l'U.N.C. et Président de l'U.N.C.-A.F.N.), '11 novembre: journée nationale du souvenir,' *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1499, novembre 1984, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

to generate youth interest in the past.[95] Such initiatives include film sessions and visits by veterans to schools, receiving Allied government representatives into their towns, and especially essay competitions which prompt research about French wartime engagement. Special exhibitions, often dedicated to the stories of local servicemen, are put together by associations as a means of perpetuating veteran 'memory' of war.[96]

However, the primary course of action through which veterans encourage young people to connect with the wartime past is through participation in remembrance ceremonies.[97] On Armistice Day, young people are charged with performing important ceremonial roles including wreath-laying, announcing the names of the fallen, reading famous poetry or essay competition submissions, parading alongside veterans or distinguished figures, and singing the national anthem or religious hymns. It is hoped that such participation - mobilisation, even - enhances the children's attachment to the *Patrie* in increasing their sensitivity to the republican values for which the soldiers fought and died, and the ideals bred and fostered on the battlefield.[98]

Children have long been involved in commemorative activity of World War One. Rémi Dalisson, in his investigation into commemorations of the Battle of the Marne, found that children were key participants in the institution of services from 1916, reflecting the state's desire for pedagogic instruction. The religious and military

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[95] One example of this activism is the involvement of veterans in the Musée de la Résistance. In Sarah Blowen's view, the participation of these erstwhile participants "deepens historical consciousness." Sarah Blowen, 'Lest we forget: Memories, history and the Musée de la Résistance,' in Sarah Blowen, Marion Demossier, and Jeanine Picard (eds.), *Recollections of France: Memories, identities and heritage in contemporary France*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2000, pp. 68-88, p. 88.

[96] D. Surville, 'La mémoire,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)*, no. 653, janvier-février 2000, p. 7. The U.N.C. du Nord puts on an exhibition relating to French military history once a year in October.

[97] Jean-Pierre Rioux has remarked on the general absence of youth in commemorations of World War Two. Jean-Pierre Rioux, 'Les variables politiques,' in E. Damoi and Jean-Pierre Rioux (eds.), *La mémoire des Français: Quarante ans de commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 1986, pp. 89-102, p. 100.

[98] Festivity is a key pedagogic tool. Louis Bergeron, 'Évolution de la fête révolutionnaire: chronologie et typologie,' in Jean Ehrard and Paul Viallaneix (eds.), *Les fêtes de la Révolution*, Paris: Société des Études Robespierristes, 1977, pp.121-130, p. 127.

figures who presided over the celebrations exalted the war and the soldiers' values, and teachers evoked the *poilus* in order to recapture the mood of pre-war republican festivities. The aim was to encourage children to identify with the *poilus*' spirit in order to develop their own attachment to the Republic and its values.[99]

Identical logic lay behind the ceremonial custom of Armistice Day. Even before the date's official commemoration, children were incorporated into ceremonies of remembrance. To mark the second anniversary of the *Ceasefire* in a northern French town, two war orphans laid bouquets at the monuments in the civil and military cemeteries and upon the tombs of two students who had been killed by German shells.[100] This poignant gesture not only commemorated the injurious effects of occupation on civilian populations, but deliberately created special bonds between the living and the dead children to emphasise the tragedy. Encouraging young people to relate to conflict victims is a technique intended to pique the interest and empathy of the living in order to transmit war's lessons.

The key reasons for encouraging youth participation in ceremonies of remembrance are the perpetuation of veteran 'memory' of war and its trauma, and the promotion of certain value systems. For François Malval of the U.N.C., another motivation presented itself. On 11 November 1922 (the first official public holiday marking the occasion), the participation of school children, as well as patriotic associations and other groups, turned the day into a "moving demonstration of national solidarity and inter-Allied harmony."[101] In this situation, then, the children's presence contributed to a feeling of unity - across the nation and across the ages - putting into practice a belief fundamental to *ancien combattant* 'identity' and 'memory.'

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[99] Rémi Dalisson, 'Champs de bataille et mémoire de guerre. L'exemplarité de la célébration de la victoire de la Marne de 1916 à 1939,' *Revue du Nord*, vol. 82, no. 337, 2000, pp. 763-787, p. 778.
[100] G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1. The names of the deceased students were Agnès Dejonghe and Georgette Varey.
[101] François Malval, 'Le 11 novembre 1922: Emouvante Manifestation de Solidarité Nationale et d'Entente Interalliée,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 4e année, no. 157, dimanche 30 juillet 1922, p. 1.

Physically carrying out rituals is one thing; understanding the symbolism behind the gestures is quite another. As children are predominantly untrained in the art of interpretation, the veterans push responsible adults to properly explain the meaning behind commemorative actions. The clearest example of this encouragement is the postscript attached to recent U.F.A.C. Armistice Day messages, which states: "The U.F.A.C. hopes that this message will be read by a young boy or girl. The reader must not only have read the text beforehand, but must also have had the text explained to him/her."[102] This call goes beyond encouraging youth participation in the commemoration; it aspires to nothing less than emotional engagement with the rituals of Armistice Day. This same message also encouraged the youth to actively live out the theories espoused in *11 novembre* ceremonies, especially persuading them to work towards international understanding; in other words, perpetuate veteran reading (or, their imagined and mythologised memories) of warfare.

In parallel with demographic changes (an ageing and dying veteran population), the role of young people in commemorations of war has become progressively more important as a means of preventing the ceremony (and veteran 'memory' of war) from disappearing with time. Writing about the Lighting of the Flame, the President of the Committee of the Flame admitted that

> at the dawn of the third millennium, it appears indispensable to welcome young people to the Arc de Triomphe and to invite them to the rekindling ceremonies, in order to give the Flame a new dimension: that of Hope.

[102] For example Anon., '8 mai 2006: message de l'U.F.A.C.,' in *Le Réveil des Combattants*, samedi 20 mai 2006, Le Réveil des Combattants, <http://www.arac51.com/8-mai-2006-Message-de-l-UFAC.html> accessed 10 January 2011; Anon., 'Message de l'U.F.A.C. pour les cérémonies patriotiques du 11 novembre 2007,' in *Le Réveil des Combattants*, mardi 16 octobre 2007, Le Réveil des Combattants, <http://www.arac51.com/Message-de-l-UFAC-pour-les.html> accessed 10 January 2011; U.F.A.C., 'Message de l'U.F.A.C. pour le 8 mai 2010,' Union Francaise des Associations de Combattants et de Victimes de Guerre <http://www.unionfederale.com/actualites_de_l_uf/union_ francaise _des_associations_de_combattants_et_de_victimes_de_guerre> accessed 10 January 2011.

> We have to make our children and grand-children understand that memory is not only a homage due to those who died for our liberty, but also a foundation on which they will build tomorrow's world.[103]

Combette here outlined the timeframe inherent in commemoration and the reason for veteran perpetuation of memory: by remembering the trials and traumas endured by yesterday's fallen soldiers, young people will be able to construct a future free from conflict.

The promotion of the key values of republicanism, civic responsibility and patriotism waxes and wanes, depending on the context and the preferences of the journalists; yet, all three systems have remained imperative to veteran agendas since 1918. This persistence suggests a reliance on a past model of discourse, in this case, the imagined memory of the World War One combatants. Turning war's lessons into positive visions for the future - in other words, carrying out a duty to inform the population of war's horrors - has been practiced by members of different associations and different generations of fire as a means of coming to terms with the trauma of their war experiences.

Young people have been central to *11 novembre* ceremony since before the date was officially recognised. Encouraging youth participation is an extension of veteran hopes for perpetuating their 'memory' of conflict and the traumas and lessons it engenders, as children and adolescents embody the nation's future. For this reason, young people are considered especially appropriate targets for absorbing the civic and moral codes embodied in the image of the soldier-citizen, an image which builds upon pre-existing republican mythology and Allied propaganda of the First World War and is fundamental to veteran writing. Particularly in recent decades as veterans of World Wars One and Two have aged and died, persuading young people to become involved with enacting memory of war has become imperative. These attempts have generally met with success; as the *Journal des Combattants*

[103] Jean Combette (Général du corps d'armée (CR), Président du Comite de la Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe), 'La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe, Flamme de l'Espérance,' *Les Chemins de la mémoire*, no. 93, octobre 1999, p. 1.

contentedly commented in 1983, Armistice Day has become "a lively and engaging homage to the veterans of 1914-1918, to the dead and to their families. // *11 novembre* is even more than that: through the massive participation of today's youth; it is an event of inter-generational union."[104] Unity - whether it be associative, inter-generational, national, or supra-national, is yet another primary concern of the French veteran community.

[104] Jean Laurain, 'Message,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 67e année, nouvelle série, no. 1874, 19 novembre 1983, p. 1.

Part III - Motivations

Chapter Eight

The legacy of camaraderie: Mobilising the war dead to encourage unity

> "At the front you provided us with an example of fraternity and union; when food was scarce, you shared your piece of bread with the starving soldiers in the trenches; you knelt before the dying before yourselves succumbing to death; and you wanted us to follow your example."
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> - M. Henri Schacht (enfant de la commune Steenvoorde, ex-Lieutenant au 208e d'infanterie), 'Discours au pied du monument de Steenvoorde,' in G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1.

This chapter focuses on veteran mobilisation of the war dead in calling for unity.[1] It argues that the idea of 'unity' fulfils two major functions in veteran 'memory', constituting one of the most powerful ways in which ex-soldiers learnt to accept the war experience, and providing a constructive avenue into which they could re-direct their past trauma. The desire for unity partly accounts for the invariability of veteran discourse: the theme is reiterated constantly in veteran writing across associations and generations of fire, and encouraged and (sometimes) enacted in practice. In this way, unity is fundamental to the *anciens combattants*' very 'identity.' The veterans' preoccupation with the concept of 'unity' stems from the centrality of camaraderie

[1] As Michael Martin aptly recognised, implicit (if downplayed or ignored) in discussions of 'unity' is its counter: disunity. Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, p. 90.

to their World War One narrative: the shared trials and experiences of the trenches - especially the ever-present threat of death - were supposed to have resulted in the formation of extraordinarily strong relationships. As one positive element which veterans could draw from their time at war - George Mosse described it as the "most compelling and seductive" component of Myth of the War Experience[2] - camaraderie was fundamental to the imagined memory of the Great War. The theme remains elementary to the French *ancien combattant* narrative, despite the different experiences of warfare to which its proponents have been exposed.

Of primary concern is union within the 'veteran community.' This appellation is itself indicative of the desire for union, yet simultaneously underscores the fabrication of this status: the notion of veteran unity is in fact a myth (which in this context implies both 'story' and 'falsehood').[3] Rarely is union actually achieved; in reality the veterans come together only when an external force seriously threatens either their financial situation or France's wellbeing. Throughout the decades and across generations of fire, two modes have converted the discourse of *ancien combattant* unity into action. On a private level, veterans have sometimes organised inter-association meetings, social events and commemorations during which leaderships and members of different groups can interact.[4] Alternatively, veterans

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[2] George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the memory of World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 65.

[3] Note for example that discourse after the Second World War incessantly called for union as the divisions within the Resistance became increasingly obvious in veteran associations. Marie-Agnès Pitois-Dehu, *Les commémorations de la Seconde guerre mondiale à Soissons de 1945 à 1984*, Soissons: Centre Départemental de Documentation Pédagogique de l'Aisne, 1985, p. 2.

[4] Attempts to encourage greater inter-association collaboration began soon after the Armistice. Only in 1927 did such efforts really come to fruition, however, with the establishment of the *Etats généraux de la France meurtrie*, an inter-association conference held between 11 and 13 November 1927. André Linville, editor of the independent *Journal des Mutilés* (which later became the *Journal des Combattants*), played a seminal role in this enterprise because his lack of affiliation with any one association allowed him to act as mediator. For a discussion of the unification attempts of the 1920s, see Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. I: Histoire*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, pp. 91-113. Yet, despite the success of the *Etats généraux*, aside from the call for economic and pension reform, the veteran groups continued to follow individual agendas when addressing other issues throughout the 1930s. For an in-depth account of the intricacies of *ancien combattant* agendas during the 1930s, see Lynette Chaffey, 'The *mouvement combattant* in France in the 1930s: An analysis of the nature of *ancien combattant* associations, their aims, activities and achievements,' PhD thesis, University of Sussex, 1972. Particularly Part II 'The aims and activities of individual *ancien combattant* associations'

have showcased their togetherness in the public arena. Such displays are usually prompted by contemporary crises or the perceived ill treatment of former soldiers. Presenting themselves as a united movement with common goals and concerns, the veterans hope for increased legitimacy in social and political debates. In addition to their appeals for accord within their ranks, veterans advocate unity on a national scale. At times, conceptions of 'unity' are expanded even further to incorporate citizens of Greater France, the Allied powers, or humanity as a whole, fortifying appeals for international peace. Armistice Day presents a powerful opportunity in which to call for and showcase unity, as commemoration is by its very definition public and participatory.[5]

In order to demonstrate the importance of the myth of the "camaraderie born on the battlefields during the hard years,"[6] the chapter commences by looking at soldier reflections on relationships formed in the trenches, particularly the ever-present recognition of death and the dead. Not surprisingly, the centrality of the fallen in wartime situations was translated into post-war constructions of 'camaraderie.' Firstly, the bonds formed between soldiers at the front were believed to not only transcend identifiers of the civilian world such as class and politics but also barriers between life and death. Secondly, the death of friends influenced soldiers' attitudes to others, whether combatant or civilian. In other words, by their very absence, the war dead made their presence felt whenever soldiers or ex-soldiers interacted with other people, attesting to the strength of relationships formed in battle and the persistence of such relationships in all three layers of veteran 'memory.' In this way,

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highlights the discrepancies of opinion between the various associations and their different reactions to domestic and international situations.

[5] Unity, particularly national unity, has long been a central pedagogic message of French festivity. James Gaasch, 'Rousseau and the politics of fête,' PhD thesis, University of California, 1976, p. 123; Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* [*La fête révolutionnaire 1789-1799*], trans. Alan Sheridan, Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1988; Sudhir Hazareesingh, '"A common sentiment of national glory": Civic festivities and French collective sentiment under the Second Empire,' *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 76, vol. 2, June 2004, pp. 280-312; Charles Rearick, 'Festivals in Modern France: The Experience of the Third Republic,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 12, no. 3, July 1977, pp. 435-460, p. 441.

[6] O. Largeault, 'Hier et demain,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 341, juillet-août 1957, p. 1.

whether veteran-activists explicitly mention the fallen or not, they are automatically incorporated in their appeals for union within *ancien combattant*, national and supra-national communities.

Much information on trench relationships can be garnered from contemporary accounts, for example from letters sent by French officers and troops to J.-H. Rosny Ainé[7] who during the Great War conducted a survey on the theme.[8] Rosny declared that his motivation was "to know how trench friendships are born; to know whether they are ephemeral or durable; whether they develop following a series of events or through force of habit; whether they stem from certain favours or from simply sharing the same work, the same trials and the same dangers."[9] In other words, Rosny was interested in the effect of trauma on relationship formation. Although George Mosse warned against accepting the data too readily, given Rosny's support for the right-winger Maurice Barrès,[10] the soldiers' accounts present multitudinous examples of how and why relationships at the front were so important. Despite the limited scope of his research, Rosny believed that the experiences related in the sixty or so letters were representative of the millions of relationships established during this time.[11]

As could be expected, trench friendships developed from all kinds of situations, ranging from commonplace acts of kindness such as sharing tobacco to the ultimate heroism of saving someone's life.[12] Friendships also blossomed between different

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[7] J.-H. Rosny Ainé was the pseudonym for the Belgian writer Joseph-Henri Honoré Boex (1856-1940), considered one of the initiators of the science fiction literary genre.

[8] Letter-writing was prolific during the World War One years, with an estimated four million letters sent daily. In this way, the period marked a watershed in the writing habits of French people. William Kidd, 'Identity and iconography: French war memorials 1914-1918 and 1939-1945,' in Nicholas Hewitt and Rosemary Chapman (eds.), *Popular culture and mass communication in twentieth-century France*, Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992, pp. 220-240, p. 227.

[9] J.-H. Rosny, 'Préface de J.-H. Rosny,' in J.-H. Rosny Aîné, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées. Recueillies au front par J.-H. Rosny Aîné de l'Académie Goncourt*, Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1919, pp. 3-11, p. 5.

[10] George L. Mosse, *The Jews and the German war experience 1914-1918*, The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture, vol. 21, 1977, p. 8.

[11] Rosny, 'Préface,' p. 4.

[12] (S.) Un officier de crapouillots, Sous-Lieutenant S., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 88-91, p. 89.

types of people: some accounts in Rosny's study draw attention to the importance of shared experiences in forming friendships,[13] while other letter-writers describe an amazing array of relationships between individuals who had little in common. Living together in the trenches, friendship developed between men of different ages,[14] regions,[15] occupations[16] and even education.[17]

Often, the soldiers referred to their friends as 'brothers,' demonstrating the accuracy of the term 'fraternity' in describing the trench experience.[18] In his autobiographical novel the prominent veteran Jacques Péricard also espoused the familial connection: "In the trenches no one is indifferent. There are not even comrades, only brothers."[19] Employing the terminology of the family hints at the intimacy of these

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[13] (S.) J… Our, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 60-64, p. 61. Also (S.) G. B…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 73-88, p. 79.

[14] Divisions of age seemed to produce feelings of hero worship for the younger individual, balanced for his elder by a sense of obligation and protection.

[15] A strong comradeship developed between L. S. and the reclusive young Breton who saved his life. Twice in his anecdote the author referred to the fact that "he was a Breton" and "I was a Parisian," (pp. 22 and 27) attesting to the importance of the situation for him. L. S…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 22-28. The allure of regional identity obviously remained powerful, however. (S.) Henry N… noted that coming from the same village, region or province formed an automatic basis for friendship among servicemen, especially once recruitments were mixed. "Even without knowing each other, they are able to fraternise more easily. They can evoke the places they have visited, local memories, sometimes the faces of people they know and maybe love." (S.) Henry N…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 92-95, p. 94.

[16] L… Henry alluded to his joy at conversing about the country with B…, who he described as a "tough farmer from Percheron" (p. 59) L… Henry, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 58-60.

[17] This was the case for (S.) Ch. P… who wrote to Rosny about his friend Léon who had been a train driver in the coal mines of northern France prior to his engagement at the front. The friendship developed when P… started to write letters home for the near-illiterate Léon. (S.) Ch. P…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 11-14. As Henry N… wrote regarding the situation, education "count[s] for nothing; we know but one education, that of sentiment and the heart." (S.) Henry N…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 92-95, p. 94. Scholars of World War One have posited that letter-writing was immensely significant for soldiers, constituting a bond with their former lives. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at war 1914-1918: National sentiment and trench journalism in France during the First World War*, trans. Helen McPhail, Oxford: Berg, 1992, pp. 139-140; Nicolas Beaupré, 'Témoigner, combattre, interpréter: les fonctions sociale et culturelles de la littérature de guerre des écrivains combattants de 1914 à 1918 (France, Allemagne),' in Anne Duménil, Nicolas Beaupré and Christian Ingrao (eds.), *1914-1945, l'ère de la guerre. I: 1914-1918, violence, mobilisations, deuil*, Paris: Agnès Viénot, 2004, pp. 169-182, p. 169.

[18] Note, however, that after investigating the situation as posited through trench newspapers, Audoin-Rouzeau concluded that fraternity was *not* experienced by the majority of troops. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at war 1914-1918*, esp. pp. 46-52.

[19] Lieutenant Jacques P. Péricard, *Face à face: souvenirs et impressions d'un soldat de la Grande Guerre. Avec une préface de M. Maurice Barrès de l'Académie française et 35 dessins de la plume de M. Paul Thiriat*, Paris: Libraire Payot et Cie., 1916, p. 246.

relationships. In one case, familial relations were further expanded. Struggling to accept the death of his son (placed by a twist of fate in the same company), one officer was consoled by his young adjutant. Their relationship developed so that eventually the officer bestowed his fatherly affection and advice on the adjutant until the young man was killed.[20] Trauma was here a catalyst for a relationship.

Comparing life in the trenches to that at school or in the barracks, Lieutenant B… noted how living at close quarters fostered friendships. The war experience enhanced this natural tendency:

> People have an instinctive need for affection. When people are separated for a long time, the far-off affection of loved ones no longer suffices. We are compelled by a secret force to search for someone around us upon whom to lavish signs of friendship. In return, this person reserves all his sympathy for us.
> It is easy to see why the need for such affection becomes intense when at war […][21]

M. C. seconded this view, citing the combination of separation from loved ones and the confrontation with warfare as initiating friendships: "As brutality was pushing him [the soldier] towards death, his instinctive reaction was to cling strongly to hearts."[22] Eric J. Leed, in his masterful account of soldier identity in World War One, also noted that strong connections were forged between men at the front as a result of their physical and emotional separation from the home sphere.[23] Not just the trauma of battle, but also the trauma of separation from the familiar, contributed to the construction of World War One bonds.

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[20] B… (Colonel Commandant l'Artillerie divisionnaire), in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 29-34.
[21] Lieutenant B…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 34-40, p. 35.
[22] M. C., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 54-58, p. 55.
[23] Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 210-211. Similar conclusions were drawn by Arnold Bergsträsser in his examination of the development of a single World War One 'generation.' Arnold Bergsträsser, 'Rückblick auf die Generation von 1914,' in Robert Tillmanns (ed.), *Ordnung als Ziel: Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte*, Stuttgart and Köln: Verlag W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1954, pp. 7-19, p. 10. Mosse purported that the idea of camaraderie might even have been created partly as an andedote to the regularity and monotony of trench life. George L. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 21, no. 4, October 1986, pp. 491-513, p. 495.

The alternative point of view was provided by (S.) Pn. who declared that war rendered men insensitive, even egocentric. "How can you be moved by the death of a comrade," he asked, "when your own life is hanging by a thread?"[24] Nonetheless, this pessimistic and cynical rhetorical question was followed by the admission that friendships did indeed exist and that, born of the trenches, they were imbued with a special value and character. Marius C… thought that soldiers became increasingly self-centred the longer the war continued, as they became less inclined to share packages from home and open themselves to more hurt by fraternising with new recruits[25] - an attitude which Leed would see as a protective mechanism against further loss of self.[26] Léon S… denied the existence of real friendships at the front, believing war provided an occasion to get to know and appreciate others but nothing more.[27] Another soldier argued that life in the trenches actually provided fewer opportunities for friendship than everyday civilian encounters,[28] a claim backed by a lieutenant for whom 'friendship' could only exist in a relatively calm environment. He claimed that the instability and agitation of trench life bred instead "staunch comradeship."[29] For such commentators, forming normal relationships was negated by the stress of the war environment.

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[24] (S.) Pn., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 40-45, pp. 40-41. Facing the death of self produced responses ranging from heroic to selfish to anxious to indifferent. David Cannadine, 'War and death, grief and mourning in modern Britain,' in Joachim Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of mortality: Studies in the social history of death*, London: Europa Publications Ltd., 1981, pp. 187-242, pp. 208-212.

[25] Marius C…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 105-108, pp. 105-106.

[26] With the death of every comrade, a soldier lost a little more of his identity, suggested Leed. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 211. Writing home was one means of asserting identity (Kidd, 'Identity and iconography,' p. 227), accounting partly for the plethora of letters produced during the War.

[27] (S.) Leon S…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 110-113, p. 112.

[28] (S.) E. G., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 121-127, p. 121.

[29] Lt. B…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 136-139, pp. 136-137. It is interesting to note that much of the commentary in Rosny's study invoking negative opinions about trench friendship centred on issues of terminology. Often the soldiers discussed the subtle differences between and expressed different interpretations of '*camarade*,' '*ami*,' '*copain*' and the colloquial '*pote*' (whose use allowed soldiers to avoid "abusing" the term '*ami*,' according to one observer, Lt. B…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 136-139, p. 138) rather than completely disavowing the presence of friendships in the trenches.

Injury, re-stationing and death often prevented friendships reaching maturity, rendering them simultaneously fragile and sacred. Many letter-writers saw the omnipresence of death as a factor unique to the formation of wartime relationships, either pushing men further apart or bringing them closer together than permitted under normal circumstances: although death brutally ended embryonic friendships, "in the face of death, men [became] brothers, and soldiers [became] compassionate to the sufferings of their injured comrades."[30] Certain contributors to Rosny's study viewed writing about their dead friends as an act of catharsis,[31] a way of once again incorporating the fallen into the reality of the living. The act of exteriorising trauma through discourse constitutes one primary reason for the development of the veterans' imagined memory of the trench experience; *anciens combattants* wrote and spoke about World War One and its victims in order to accept the past.

Already during the war, then, soldiers remained unfailing conscious of the fallen.[32] In everyday actions, for example in deciding whether or not to share packages from home with new recruits, soldiers were sensitive to the omnipresence of death. In tandem with such awareness was a developing discourse of trauma healing which involved 'resurrecting' fallen comrades as a way of accepting their deaths. The idea of incorporating the dead into the realm of the living as a means of coming to terms with the experience of war and death continued into the post-war era, manifesting itself in the remembrance discourse and practice of the *anciens combattants*.

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[30] (S.) E. P., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 100-103, p. 101.

[31] This was the case for (S.) Ch. P… who mourned his friend's absence. (S.) Ch. P…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 11-14. Corporal L. L. also expressed similar feelings, writing simply that the presence of his friend caused him joy, and that his absence made him sad. L. L. (Caporal d'Infanterie), in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp 65-69, p. 66. It has been noted by historians of soldier psychology that writing experiences down can prove cathartic. See for example the interviews conducted in: Nigel Hunt and Ian Robbins, 'Telling stories of the war: Ageing veterans coping with their memories through narrative,' *Oral History*, vol. 26, no. 2, Autumn 1998, pp. 57-64.

[32] However, soldiers' encounters with death were overshadowed by the fact they survived. Elizabeth Snyder Hook, 'Awakening from war: History, trauma and testimony in Heinrich Böll,' in Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (eds.), *The work of memory: New directions in the study of German society and culture*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002, pp. 136-153, p. 136.

Several contributors to Rosny's study mused about the survival of trench friendships after the war. One particularly simply- but movingly-written letter asked the rhetorical question: "Will this friendship last forever? I hope so."[33] Another soldier expanded on this idea:

> Will trench friendships survive the war? I believe so, at least among soldiers of the same village who will continue to see each other. In the calm of peace, we will better be able to appreciate the sacrifice once imposed by the comradeship of combat: with pleasure we will see the man who used to march next to us and share our worries, was at the Escouade and lived through the same tragic hours. In the evening, around the fire or during familial celebrations, they will recount their exploits, glorify the heroism of the brave guys who fell during attack, talk about their leaders while instinctively remembering their 'love' on the Yser, in Champagne, at Verdun. Often they will remember, they will defend themselves - and they will finish up laughing so they do not cry.[34]

The survival of trench friendships depended, for this author, on maintaining regular contact with former companions. He envisaged a scenario in which *poilus* gathered and spoke of their experiences; elements in his description such as the glorification of the dead and the narration of one's "exploits" make clear, however, the progression which occurs between the exchange of real memories and the development of an imagined memory.

Some soldiers believed that without the maintenance of constant interaction, the closeness which once existed between comrades disappears. One of Rosny's contributors, obviously disillusioned with his 'friendship,' wrote that "when you are in the trenches, friendships are great and sincere and you believe them to be durable because you share danger as well as packages. But when your friend goes to the rear, he writes to you twice, three times and then… that is all."[35] Here again is the belief that maintaining friendships requires constant face-to-face interaction. This conviction is at least partly responsible for the plethora of social functions organised

[33] L. L., (Caporal d'Infanterie), in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp 65-69, p. 68.
[34] (S.) J… Our, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 60-64, p. 64.
[35] (S.) O. D…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, p. 127.

by *ancien combattant* associations which in the aftermath of World War One attempted to maintain (or re-create) the unity of the trenches.[36] While veterans' organisations no longer seek to preserve the relationships formed in the trenches, the ideal of companionship born of war has been transmitted from the veterans' imagined memory to their mythologised memory. Associations continue to espouse the ideal of camaraderie, and attempt to see it enacted in the real world.[37]

Pn. of Rosny's study thought that "if the hazards of existence later join two former *poilus*, the fact of having known each other, of having been comrades during the Great War, will create an affinity of great value [which could lead] to a possible friendship."[38] However, initiating veteran-veteran relationships in the aftermath of war was not necessarily restricted to soldiers who fought together. In fact, the affinity between ex-soldiers was considered powerful enough to establish connections between men who had never crossed paths. This empathy is clearly demonstrated in Roland Dorgelès' powerful post-war novel *Le Réveil des Morts*. Ruminating on his relationship with the *mutilé* Canivet, the protagonist Jacques, himself a veteran, decides that

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[36] Social activities are central to veteran associative life and have been since the aftermath of World War One. In the late 1920s, the U.N.C. Lille organised a 'Summer Festival' on the afternoon of *14 juillet* for veterans and their families. In this way, the serious events of the morning (including the compulsory visit to the war memorial and the military revue) were followed by joviality and games, including raffles for the adults and, in 1927 and 1928, a balloon-releasing competition for the youngsters. The proceeds of the 1928 raffle were added to the Section's funds. Anon., 'Fêtes du 14 juillet: la Fête d'été de la Section lilloise,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, août 1927, no. 73, pp. 4 et 5; Anon., 'La fête nationale du 14 juillet à Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, août 1928, no. 85, pp. 5 et 6. Another reason why group events were so important in the aftermath of World War One was to minimise the sense of isolation experienced by many (particularly disabled) ex-servicemen. David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans and public welfare policy: Comparative and transnational perspectives on western states in the twentieth century,' *Transnational Law and Contemporary Problems*, vol. 11, 2001, pp. 77-106, p. 100. David A. Gerber stressed the importance of socialisation and solidarity to veterans' associations, arguing that particularly for disabled veterans, often isolated from the rest of society by their injuries, the support provided by such groups proved a more compelling reason for membership than advocacy for material compensation. He argued this point by underlining the fact that the state provides benefits to veterans regardless of whether or not they belong to an organisation; membership must therefore, in his view, be stimulated by different needs. David A. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans, the state, and the experience of disability in western societies, 1914-1950,' *Journal of Social History*, vol. 36, no. 4, Summer 2003, pp. 899-918, pp. 900-901.

[37] To get an idea of the plethora of social activities on offer for veterans in the Nord region today, visit the *Voix du Nord* website (www.lavoixdunord.fr) and type '*ancien combattant*' into the search engine. Activities range from fishing competitions to school visits to battlefield tourism to commemorative ceremonies, with the majority of events taking place in the summer months.

[38] (S.) Pn., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 40-45, p. 42.

> faint but undying connections exist between veterans. These links are rendered even stronger by time, instead of being destroyed. When you speak to someone new and you realise "Berthonval's farm!… Resting at Tincques… The Pylônes way…" it is over: you do not look at each other the same way. The man is no longer a stranger. You suffered in the same places, you escaped the same dangers, you knew the same anger, the same miserable joys - and it is as if you have found a friend.[39]

For Jacques, such immediate and automatic rapport can develop only from having shared the experience and ordeal of combat. This initial connection can mature further; Jacques and Canivet become close friends until Canivet's tragic depression-induced suicide. Several years after the publication of his novel, Dorgelès reiterated Jacques' musings in an article for *La Voix du Combattant*, claiming that, "linked by four years of war," combatants share an intimate and immediate bond.[40] While Dorgelès' left-wing political views undoubtedly find purchase in this sentiment, the belief was - and continues to be - widely espoused by the French *anciens combattants*. Exposure to such a fearsome and awesome force as war is seen to negate the inconsequential worries of everyday life and strip men of normal identifiers such as regional, political or religious affiliations, creating relationships based on a sense of shared experience and particularly, shared trauma.

The idea of a unique connection between combatants of the Great War thus persisted after the Armistice and into peacetime. For Eric Leed, the celebrated notion developed partly from veterans' shared victimhood status and mutual dislocation from social categories in the post-war world.[41] Stephen Garton, in his

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[39] Roland Dorgelès, *Le Réveil des Morts*, Paris : Albin Michel, 1923, p. 111.

[40] Roland Dorgelès, 'Onze ans après,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 10e année, no. 538, samedi 9 novembre 1929, pp. 1-2, p. 2.

[41] Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 210. Stéphane Tison has also described the veterans as a group "apart." Stéphane Tison, 'Traumatisme de guerre et commémoration. Comment Champenois et Sarthois sont-ils sortis de la guerre ? (1870-1940),' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 216, 'Guerres et après-guerres. "14-18" et Indochine,' octobre 2004, pp. 5-30, p. 8. As Gerber's work into disabled veterans has revealed, the separation from society - and the consequent pulling-together of sufferers - was even more acute in the case of men permanently injured by war, who not only shared the communal experience of war but also endured its consequences together. Gerber, 'Disabled veterans, the state, and the experience of disability in western societies,' p. 905.

discussion of the relationship between war and masculinity, also highlighted the role of displacement in the formation of comradeship, noting that it was sometimes expressed in response to perceived betrayal on the home front, particularly by unfaithful women but also shirkers and profiteers.[42] Veteran discourse, not surprisingly, has tended to focus purely on the positive elements of camaraderie. The notion was central to many personal memoirs and novels written by veterans remembering life in the trenches,[43] as well as a constant theme in the *ancien combattant* press: the idea of friendship beyond identifiers of the civilian world and beyond boundaries between life and death (which constitutes unity in its most extreme and profound sense) developed into a constant of *ancien combattant* doctrine, and has remained fundamental to veteran 'memory' of the war experience throughout the decades.[44] Thus veterans of later wars, relying on inherited mythologised memory, espouse and celebrate the theme of unity with the same devotion as their forebears.

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[42] Stephen Garton, 'War and masculinity in twentieth century Australia,' *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 56, 1998, pp. 86-95, p. 93. Veteran writing also positions the community of the war dead in opposition to unsavoury types: one year after the Armistice, a U.N.C. journalist feared that the message of sacrifice had not been understood because the country was being "preyed on by profiteers and the most shameful and odious mercantilism." Edouard Hannecart, 'La Voix des Tombes,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 1e année, no. 17, dimanche 5 novembre 1919, p. 1.

[43] Henri Barbusse, for example, focused his novel around the ideal of the fraternity of the trenches. Even the dedication draws attention to the theme: "In memory of comrades who fell beside me at Crouy and Cote 119." Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu. Journal d'une escouade. Suivi du Carnet de guerre; Préface de Jean Relinger*, Paris: Flammarion, 1965 [1916]. Barbusse's celebration of soldier-soldier fraternity echoes his communist ideals; however, he has elsewhere condemned the war experience precisely because the mass experience de-individualises humans. In his 1919 address *Ce que veulent les anciens combattants* to National Congress, he argued that "when we were in the trenches our movements did not belong to us and were lost among the movements of the whole," declaring that "what rings true for the misery and decay of the military is true for all popular misery in general." Henri Barbusse, *Ce que veulent les anciens combattants. Discours au Congrès national de l'A. R. A. C. à Lyon le 7 septembre 1919*, Paris: Imprimerie La Productrice, 1919, p. 7.

[44] The protagonist of Abel Gance's 1938 remake of *J'accuse*, Jean Diaz, takes camaraderie to the extreme. As the only survivor of the 12-man squad sent out on 'death patrol' on 10 November 1918, the night before the Armistice, Jean feels a very strong connection to his comrades who died so futilely. His eventual necromancy is possible because of the bonds which join him so tightly to the dead. The intensity of Jean's belief in camaraderie can be seen as representative of the extent to which the notion pervaded French popular culture in the post-war era. Abel Gance, *J'accuse* [*That they may live*], trans. Pierre van Paassen, video recording, Mad Phat Enterprises Inc., Bakersfield, C.A., [1938].

Georges Pineau of the veteran-writers' group the Association des Ecrivains Combattants (A.E.C.) eloquently explained the links - which he identified as the *esprit combattant* - between members of the French veteran community and the sense of solidarity created by the phenomenon of wartime companionship:

> War brought minds and hearts closer together. Released from any material concern and purified by suffering, souls embraced, full of enthusiasm and quivering with the noble feeling of friendship. In those tired and bruised bodies pulsed souls of fire.
> And all these men who were victims of hatred learnt to love each other like brothers…
> The *esprit combattant* - the common soul of the generation of fire - is therefore above all fraternity… It is also the spirit of truth: faced with death, the mask falls; man does not joke around.[45]

Facing death was therefore the link - the "common soul" - between soldiers at the front. The experience of warfare formed men into one united entity (one 'generation' of fire), whether individuals survived the trauma or not. In other words, the fallen were automatically incorporated into notions of soldier unity - and *ancien combattant* identity.

French veterans attempted to translate the ideals of wartime camaraderie into post-war life, most obviously through the creation of *ancien combattant* associations.[46] The abundance of associations entitled 'Union' or 'Fédération,' as well as the mottos of certain groups such as the U.N.C.'s "United as at the front"[47] and the

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[45] Georges Pineau (de l'Association des Ecrivains Anciens Combattants), 'L'esprit combattant,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 8e année, no. 436, vendredi 11 novembre 1927, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

[46] This situation was not unique to France: Volker Berghahn understood that the German veterans' association the Stahlhelm was based upon the principles of the soldiering experience. Volker R. Berghahn, *Der Stahlhelm: Bund der Frontsoldaten 1918-1935*, Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1966, p. 7. For some observers, it was natural that veterans transposed the regulations of military life onto the civilian realm because the bonds of combat were all that joined them together. René Rémond, 'Les anciens combattants et la politique,' *Revue française de science politique*, vol. 5, no. 2, avril-juin 1955, pp. 267-290, p. 289.

[47] The U.N.C.'s website attributes the motto to General Léon Durand. Union Nationale des Combattants, <http://www.unc.fr/hist.php?type=2> accessed 10 January 2011. Daniel Brottier, too, has also been credited with its invention. Antoine Grach, *Le bienheureux Père Daniel Brottier 1876-1936: du Sénégal à l'œuvre d'Auteuil*, Paris: Editions Karthala, 2006, p. 112.

D.R.A.C.'s "Equal as at the front," attest to this desire.[48] The majority of these groups sought to connect veterans as they had been in war, above dividers in civilian life such as class and religion.[49] Maintaining unity within the ranks of ex-combatants was - and remains - so fundamental to the French veterans' 'identity' and 'memory' that in 1960 the *Journal des Combattants* declared it one of the community's two "pressing duties" alongside preserving the memory of the dead.[50] The desire for unity manifested itself immediately after the Great War, as this 1920 *Patriote de Flandres* article reveals:

> Finally let us address those who have left us and ask them to not forget us alongside God so that we may be worthy of them; let us promise to be faithful to them; let us renew our pact of the '*union sacrée*' upon their tombs. For months and years we faced the invader

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[48] See Philippe Manneville, 'Les associations d'anciens combattants en Seine-Maritime: témoins de la population,' *Les Normands et l'Armée, Revue de la Manche*, vol. 38, nos. 150-151, 1996, pp. 189-206 for an analysis of the names of veterans' association founded in the Seine-Maritime area.

[49] Despite the creation of organisations such as the Ligue des Droits des Religieux Anciens Combattants (D.R.A.C.) catering for veterans of specific religious sensibilities, Prost has argued that one of the traits of *ancien combattant* associations is the peaceful coexistence of believers and non-believers. Prost, *I: Histoire*, p. 64. The majority of veterans' associations also strive to reflect the classlessness supposedly inherent in the World War One trench experience (another element of the Mosse's Myth of the War Experience was the notion of war as an instrument to abolish class: Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 65). At least in relation to Armistice Day, even journalists of the A.R.A.C. rarely mention class despite the centrality of this issue to the communist agenda. One rare instance is an article written in late 1934, when in response to the tensions of February the journalist urged, "You [veterans] were sent to fight in the name of the Nation and you were asked to sacrifice yourself for its liberties. [On 11 November] you will thus call on the republican masses, whatever their philosophical or political opinion. // As is just, you will lead the immense republican mass, and behind you will be the workers, civil servants and shopkeepers who do not blush at the thought of 1789, 1793, 1830, 1848 and 1871." F.N.C.R. Seine et Seine-et-Oise, A.R.A.C. Centre, Seine et Seine-et-Oise, Cheminots, 'Cessez le feu! Onze novembre 1918: la tuerie s'interrompait - Que sont devenues les promesses?' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 4e année, no. 47, 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1934, p. 6. This article is telling in its support of republicanism; time and time the A.R.A.C. demonstrates its support of this political doctrine and its institutions. As the other end of the political spectrum, right-wing veterans' associations also downplayed class divides, which in the interest of enforcing social unity is inherent to right-wing politics. Ariane Chebel D'Appollonia, *L'extrême-droite en France: de Maurras à Le Pen*, [n.p.]: Editions Complexe, 1996, p. 56. This was true, for example, of the ultra-nationalist Union Patriotique des Français israélites (U.P.F.I.), whose *Bulletin* was moralising and "preached union," in the words of Pierre E. Landau, author of a study into Jewish veterans' papers of the 1930s. Philippe E. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs face aux défis des années trente,' *Archives Juives*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2003, pp. 10-24, p. 18.

[50] Anon., 'Maintenir l'union des générations du feu, garder le souvenir des nos morts: tels sont les devoirs impérieux des Anciens Combattants,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 45e année, nouvelle série, no. 726, samedi 2 juillet 1960, p. 1.

> side by side in the most complete union, with sincere affection for each other. We want to keep this natural affection, this sacred union… Oh, dear dead ones, we love each other, and we include you in this affection, you who live and will always live beside God who is charity.[51]

The war dead here provide a concrete entity onto which survivors can project emotion. With this poignant connection established, the author used the image of the soldiers' steadfast and united defence to formulate visions for a cohesive future, transforming the war experience into a positive vision. Penned following a period of prolonged strikes in northern France, this article could be seen as an attempt to rally the population together beyond class boundaries.

The article's religious tone is unusual, but reflects the revival of faith characteristic of northern French veteran writing during the immediate post-war era. According to contemporary veteran sources post-war religiosity did not prove divisive; on the contrary, it was seen to enhance appeals for unity. Reporting on the 1921 Parisian All Saints' Day ceremony, one veteran proudly claimed that "the pastor, rabbi and Catholic priest all spoke the same language, taught the same lessons and were inspired by the same spirit: they magnificently proved the unity of the French soul, the unity of great human hopes for Justice, moral grandeur and Peace."[52] In Lille five years later, religious ceremonies were held on Armistice Day in both Saint Martin's Church and the Synagogue, where "after pronouncing the Jewish liturgy, the great Rabbi Poliakoff gave a speech about the respect we owe to the dead for their sacrifice, regardless of their religious sensibilities."[53] Through the "same language" - remembrance of war and its victims - a sense of community and unity was thus constructed beyond religious boundaries. This community encompassed not only the veterans, but also France and even humanity as a whole. On *11*

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[51] M. Crémon (ancien poilu), 'Discours,' in G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, no. 504, p. 1.
[52] Ernest Pezet, 'La garde de nos Morts: ce que sentent et pensent les anciens combattants, en la Fête des Morts,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 3e année, no. 119, dimanche 6 novembre 1921, p. 1.
[53] Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 65, décembre 1926, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

novembre, the powerful symbolic joining of the national holiday and the war dead can be inflected to call for veteran-veteran union, and over the years the *anciens combattants* have used this authority to its maximum potential.

The fallen were fundamental to the veteran aspiration of recreating frontline union beyond the physical and temporal environment of the 1914-1918 trenches.[54] As the most sincere illustration of selflessness and brotherhood, the ideals of the dead were worthy of emulation, as demonstrated by another northern French veteran-journalist:

> Glorious heroes! We salute you with love, recognition, and with all our heart.
> At the front you provided us with an example of fraternity and union; when food was scarce, you shared your piece of bread with the starving soldiers in the trenches; you knelt before the dying before yourselves succumbing to death; and you wanted us to follow your example. We formally promise you this. With love, we will kneel before those who suffer: widows, young orphans and our dear disabled veterans.[55]

Importantly, the fallen wanted the survivors to "follow [their] example." The selfless behaviour of the dead, as well as the trials they underwent, dictate certain responsibilities to the survivors, including fair treatment of war victims and maintaining a sense of unity. Veterans are required to fulfil their duty to the war dead in order to (at least partly) validate the sacrifice.

There are many references in this segment to Catholic tradition. The dead soldiers are equated to martyrs, demonstrating compassion to suffering and most evocatively sharing their meagre rations in imitation of Jesus splitting the loaves. That this veteran-writer mentioned sharing provisions is particularly interesting in light of Marius C…'s proposition to Rosny that passing time and ever more deaths rendered

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[54] The war dead were also central to formulations of camaraderie in post-War Germany. George L. Mosse, 'National cemeteries and national revival: The cult of the fallen soldiers in Germany,' *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 14, no. 1, January 1979, pp. 1-20, p. 7.

[55] M. Henri Schacht (enfant de la commune Steenvoorde, ex-Lieutenant au 208e d'infanterie), 'Discours au pied du monument de Steenvoorde,' in G. L., 'La Fête nationale du 11 Novembre,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 504, dimanche 14 novembre 1920, p. 1.

men increasingly unlikely to divide up their parcels for fear of becoming emotionally attached to their comrades.[56] The post-war article paints the fallen *poilus* as selfless: besides the fact that it would have been shocking and hurtful to highlight the human failings of these men, most veterans were determined to only promote (and in official discourse at least, memorialise) the positive personality traits of their lost friends. Such selective remembering, which undoubtedly helped heal the trauma of witnessing so much death, developed into a single overarching narrative - the veterans' imagined memory - which portrayed the fallen as infallible and sacred.

Relying on mythologised memory of their forebears' accounts, veteran-writers too young to have participated in World War One have continued to laud the fraternity of the trenches, either focusing on the presumed moral superiority of the Great War at the expense of neglecting 'their' war, or attempting to insert later soldiering into its tradition. An example of this first consideration is the anonymous writer who in 1960 affirmed that the combatant fraternity born of the trenches formed a "moral link" between ex-soldiers.[57] The U.F.A.C.'s 1956 Armistice Day message reiterated this idea, relating how the pressures exerted on the *poilus* showed that "the moral forces which animated them were capable of breaking the material forces which tried to crush them."[58] Despite both being written not long after World War Two - and, in the case of the U.F.A.C., by the President of the association specifically established after this conflict to group veterans together - these citations contain no reference to the soldiers or victims of 1939-1945. Here again is the myth that the links between ex-servicemen remain intact, despite the frivolities and pressures of home life which conspired to undermine veteran unity.

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[56] Marius C…, in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 105-108, pp. 105-106.
[57] Anon., '11 novembre: fête de la fraternité,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 45e année, nouvelle série, no. 742, samedi 5 novembre 1960, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.
[58] E. Pierret-Gérard (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste de l'U.F.A.C. A lire devant les Monuments aux Morts,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 41e année, nouvelle série, no. 542, samedi 10 novembre 1956, pp. 1-2, p. 2.

The following citation interweaves subsequent wars with that of 1914-1918, demonstrating how veterans of later wars have appropriated the imagery and 'memory' of World War One camaraderie to legitimise their positions:

> Can fifty years change, if not destroy, this communion between all the generations of fire?
> In your soul and conscience, you could not reach this conclusion, which would negate your very *raison d'être*: fraternity beyond any social, political or religious beliefs.
> If there are some Frenchmen who can place themselves above the rest, it is the *anciens combattants*. Drawn from all faiths and all walks of life, they are privileged to an equality which only they can know because it is the fruit of a community forged on the battlefield, wherever it may be.
> We should think of this during the minute of contemplation which will soon lead us to gather in front of war memorials and in cemeteries.
> […]
> That is the meaning of Armistice Day, and the first ones to have professed and applied this were our comrades of 1914-1918.
> They are our fathers and our grandfathers - let us not forget them![59]

Although written in 1967 by a veteran of World War Two, this comment reflects several themes fundamental to World War One veteran imagined memory. The author reiterated the ideal of unity born of the battlefield, that unique connection which overrides other identifiers like politics or religion, and drew attention to the veterans' moral superiority which developed simply from their selfless participation in war. The persistence of the myth shows that the idea of comradeship was still central to commemorative discourse after 1945 (although Mosse recognised its waning political potency[60]). The theme of unity within the combatant community remains central to *ancien combattant* discourse: writing in 2007 of the ninetieth anniversary of the A.R.A.C., Paul Markidès cited "the necessary reinforcement of

[59] L. Karber (Secrétaire Général), '11 novembre,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 454, octobre 1967, p. 1.
[60] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 216.

the unity of the Combatant Movement, guarantor of successful struggles"[61] as one of the association's contemporary tasks. The ongoing concern within the veteran community for unity results from two factors: the absorption of the notion in imagined and mythologised memory, and the concept's power to heal traumas faced by veterans of later wars.

While the veterans' fixation on maintaining a united front results primarily from their desire to emulate the ideal of wartime camaraderie beyond the trenches, additional reasons can be determined in relation to specific events and trials of post-war life. Most important of these motivations is the financial situation of ex-servicemen. As Amédée Chivot lamented in 1948, bemoaning the fact that "State coffers are closed before our misfortune":

> They [veterans] will meditate on the vanity of promises, even the most serious ones; they will meditate on the fidelity of our comrades at the front; they will meditate on the opportunity to remain indissolubly attached to this fidelity. They will meditate on the moral and civic force which the men of both wars represent if they solder themselves into a homogenous bloc. They will meditate in the hope that their cause, represented by this unity, will triumph; they will meditate on the certainty of a gap if they let themselves be divided.[62]

Presenting themselves as a united body, the veterans were better positioned to rally for or protest changes to their state-reliant welfare benefits. Armistice Day proves an excellent arena to call for and display veteran unity because whether they find themselves "in the proudest city, the most humble village [or] a hamlet attached to the side of a hill, veterans and war victims will take communion in the same cult"[63]

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[61] Paul Markidès, '90e anniversaire de l'A.R.A.C.: le combat d'un siècle pour la paix, pour la vie,' *Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, des Combattants pour l'Amitié, la Solidarité, la Mémoire, l'Antifascisme et la Paix*, 27 janvier 2007. A.R.A.C. de la Marne, <http://www.arac51.com/90e-anniversaire-de-l-ARAC-Le.html> accessed 10 January 2011.

[62] Amédée Chivot, '30e anniversaire,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 33e année, nouvelle série, no. 140, samedi 13 novembre 1948, p. 1.

[63] Journal des Combattants, [n.t.], *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés,*

- the cult of the war dead. An article entitled '*11 novembre* must bear witness to unity and action' printed during the mid-1950s when French citizens were divided over the remilitarisation of Germany, revealed the centrality of the commemoration to notions of veteran unity.[64]

In "bearing witness to unity and action," Armistice Day provides an arena for protest. In recognition of the fact that contesting the status quo is especially powerful on commemorative dates (because while shared memories provide social cohesion, they can also lead to conflict[65]), the *ancien combattant* community has occasionally refrained from participating in official *11 novembre* commemoration or even organised its own counter-demonstrations. While these occasions are rare, they attest to the veterans' investment in the causes for which they campaign: mass mobilisation of the veteran community, especially on Armistice Day given its symbolic power, can be used to remind the state of the veterans' existence[66] and also demonstrate their potential as a pressure group.[67] Financial and legal

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combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers, 35e année, nouvelle série, no. 240, samedi 11 novembre 1950, p. 1.

[64] Anon., 'Le 11 Novembre doit être un beau témoignage d'union et d'action,' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre. Supplément au Réveil des Combattants*, 11e année, no. 132, octobre 1956, p. 1.

[65] Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, 'Introduction,' in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, (eds.) *Memory and history in twentieth century Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 1-6, p. 1. Manning attributed the potential for conflict in celebration to its public and participatory elements. Frank E. Manning, 'Cosmos and chaos: Celebration in the modern world,' in Frank E. Manning, *The celebration of society: Perspectives on contemporary cultural performance*, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983, pp. 3-30, p. 28.

[66] Fabrice Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation du répertoire d'action des associations d'anciens combattants et de victimes de guerre. Des mutations pilotées par les représentants de l'Etat,' in N. Dahan and E. Grossman (eds.), *Les groupes d'intérêt au XXIe siècle: renouveau, croissance et démocratie. Colloque du Cevipof les 24 et 25 septembre 2004*, Paris: IEP Paris, 2004, pp. 6-9; David I. Kertzer, *Rituals, Politics and Power*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 119. Individual veterans' groups have also used mass demonstration to bring attention to their individual situations. The President of the Association des Anciens Combattants Volontaires Juifs (A.C.V.J.), for example, was concerned primarily with putting together a Livre d'Or dedicated to the memory of Jewish volunteers of World War One, and participating in patriotic demonstrations in which homage could be paid to Jewish soldiers. Philippe E. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs face aux défis des années trente,' *Archives Juives*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2003, pp. 10-24, p. 12. The two concerns were published in the association's newspaper *Le Volontaire Juif*, no. 1, janvier 1931, p. 2.

[67] For information on the French veteran community as a pressure group, see Elliott Pennell Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' PhD thesis, Université de Genève, thèse no. 175, Ambilly, Annemasse: Imprimerie Les Presses de Savoie, 1966. Amongst other groups, Tartakowsky considered the *anciens combattants*' employment of space to express their opinions: Danielle Tartakowsky, 'La construction sociale de l'espace politique: les usages politiques de la

recognition are the most common reasons for protest (in Elliott Pennell Fagerberg's words, cause "maximum excitement"[68]), although the veterans also rally in support or criticism of important domestic and international issues.

At times, therefore, veteran discourse on 'unity' has resulted in impressive displays of veteran solidarity. On 11 November 1935, an estimated 100 000 *anciens combattants* marched from Avenue Victor Emmanuel III[69] to the Etoile in protest against reduced retirement pensions.[70] One author praised this exhibition of fraternity, celebrating the fact that "without difference of political or religious opinion, the *anciens combattants*' dignified protest showed that they want the population to witness their continued and aggravated misery."[71] In the words of another observer, the participation of so many men "was particularly useful because it showed the masses that it is not the *ancien combattant* leaders who resist the laws, but the crowds of suffering people themselves who protest against the deprivations imposed on them by recommended levies."[72] "Due to the number of comrades present, this demonstration could not have failed to strike public opinion as we had hoped," claimed another writer.[73] Such mass presence was a poignant and powerful illustration of veteran dissatisfaction with the proposed pension cuts, providing

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place de la Concorde des années 1880 a nos jours,' *French Historical Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1, Winter 2004, pp. 145-173.

[68] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 234.

[69] Avenue Victor Emmanuel III was named for the former king of Italy. It was renamed Avenue Franklin D. Roosevelt at the end of World War Two in honour of the wartime American President, demonstrating how place names can reflect contemporary attitudes.

[70] Anon., 'L'anniversaire du 11 novembre,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 20e année, no. 232, décembre 1935, p. 269. Several well-known leaders of the *ancien combattant* movement such as Georges Rivollet, Maurice de Barral, Jean Volvey and Edmond Bloch took part in the march. Kertzer has observed that the setting of rallies proves crucial to their impact. David I. Kertzer, *Rituals, politics and power*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 120.

[71] Anon., 'L'anniversaire du 11 novembre,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 20e année, no. 232, décembre 1935, p. 269.

[72] Robert Perraut, 'Il faut rester unis,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 20e année, no. 232, décembre 1935, pp. 231-236, p. 235.

[73] Anon., 'L'anniversaire du 11 novembre,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 20e année, no. 232, décembre 1935, p. 269. This author also declared that the "silent procession [was] so solemn given the size of the crowd."

tangible evidence of the *anciens combattants*' belief that action en masse yields greater results. Such demonstrations also illustrated in practice what the *ancien combattant* associations had aspired to upon their creation: unity beyond political (or other) identifiers.[74] The interaction here between language and practice is obvious: unity is an ideal espoused in veteran writing and intended to be enacted in practice. This duality means that the theme is constantly reiterated, contributing to the invariability of veteran discourse.

Political divisions within France also provoke renewed calls for veteran union. The situation was especially dire during the politically-strained interwar years when the *anciens combattants* found themselves on both sides of the fascist-socialist divide. In a meeting with the A.G.M.G.'s leadership following the events of February 1934,[75] Minister for Pensions Georges Rivollet warned that if the veterans' associations were in disaccord, "he would have no authority at the ministry."[76] This fear prompted Robert Perraut of the A.G.M.G. to encourage veterans one year later

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[74] The following year, contingents of veterans marched up the Champs-Élysées in another afternoon procession which prompted similar responses from the veteran community. According to an A.G.M.G. veteran-writer, the action showed that "through the difficult hours we are momentarily experiencing, the spirit of union shown by the *anciens combattants* remains an example for the whole Country." Anon., 'Le 11 novembre,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 21e année, no. 239, décembre 1936, p. 248. The same feeling was displayed in the A.R.A.C. article entitled '11 November 1936: Total union of the generation of fire.' Vaillant-Couturier (Président de l'A.R.A.C.), 'Onze novembre 1936: union totale de la génération du feu,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 6e année, no. 71, 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1936, p. 6.

[75] For its participation in the riot and general collaboration with the Croix de Feu, the U.N.C. was ostracised by some of the other veterans' groups. Particularly the A.R.A.C. expressed its disapproval, pointing out the hypocrisy of the divisive and aggressive actions employed by the association whose motto reads 'United as at the front.' Jacques Duclos (Vice Président de l'A.R.A.C., Vice Président de la Chambre des Députés), 'Le pacte Jean-Goy-La Rocque,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 6e année, no. 71, 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1936, p. 1.

[76] Robert Perraut, 'Chronique mensuel: l'entente nécessaire,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 19e année, no. 217, mars-avril 1934, pp. 68-72, p. 68. Antoine Prost saw in Rivollet's appointment to the Minister for Pensions post following the events of 6 February an effort on Président du Conseil Gaston Doumergue's part to win over the *anciens combattants*. Antoine Prost, 'Les anciens combattants aux origines de la Légion: les mouvements d'anciens combattants,' in René Rémond (ed.), *Le gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942: institutions et politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin et Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1972, pp. 115-121, p. 117.

to "remain united and confident" despite domestic turmoil. He elaborated this point of view by reiterating the unanimity which supposedly binds the *ancien combattant* community together:

> Civil war will not be the way to put the affairs of the country back in order.
> It is our duty to defend our political preferences beyond our associations, but let us defend them through legal means. The *esprit ancien combattant* is made up of mutual tolerance. Let us not forget this, whatever side we are on.[77]

Perraut here encouraged his fellows to identify first as 'veterans,' and then as adherents of a particular political group. In so doing, unity would become paramount, being both fundamental to *ancien combattant* identity and deeply-entrenched in their imagined memory. For men such as Perraut, charged with perpetuating the narrative of the war experience, the bonds of camaraderie forged in trauma were seen as more potent than political leanings. Adhering to this claim was one means of transforming suffering into a positive lesson for society.

In fact, the relationships of war can be strong enough to overcome not only political preferences, but also attempts at division through political means. In 1926, the northern French veteran Aimé Goudaert triumphantly declared:

> the bloody old politicians who waited for us when we returned from war and who wanted to monopolise us and set us against each other have completely 'missed the boat.' Every day we see a revival of the combatant spirit, and it is increasingly sure it knows what it wants and where it is going.[78]

The "combatant spirit," developed among men at the front (whether they survived or not) and referred to time and again in veteran discourse throughout the ninety

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[77] Robert Perraut, 'Il faut rester unis,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 20e année, no. 232, décembre 1935, pp. 231-236, p. 234.
[78] Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution au Banquet,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 65, décembre 1926, pp. 2-3, p. 3.

years since the end of World War One, is deemed stronger than forces which seek to undermine veteran union for sordid political reasons. Particularly Armistice Day, as the occasion for memorialising war and reiterating its messages, is supposed to be free of political division. The detrimental effect of politics on united participation was noted in 1966 by Jean-François Henry who "believe[d] that, for a day like this, politics should be banned. We already have enough difficulty encouraging youth interest in our demonstrations and ceremonies, which to them often seem like sentimental but outdated folklore."[79]

Examples abound of individual veterans' associations which on *11 novembre* have subordinated their desires to the will of the collective in order to sustain the appearance of inter-veteran harmony. In 1949, the A.R.A.C. had hoped to reproduce the 1948 policy of non-participation in official Armistice Day ceremonies in protest against governmental indifference to the veterans' situation, but the U.F.A.C. decided against it. Following this pronouncement, the A.R.A.C. instructed its members to respect this decision: "In order to maintain union within the U.F.A.C., force yourselves to ensure that this *11 novembre* 1949 runs like in 1947-1948 and is at the same time a homage to our dead and a day of struggle in favour of our demands and peace."[80] This quotation makes it clear how practicing the cult of the dead can work towards the fulfilment of veteran demands - and therefore, of their *devoir*.

While ideally the veteran community should remain close-knit and united, situations such as that of 1949 expose the fact that tensions and the potential for division between the different associations do exist. These skirmishes disprove the myth of veteran unity, consciously constructed as a positive consequence of the war experience by the 1914-1918 ex-servicemen as a principle means of coming to

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[79] Jean-François Henry, '11 novembre 1966,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 443, octobre 1966, pp. 1 et 8, p. 8.
[80] Anon., 'Pour un 11 novembre de Paix et d'Union!' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes des deux guerres. Supplément du Réveil des Combattants*, 4e année, no. 36, octobre 1949, p. 1.

terms with their trauma, then transmitted to subsequent generations of fire via mythologised memory. Unity was seen to prolong the camaraderie of the trenches, including between survivors and the fallen, but also served to better veteran chances of political, social - and particularly financial - power. As Antoine Prost noted in concluding the last of his three volumes on the French veterans, the *esprit combattant* is a myth, constructed to sustain the illusion of 'community' between vastly different men.[81] Mostly these differences are downplayed or even ignored, although occasionally circumstances lead representatives of certain groups to criticise the behaviour of others. Such commentary is often penned with the aim of chastising individuals for forgetting the basic tenants of being a veteran in France, especially devotion to the key value systems of republicanism, patriotism and civic responsibility and veteran unity. It would seem that in situations of perceived crisis, veterans from across the associative spectrum and from all generations of fire emphasise unity precisely because they are aware of its imaginary state. The continuation of the discourse of unity is particularly interesting after World War Two, when commemoration of war tended to favour the exploits of individuals rather than the collective.[82]

As well as promoting harmony within the veteran community, veteran-activists also believe 'unity' is essential at both a national and supra-national level. Advocating unity within the nation is one element of the veterans' patriotic desire for a strong, healthy France, while unity beyond the nation's borders constitutes an extension of their pro-peace campaigns. As the soldiering experience - and particularly that of the Great War trenches - is seen to provide the ultimate example of unity beyond the concerns of the everyday, many veterans feel compelled to use this knowledge to contribute to the installation of unity beyond their immediate community: "This kind of camaraderie must remain a force, a healthy element in a proven nation"

[81] Antoine Prost, *Les anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939. III: Mentalités et Idéologies*, Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977, p. 221.
[82] Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 6. The tendency towards individual remembrance of World War Two was aided by the complexities of trying to establish a communally-endorsed vision of the war experience. For Mosse, camaraderie was not a powerful political force following World War Two, partly as a reaction against National Socialism. Mosse, 'Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience,' p. 496.

claimed an A.G.M.G. journalist in 1957.[83] In other words, appeals for further unity are seen to stem from displays of veteran accord, further underscoring the fundamental duty of veteran-veteran solidarity. The A.R.A.C. made clear this ideal when just after the extravagant celebrations of Bastille Day 1936[84] it appealed for union amongst the Great War generation of fire as the basis for national unity.[85] While context could make this call appear triumphant - the A.R.A.C. was obviously in favour of the Popular Front's recent electoral success - the fact that a few months later the right-leaning A.G.M.G. proclaimed that "in this difficult time, the spirit of union shown by the *anciens combattants* remains an example for the whole Country"[86] attests to the widespread belief that veteran activity has an impact, and that, for this reason, veterans are bound to act in a certain way.

The experience of having participated in war and having faced comparable traumas moulded veterans into a unity. This group was then obliged to use its knowledge in forming the post-war nation, particularly to perpetuate wartime solidarity. One anonymous *Journal des Combattants* writer made this point clear in an article penned in 1977, when three generations of fire were involved in the veterans' associations:

> Veterans incarnate the memory of the great moments which have shaped our country; they are an example of solidarity. The *anciens*

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[83] O. Largeault, 'Hier et demain,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 341, juillet-août 1957, p. 1.

[84] For details about *14 juillet* 1936, see Julian Jackson, *The popular front in France: Defending democracy*, 1934-38, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 114-118. For more information relating to festivity under the Popular Front: Pascal Ory, 'Théorie et pratique de "l'art des fêtes" sous le Front populaire,' in Alain Corbin, Noëlle Gerôme et Danielle Tartakowsky (eds.), *Les usages politiques des fêtes aux XIXe-XXe siècles. Actes du colloque les 22 et 23 novembre 1990 à Paris*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1994, pp. 277-290.

[85] Le Réveil des Combattants, '14 juillet d'union pour nos droits, la paix, la liberté,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 6e année, no. 68, août 1936, p. 6. The election of the Popular Front divided the French public, including the *anciens combattants*. François Cochet, 'Verdun: les évolutions de la mémoire d'une bataille symbolique,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 160, avril 2006, pp. 7-10, p. 8.

[86] Anon., 'Le 11 novembre,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 21e année, no. 239, décembre 1936, p. 248.

> *combattants* can and must work towards reinforcing French national unity in making it felt, among the youngest and even the less young, that above individual differences and particular opinions exists something which belongs to all Frenchmen.
> It is the duty of the Secretary of State to help the ex-combatants fulfil this role and serve as an example in peace as they did in war.[87]

In other words, veterans have a (yet another) post-war duty they are required to enact: aid the nation in achieving ideals of unity. This aspiration can be realised through promoting awareness of the vital similarities which exist between members of a nation, rather than focussing on the divisive minutiae. This basic premise is exactly what is supposed to have happened in the trenches and then in subsequent arenas of war: soldiers formed connections which did not rely on distinctions prevalent in the civilian world but were based on experience of and exposure to the conditions of war. In such instances, veterans use their past experience to shape contemporary society, putting their trauma towards the positive outcome of solidarity within the nation.

One reason why ex-combatants are compelled to work towards national unity is their sense of responsibility towards their fallen comrades. This duty was expressed by an anonymous northern French veteran in 1927:

> After the Gospel, R. P. Courtois gave a vibrant and patriotic speech which magnified the achievement of our great dead and incited the vast crowd to unite. "Certainly," he said, "union exists within these walls - but it needs to continue once the ceremony is over. During the war, the *Patrie* could not have survived unless we were united. Our dead insist upon it and we do not have the right to spoil their beautiful accomplishment."
> At the end of his speech, the eloquent orator also asked that the crowd practice union in God's name: union within families, in the town and in the country, despite class and political struggles. Despite

[87] Anon., 'Le 59e anniversaire de la Victoire de 1918,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 62e année, nouvelle série, no. 1586, samedi 19 novembre 1977, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1.

> the sacrifices, let us put the wellbeing of the country above our own personal interests.[88]

When speaking of France's wartime union, Courtois alluded to both the political *Union sacrée* and the soldiers' altruism. He believed that these examples of patriotic selflessness should dictate contemporary behaviour, even though the *Patrie* was no longer under threat. While such union endured among the survivors currently seated together "within these walls," the difficulty was dispelling this momentary feeling across time and space. It was in memory of the fallen - men who gave their lives for France - that national union was necessary. The *devoir* of unity thus extended beyond the community of the living to incorporate the dead: carrying out this desire was a means of both memorialising and respecting their sacrifice.

In espousing unity, both between members of the *ancien combattant* community and between members of the nation, veteran-writers often claim to speak in the name of the war dead. In the following extract, the northern French author transcribed the opinions of the fallen, positioning himself as ambassador of the dead and loyal translator of their desires:

> "Comrades," they [the fallen] tell us finally, "love each other; stay united like we were during the war, without distinction of opinion, fortune or profession. We lived side by side, sharing the same piece of bread, drinking the same wine [*quart*], sleeping in the same tent. We were friends and brothers; stay that way forever."
> Echoing these voices from beyond the grave, President Millerand recently asserted at Meaux: "Let us remain united to live, as they were united to die."
> Let us also echo them today, gentlemen. Let us bow our heads at the tombs of these glorious dead and let us tell them:
> "Dear comrades, yes, we swear to banish forever any force of division; we want to love each other like brothers, as Christians and as Frenchmen, so that during times of peace and harmony we can work effectively towards the growth of our beloved *Patrie*."
> Thank you comrades, and may your souls rest in peace!"[89]

[88] Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice a Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

Given a voice through the veteran's pen, the fallen here reiterate the comments of the soldiers in Rosny's study. As with those letter-writing survivors, the dead describe the war experience as conducive to forming relationships beyond traditional identifiers and urge their erstwhile comrades to maintain these brotherly ties. In urging the perpetuation of wartime bonds into the civilian world, the dead reiterate - and help construct - a narrative which was in the process of formation in 1921 when the article was written: the imagined memory of the World War One experience.

Directly citing the fallen is a powerful tool, designed in the above example to demonstrate the author's self-designated ambassadorial role between the communities of the living and the dead, and to exert great influence over his readers. Yet in this piece the author cites not only the fallen, but also incorporates a speech given by the President of the Republic given at Meaux for the recent commemoration of the Marne victory[90] and proposes an oration for the veteran community to recite on Armistice Day. This triple measure of spoken dialogue cleverly moulds the dead, French political leaders and the veterans into one entity seeking the same goal of national unity. Just as Millerand underscored the togetherness of the war dead in the hope of inspiring similar levels of unity within contemporary society, the author encourages the veterans to aspire to and propagate this same sentiment, using the example provided by the soldiering enterprise as guidance.

Writing of the 1927 Armistice Day commemoration at Dunkirk, another northern French veteran purported to voice the desires of the fallen. These men speak directly to their audience (their surviving comrades), to whom they dictate their will:

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[89] G. L., 'La Fête de la Victoire à Steenvoorde,' *Le Patriote de Flandres*, no. 558, dimanche 13 novembre 1921, pp. 1-2, p. 1.

[90] The commemoration took place on 11 September 1921 in celebration of the seventh anniversary of the Marne victory.

> Do not let the flame which we left you be stifled by self-centred interest groups. Carry the torch high so that it lights the way towards the fulfillment of our dream: a more glorious France united in work and peace. May each individual, guided by love and justice, endeavour to simultaneously engage in the personal and collective good in fraternal union, the only guarantee of lasting peace. Although we are invisible to your eyes, we will always remain present and living in your hearts.[91]

The fallen encourage their erstwhile brothers-in-arms to promote harmony as a means of guaranteeing peace and making France greater; union is once again promoted as fundamental to post-war society. Encouraged to think of the fallen - and actually hear their voices - witnesses partake of a moment of unity purely by their presence at the ceremony. In this way, veterans could put the trauma of war towards the positive outcome of a united nation.

Mosse noted that in the immediate aftermath of World War One, the war dead were used to resurrect the popularity of the idea of 'nation,' primarily as a way of legitimising the governments responsible for the bloodshed.[92] For many veteran-writers of the era, the fallen were also central to discussions of national grandeur and national unity. Linking the dead to nationhood has continued throughout the decades. For example in 1951 Marcel Engrand reminded Armistice Day participants that "our one and a half million dead dictate to us the great duty: that the *Patrie* remain mistress of her destiny."[93] Interestingly, the President of the U.F.A.C., which had been recently created to group veterans (of both world wars) into one entity, only summoned victims of the Great War to support his argument. In this context, failing to mobilise the Second World War fallen seems strange, even in a Manifesto for Armistice Day. Espousing national strength through reference to the

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[91] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.
[92] Mosse, *Fallen soldiers*, p. 79.
[93] Marcel Engrand (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 58, octobre 1951, p. 2.

fallen was reiterated almost three decades later when on Armistice Day 1979 the U.N.C.'s Jean-Maurice Martin declared,

> united in Memory and in fervent homage, we hear the great message of the dead. They demand that derisory quarrels cease so that the people of France, united in their diversity, assure the continuity of the *patrie* whilst respecting the values for which they fell.[94]

Such arguments attest to the veterans' belief in the ongoing power of the war dead to strengthen French national unity. This dictum is one element of the veterans' well-entrenched 'memory.'

Armistice Day is the prefect opportunity to visually construct this unity, because as erstwhile President Valérie Giscard d'Estaing mentioned, "every time they respect the memory of those who died for their liberty and honour, the people of France rediscover the source of their unity."[95] In this vein, the cult of the war dead provides a space for communication between members of the nation. Ceremonial, too, generates unity: "The morning's activities, like those in the afternoon, underline how much the most radically different people, opposed on all issues, can understand one another and work in defence of our national independence,"[96] cheered an A.R.A.C. veteran in relation to protest against the Paris-Bonn Accords. In coming together to remember and commemorate the First World War - especially the war dead - the citizens of France 'take communion' in the liturgy of the nation and symbolically reaffirm their adherence to its system of beliefs.

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[94] Jean-Maurice Martin (Président-Adjoint de l'U.N.C.), 'Le 11 novembre, comme chaque année…,' *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1449, novembre 1979, p. 2.

[95] Valérie Giscard d'Estaing, in Amédée Chivot, 'A propos du 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 61e année, nouvelle série, no. 1537, samedi 13 novembre 1976, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1. Valérie Giscard d'Estaing was very out-of-favour with veteran-activists at this time, partly due to financial issues and partly because of the President's unenthusiastic stance towards commemoration.

[96] Le Secrétariat Fédéral, '11 novembre 1953: Paris a dit non,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 98, décembre 1953, pp. 3-4, p. 3. The title 'Paris said no' refers to the ongoing debate on the Paris-Bonn Accords, against which the A.R.A.C. vehemently protested throughout the 1950s and early 1960s.

Recreating national unity is particularly imperative in the face of domestic or international trouble. In November 1938, having recently witnessed the collapse of the Popular Front government and the signing of the Munich Accords, Henri Lévèque (President of the A.G.M.G.) made a poignant plea to the Unknown Soldier for guidance, both for himself personally and for the nation. In the veteran's estimation, the French people bore responsibility for the predicament in which the nation now found itself. More socially-accountable behaviour - including greater national solidarity - would have perhaps averted the situation:

> In the same way every believer asks God to pardon his faults, I was thinking that on this Armistice Day 1938 every Frenchman who has faith in our Homeland and her civilising mission, born of respect for man's dignity, should imagine himself in front of the dead soldier under the Arc de Triomphe, and then repent and ask for forgiveness.
> Forgiveness for having let his victory be sabotaged and his martyrdom become worthless.
> Forgiveness for unconsciously having let develop, or knowingly having worked to create, all the problems which today make up the poignant uncertainties and awful dangers of the future.
> Forgiveness for having let political parties fight one another on France's back.
> […]
> But confessing our faults and asking forgiveness do not suffice. To pay for your wrongdoings, to become a good Frenchman, you need to determine not to do it again; you need to make firm resolutions and uphold them.[97]

In striving to right the numerous economic and moral "wrongdoings" perpetrated by French people in the twenty years since 1918, the veteran-writer called upon the Unknown Soldier, representative of all the French war dead. The Soldier carried out a double function, providing both the reason why such selfish and un-patriotic behaviour was unacceptable and the focus for future aspiration and improvement.

[97] Henri Lévèque, 'Soldat Inconnu, pardonne-nous, soutiens-nous!' *Intransigeant*, le 13 novembre 1938, in *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 23e année, no. 253, décembre 1938, pp. 300-302.

Asking forgiveness of the Soldier elevated him even beyond his unique and pivotal role as ambassador of all the fallen to an all-powerful grantor of pardon, an equation with God which is supported by the abundant religious terminology in the passage. The symbolic link between the Soldier and God, constituting perhaps the ultimate mobilisation of the dead, has profound implications. For the author, the nation had reached such a low point that only assistance from the most eminent authority could rescue it from the quagmire, and the French population was required to spiritually engage with this power in order to achieve redemption. Even without using the words 'died in vain' the message is clear: demand pardon for having let the sacrifice of the dead go to waste, then strive to follow the moral path lain out by the war dead, and the current crises may be reversed. Using the medium of the Unknown Soldier and the dead men and women he embodies to underscore the problems within society, and particularly the method through which they can be righted, powerfully employs the idea of 'dying in vain' to criticise a contemporary situation, in which disunity had played a major role.

In contrast to Lévèque's condemnation, looking back on the period just before the outbreak of the Second World War with the benefit of hindsight the A.R.A.C.'s Jean Lucibello was impressed with the unity displayed by his compatriots in response to the mounting fascist aggression. Reflecting on how memory of the Great War was revived as an instrument for national unification in the late 1930s, he noted that in such a threatening context the population automatically pulled closer together. Relying on and further contributing to the ideal and myth of French national unity, he wrote, "It is noticeable that each time a serious threat has weighed upon France and upon peace, *11 novembre* has pulsed with the patriotism of veterans and war victims rising up against danger."[98] Lucibello's writing emphasises the role of the

[98] Jean Lucibello (Secrétaire de la Fédération de la Seine, Membre du Bureau National), 'Pour un 11 novembre d'union et d'action patriotique,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 96, octobre 1953, p. 2. Very similar comments were penned by Lucibello's colleague one month later: "this 11 November 1953 will vibrate with the patriotism of the *Anciens Combattants*, the war victims and the population, united in their common will to face danger. It has been thus every time a heavy threat has weighed upon France and upon peace." Roger Duchemin, '11 novembre,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de*

anciens combattants in initiating displays of national unity - and illustrates that despite its dedicated communist stance, if the situation requires it, the A.R.A.C. does not hesitate to promote patriotism and national unity over internationalism. The discrepancy between Lévèque's and Lucibello's opinions regarding the pre-World War Two situation is not merely a matter of conservative versus communist political orientation; rather, it highlights the effect of passing time on 'memory' and narrative. Writing within the context of late 1930s Europe, Lévèque captured the fear and sense of doom; with the war Lévèque had viewed with trepidation over, Lucibello, conversely, celebrated and built upon a myth. Despite their different readings of the situation, however, in terms of 'unity' both veterans espoused the same narrative: national unity is desirable and imperative.

Echoes of Lucibello's comment can be found in an article written by General Surville of the A.G.M.G. in 1988. This veteran declared that while the French citizenry is often divided, luckily "this country always finds the necessary moral resources to unite in case of danger, to help out in case of misfortune, to conquer adversity and do its duty up to the ultimate sacrifice."[99] Despite the difference of 35 years, both Lucibello's and Surville's citations align public displays of strength and unity with defence of the *Patrie en danger*, a notion fundamental to French republican ideology since the 1792 *levée en masse* and absorbed into veterans' imagined and mythologised memories.

The unifying component of commemoration prompts veterans to suggest Armistice Day as an arena for displays of national solidarity. For example, perceiving in the proposed rearmament of West Germany a major threat to French and international security, some veterans (particularly of the A.R.A.C.) vehemently campaigned against the Paris-Bonn Accords during the 1950s and early 1960s. Drawing upon

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Guerre, nouvelle série, no. 97, novembre 1953, p. 1. The coming-together of citizens at times of danger proves the existence of a 'nation,' believed Olier Mordrel. Olier Mordrel, *Le mythe de l'Hexagone*, Paris: J. Picollec, 1981, p. 220.

[99] Général D. Surville, 'Edito,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, 39/45, T.O.E., A.F.N.)*, no. 592, octobre-novembre-décembre 1988, p. 1.

the war dead to add potency to his argument through the powerful notion of 'dying in vain,' an A.R.A.C. author condemned the scheme:

> This *11 novembre* is particularly meaningful for the veterans and victims of war. How could they honour the memory of their dear departed comrades or stand before the war memorials without expressing their indignation for the broken promises which they witness?
> What would so much sacrifice have accomplished if they were to today accept that the survivors' rights be flouted without protest or if German militarists again tread upon the soil of their country?
> No, the veterans and war victims will not accept it.[100]

Placing the aspirations of the survivors and the fallen in direct opposition to the proposed remilitarisation of Germany is a powerful tactic designed to wholly mobilise public opinion behind the veterans. Together, French people could remember war and its horrors in order to campaign for future good.

Displays of veteran and national solidarity can be used to visually represent and support other topics recurrent in *ancien combattant* discourse. As with the protests against the Paris-Bonn Accords, peace and international cooperation are the themes which commemorative unity most often promotes, partly because the sense of community engendered by commemoration can encompass people in different physical locations. In this way, remembering war on Armistice Day can be used to construct a sort of supra-national unity which members of all the world's nations are invited to join. As one proposed Armistice Day speech declared:

> It is true that isolated, we are weak and powerless - but together we make up a considerable moral force which should exercise its influence in the United Nations.
> While a third world war - even more terrifying than its predecessors - threatens the whole of humanity, we need to raise our voice to call for the rapid settlement of current conflicts, simultaneous and controlled general disarmament, the respect of the principles of the

[100] Anon., '11 novembre: union et fidélité à nos morts,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 181, novembre 1960, p. 4.

> United Nations Charters and the rights of man, and the development of cooperation between peoples.
> Long live France. Long live the Republic. Long live Peace.[101]

This passage reiterates the fact that the self-constructed duties of the veteran community extend beyond consideration for the French nation into the global arena. The *devoir* to promote international understanding offered the greatest recompense for past suffering; for this reason, internationalism has been espoused by all generations of fire.

One manifestation of this supranational ratification of the ideal of unity is the support which veterans of the French *métropole* offer their colonial counterparts.[102] Continental French *anciens combattants* have at times rallied to defend the rights of French African troops. The U.F.A.C.'s 1992 message clearly emphasised this aim by claiming that when "we express our gratitude and affection to the survivors; we [also] express our gratitude to the soldiers of the African army and the colonial troops who spilt their blood for France."[103] The orator here invoked the blood debt as a means of linking colonial and metropolitan veterans. In other words, French veterans appropriate not only the war dead of their own country when formulating aspirations and demands for unity, but occasionally seek to incorporate fallen colonial troops to strengthen their arguments.[104] The action combines the trauma of two groups to campaign for recognition.

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[101] Lucien Begouin, 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 56e année, nouvelle série, no. 1290, samedi 6 novembre 1971, p. 1.

[102] The interaction between mainland and overseas French veterans highlights Jay Winter's findings on the British case: through celebrating the dedication of overseas troops, Armistice Day pays tribute to the ties which bind the British Empire with its (former) colonies. Jay Winter, 'Migration, war and Empire: The British case,' *Annales de démographie historique*, no. 1, 2002, pp. 143-160, p. 144.

[103] René Peyre, '11 novembre: le message de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, no. 564, novembre 1992, p. 21.

[104] At times when highlighting the ties between France and her colonies has been of political benefit, the government has also invoked the blood debt and used the arena of national commemoration to display *métropole*-colony unity. Thus in 1958 during the Algerian War, 4000 Algerian veterans and 2000 Algerian youth (representatives of sporting associations) were invited to parade with metropolitan military units on 14 July. While in France, they were also treated to speeches, official visits and theatre outings. Anon., 'Quatre mille anciens combattants musulmans défileront le 14

As well as underscoring the links between France and her (former) colonies, *11 novembre* can be used to reiterate the ties between Allied powers. Using Armistice Day to showcase international unity was especially poignant in 1939, as symbolised by the appellation of 11 and 12 November as the 'Franco-British Days' in honour of France's closest military ally.[105] Celebrated two months after the outbreak of World War Two, "no ceremony was planned […] due to the circumstances" but the *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G.* was pleased to report that on their own initiative individual veterans' associations grouped beneath the Arc de Triomphe to honour the Unknown Soldier and the masses of fallen soldiers he embodied.[106] The homage paid to the Unknown Soldier by General Gamelin, commander of the Allied Armies in France, symbolically furthered the theme of military collaboration and brought

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juillet avec les unités métropolitaines: dans toute la France la Fête nationale revêtira un éclat particulier,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 43e année, nouvelle série, no. 627, samedi 12 juillet 1958, pp. 1 et 3. A similar programme was organised for *anciens combattants* visiting from many African states in 1963. In addition to meeting General de Gaulle and the Veterans' Minister Jean Sainteny (whose speech detailed France's debt towards them), the visitors were invited to functions hosted by the U.F.A.C., the U.N.C and the Aveugles de Guerre [an association for veterans blinded by war]. E. A., 'Les A.C. Africains et Malgaches aux cérémonies du 14 juillet,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 48e année, nouvelle série, no. 878, samedi 20 juillet 1963, p. 3. In his ground-breaking study on the *tirailleurs sénégalais*, Gregory Mann devoted much attention to the continuing rhetoric of 'blood debt' in contemporary debates relating to France and its former colonies. Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century*, London and Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, esp. Ch. 5 'Blood Debt, Immigrants and Arguments.'

[105] On 11 November, the English King exchanged telegrams with Lebrun expressing "sentiments of affection and trust," in the words of an anonymous A.G.M.G. writer. Anon., 'Le 11 novembre et les journées franco-britanniques,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 24e année, no. 258, septembre à décembre 1939, p. 210. As Fagerberg noted, throughout the interwar period, a Franco-British alliance was seen as paramount to assuring French security. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 248. The 1939 Franco-British Days reflected the festivities organised in Paris in July 1938 in honour of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. Such festivities demonstrated visibly and publicly the fact that, as Jean-Claude Allain has outlined, French leaders constantly sought British (particularly military) cooperation during the first half of the twentieth century. Jean-Claude Allain, 'La IIIe République à l'épreuve des deux guerres européennes,' in Paul Isoart et Christian Bidegaray, *Des Républiques françaises. Colloque, Nice*, Paris: Economica, 1988, pp. 627-638, p. 633.

[106] Although the public holiday had been cancelled, some pre-war rites such as the Relais Sacré torch exchange were carried out in addition to the service under the Arc de Triomphe. As well, President Albert Lebrun, members of the government and the heads of the two Chambers performed a service at 1100 hours beneath the Arc de Triomphe. Anon., 'Le 11 novembre et les journées franco-britanniques,' *Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide*, 24e année, no. 258, septembre à décembre 1939, p. 210.

the war dead into the heart of the event. As well, a detachment of the Polish army presented arms during the morning's ceremony, no doubt symbolic of the nation's resistance against Germany. Such symbolic activity was designed to showcase - and strengthen - international unity at a time of crisis.

For combatants of the First World War, the "most sublime fraternity" was demonstrated "in the trenches or on the battlefield."[107] The hardships and traumas of warfare - and especially the ever-present threat of death - were thought to encourage soldiers to look beyond political, class, geographical and social boundaries to form relationships based on personality and mutual respect. Such tight connections were assumed to persist beyond the theatre of war: between men who had fought together but also between combatants who had never actually met, as well as between surviving soldiers and their disappeared companions. In taking on their forebears' imagined memory, veterans of wars subsequent to 1914-1918 also adopted the ideals of wartime camaraderie and post-war unity, which they have espoused regardless of the disparities between the wars they fought and the post-war environments in which they found themselves.

In the aftermath of the Great War, this camaraderie was enacted within the civilian realm via the establishment of veteran associations which positioned the notion as central to the *ancien combattant*'s very identity, both as a means of coming to terms with trauma and as a means of using the wartime ordeal to construct future good. The importance of unity, and the veterans' belief that the war endeavour best facilitates this unity, has not diminished over time: as one veteran wrote in 1997, "experiencing trials together convinces us that fraternity gives liberty and equality the true dimension of their human depth."[108] However, the idea of a single united body of veterans (across associations and, after World War Two, across generations) was in fact artificially imposed, as evidenced by instances of veteran-veteran disagreement. Yet, despite its fabrication, unity has remained one of the

[107] (S.) E. P., in Rosny, *Confidences sur l'amitié des tranchées*, pp. 100-103, p. 102.
[108] Michel Lartigue, 'Allocution pour le 11 novembre (proposition),' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1629, novembre 1997, p. 12.

most fundamental aspects of veteran 'identity,' 'memory' and discourse. Armistice Day, labelled the "festival of fraternity,"[109] has over the decades proved the ideal space in which to showcase accord: *ancien combattant*-activists use the space to propose the absorption of unity at the veteran, national and supra-national levels. This final level constitutes a means of promoting the veterans' primary motivation for mobilising the fallen: peace.

[109] Anon., '11 novembre: fête de la fraternité,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 45e année, nouvelle série, no. 742, samedi 5 novembre 1960, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

Part III - Motivations

Chapter Nine

Killing war: Mobilising the war dead to promote peace

> "May their example give us the strength to work with all our energy towards the immense task of human reconciliation."
>
> - Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution au Banquet,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 65, décembre 1926, pp. 2-3, p. 3.

Mentioned in speeches and in the *ancien combattant* press almost every year during the nine decades following 1918, peace is indisputably the primary maxim of veteran imagined and mythologised memories and their standardised Armistice Day discourse. The chapter argues that this primacy stems from two interrelated factors: firstly, an internationally-harmonious society constitutes the greatest recompense for past trauma; and secondly, the failure of peace - and the subsequent return to conflict - most obviously negates past sacrifice. 'Peace' is equated in this way to an absence of war; however, the ex-servicemen and -women who employ the term rarely tease out the precise meaning they attach to it. The inflexibility of veteran discourse is therefore particularly noteworthy in the case of peace given the concept's multitudinous interpretations over the ninety years since World War One. The pre-eminence of peace in *11 novembre* liturgy automatically connects it to the war dead, around whom the ceremonies focus; however, this link is consciously developed by veteran-journalists who mobilise the dead to promote their peaceful aspirations, often as part of their moral *devoir de mémoire* towards the fallen.

That Armistice Day celebrations are inextricably linked with notions of 'peace' stems from the "magnificent hope for peace [which] swelled the hearts of us, soldier-citizens, on the day following the victory of 1918."[1] As 11 November 1918 heralded the end of the Great War and ushered in an era of 'peace,' the ceremony of Armistice Day - the official commemoration of World War One and subsequent wars, and for the servicemen and -women who lost their lives during these conflicts - is particularly pertinent to pro-peace dialogue. As one northern French veteran stated: "we only want an appreciation […] that a real peace must, through the unanimous will of all citizens, reign around the war memorial."[2] In other words, the status of Armistice Day as the primary date for remembering war and the war dead makes it the perfect opportunity to reflect upon the benefits of war's absence.

The interconnected themes of the war dead, Armistice Day and peace are absolutely fundamental to the *anciens combattants*' sense of identity and the 'memory' it incorporates. As the *Journal des Combattants* illustrated in 1949, veterans feel themselves duty-bound "to piously honour their brothers-in-arms who fell on the Field of Honour and to celebrate the festival of Victory and Peace."[3] This passage demonstrates the two interrelated elements integrated into the veterans' *devoir de mémoire*: memorialisation and honour. Veterans capitalise upon the conjuncture and use *11 novembre* and its war dead to put forward their arguments for peace:

> On Armistice Day you will fulfil your duty to the martyrs of war.
> YOUR GESTURE WILL BE:
> A homage to the memory of those killed by War;
> An affirmation of justice;

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[1] Léon Viala, 'La Paix fuira-t-elle toujours?' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 7, août-septembre 1946, p. 3.

[2] P. Desorbaix, 'Le Toussaint, le Jour des Morts et la Fête de l'Armistice,' *Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs*, no. 17, novembre 1926, p. 1.

[3] P. Beauvilliers, 'La célébration du 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 187, samedi 22 octobre 1949, p. 1.

A desire for peace.[4]

The tense international context of 1938 added extra poignacy to this call for peace; however, throughout its ninety-year history Armistice Day has been inseparable from notions of peace and the war dead in veteran discourse and practice. The primacy of 'peace' relies on its position as the most favourable achievement of veterans' suffering.

Just as the veterans mobilise the fallen to promote peace, so too can the dead (through their veteran spokesmen) inspire the living to work towards the fulfilment of pro-peace ideals. For example, in his evocative 1926 Armistice Day Banquet oration Aimé Goudaert, President of the U.N.C. du Nord, mobilised the fallen to stimulate belief in the cause of peace through the imagery of death and the graveyard. As tangible reminders of war's destruction, tombs can arouse great levels of devotion to certain worthy ideals:

> My dear Comrades, I am going to interrupt this joyful reunion for a few moments and steer you towards the immense forest of small wooden crosses beneath which sleep our comrades who died on the Field of Honour. Bowed before the tombs of our heroes, we undoubtedly hope that they are happy, those men who never questioned the value of their immense sacrifice, who did not see what we have seen, and who have not known the sadness of our victory.
> May their sublime example at least give us the strength to pursue our difficult task, continue just combat, resist the attack of all evil forces, and impose the spirit of the generation of fire everywhere; may their example give us the strength to work with all our energy towards the immense task of human reconciliation.
> *11 novembre*, day of French thoughts, day of ardent memories, let us have the will to wish for and claim Justice for France and Peace for the World.[5]

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[4] Le Bureau de l'U.F. Drômoise, '11 novembre 1938,' *Le Rescapé du Combat* (Edition de la Fédération de la Drome), in *Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses*, 4e année, no. 34, novembre 1938, p. 3.
[5] Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution au Banquet,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 65, décembre 1926, pp. 2-3, p. 3.

In such cases the war dead provide inspiration to the veterans, who see in the fallen a form of support for their difficult post-war tasks. According to veteran 'memory,' ensuring peace is the most important of these responsibilities because it provides the greatest justification for wartime sacrifice and trauma.

As Georges Pineau of the Association des Ecrivains Combattants (A.E.C.) thoughtfully observed in 1927, "Peace is not only an absence of war."[6] This insight means that 'peace' can be classified and construed in many ways.[7] The veterans' interpretation of the concept changes according to contemporary domestic and foreign security concerns, with the term embodying different meanings at different times for different representatives of the community.[8] Despite this fluidity of meaning, the *ancien combattant* press only rarely attempts to delineate exactly what 'peace' engenders. More commonly, veteran-writers laud the cause of peace without much consideration of the circumstances it entails. As a result of this lack of engagement, the discourse of peace has remained comparable across associations

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[6] Georges Pineau (de l'Association des Ecrivains Anciens Combattants), 'L'esprit combattant,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 8e année, no. 436, vendredi 11 novembre 1927, pp. 1 et 3, p. 1.

[7] 'Peace' is not a neutral term, and the peace movement in France has never been homogenous. Jean-Pierre Biondi, *La mêlée des pacifistes 1914-1945: la grande dérive*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2000, p. 13. In 1930, André Siegfried questioned the type of 'peace' the French people wanted. He astutely recognised that for peasants, 'peace' meant shorter military service and fewer taxes to finance military operations. Conversely, for socialists, 'peace' equated to closer international ties, while for others 'peace' would prevail because of humankind's inherent goodness. André Siegfried, *France: A study in nationality*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930, p. 55. Reflecting on interwar French pacifism, Maurice Vaïsse distinguished between "post-war pacifism" in the 1920s, founded upon a desire to avoid a catastrophe comparable to the Great War, and "pre-war pacifism" in the 1930s which developed from the growing international threat. Maurice Vaïsse, 'Le passé insupportable: les pacifismes, 1984, 1938, 1914,' *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, vol. 3, July 1984, pp. 27-39, p. 30. Four types of pacifistic thought were identified by Gilbert Merlio: integral or radical pacifism which refuses warfare even at the cost of subjugation; partial pacifism which considers war to be irrational and inhumane but occasionally necessary; pacifism of conviction which equates peace to an end in itself; and instrumental pacifism which sees peace as a means of fulfilling a political aim. These distinctions are not always clear-cut, and are often inter-related to other schools of thought such as anti-militarism, anti-colonialism and anti-nuclearism. Gilbert Merlio, 'Le pacifisme en Allemagne et en France entre les deux guerres mondiales,' in Bernard Duchatelet (ed.), *Romain Rolland, une oeuvre de paix. Actes du colloque de Vézelay 4 et 5 octobre 2008*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010, pp. 33-50, pp. 33-34.

[8] Generally speaking, individual associations interpret 'peace' based on their political leaning. In this vein, the U.N.C. is quicker to interpret peace as France's right to self-assertion within the international environment, while the U.F. and the A.R.A.C. tend to view peace as cross-border cooperation and reconciliation.

and generations of fire despite the contextual particularities and personal viewpoints which bear upon the work of the different veteran-writers. Even the advent of new threats to peace (of which fascism, Nazism and nuclear weaponry are key examples) has had little effect on veteran consideration of the subject. The *anciens combattants* have adopted the vocabulary suited to such developments but not challenged or manipulated the discursive pattern, established for the framework of post-1918 peace and transposed onto other post-war peace environments, into which they insert the terms. When slight variance *does* occur, it tends to be noticeable through the omission of certain elements of veteran 'memory' rather than addition. One influential explanation for this refusal or powerlessness to alter the discourse is the deeply-entrenched veteran 'memory'; what was viewed after 1918 as the appropriate dialogue of peace was standardised into the veterans' imagined memory and then passed on to the younger generations.

The following attempt to define 'peace', put forward by an anonymous author of the *Ancien Combattant du Nord* in 1927, is one exception to this general rule:

> They [the *anciens combattants*] will be especially preoccupied with the problem for which they feel most passionate: the problem of Peace.
> Firstly, Peace in the Nation. Peace at home can be achieved through the fraternal and loyal collaboration of all Frenchmen. It ensures the security of the country, the harmonious development of all its resources and the wellbeing of all its inhabitants.
> Secondly, external peace: through respecting treaties, the fair distribution of the damages and costs of war, the combined efforts of all Nations, big and small, which have the firm and sincere desire to avoid sending humanity back to bloody hecatombs.
> Some people will say this is a big and unrealisable dream. Certainly not. This dream will become a reality if all Frenchmen want to make the effort which we made in the trenches, and if our Associations continue to override what divides us and search for what unites us.[9]

[9] Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice à Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

For this journalist, 'peace' entailed France's wellbeing at both the domestic and foreign levels. Internal harmony was achieved through national unity, an understanding of 'peace' which has continued to dominate veteran agendas since 1918. "External peace," on the contrary, meant first and foremost international cooperation to avoid a catastrophe comparable to the Great War. The definition is very much a product of its time: the vast majority of veterans were in the 1920s and 30s opposed to a return to conflict, with large section of the *ancien combattant* population adhering in the mid-1920s to Aristide Briand's construction of peace as dependent upon collective security (with the notable exception of the U.N.C. which favoured Raymond Poincaré's more conservative approach to foreign policy).[10]

Despite its shortcomings, most veterans in the post-World War One era lauded the establishment of peace precisely because it equated to an absence of war and therefore the greatest recompense for the traumas of the war experience. Such sentiment was made explicit by an anonymous U.F. journalist in the early 1930s, who brought attention to the role played by the fallen in securing peace:

> We repudiate nothing of our past: without our victory, there would be no Society of Nations, no people's liberty, no European ideal.
> We honour our dead and all the dead who fell for our cause; […] through a tradition established between men who fought, we salute all the war dead.[11]

This passage is again indicative of its time and the association which published it. Throughout the 1920s and 30s, the Union Fédérale avidly supported associations established to further international cooperation and understanding such as the League of Nations. Particularly imperative, however, were associations which fostered relations between ex-combatants, and especially between ex-combatants of

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[10] Elliott Pennell Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' PhD thesis, Université de Genève, thèse no. 175, Ambilly, Annemasse: Imprimerie Les Presses de Savoie, 1966, pp. 34 and 47

[11] Anon., '11 novembre 1932: Quatorzième anniversaire de la victoire et de la paix. Manifeste de l'Union Fédérale,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants et de Victimes de la Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, 2e année, no. 23, 15 novembre 1932, p. 5.

former enemy nations. The U.F. leadership was therefore highly involved in groups such as the Fédération Interalliée des Anciens Combattants (F.I.D.A.C.) founded in 1920 to group veterans of former Allied nations, the Conférence Internationale des Associations de Mutilés et Anciens Combattants (C.I.A.M.A.C.) which was open to German ex-servicemen, and the Comité France-Allemagne designed to cultivate cross-Rhine relations through cultural programmes.[12]

Also important in this citation is the reference to the role of veterans and their associations in the process of peace-building. In the aftermath of World War One, veteran responsibility for ensuring peace was enacted through attempts (mainly through discourse rather than parliamentary action) to influence the form which post-war peace would take. Despite the different attitudes prevalent within the veteran community, the *anciens combattants* agreed upon the necessity of constructing peace and their role in this enterprise. As a northern French veteran wrote:

> We built Victory, and we will be the true builders of the Temple of Peace. We will build it carefully and upon solid ground, without hurrying, as suits the construction of gigantic edifices designed to stand the test of time. We will continue our crusade and we will be the Knights of Peace in people's hearts, in the Nation and in the World.[13]

The veterans' engagement and involvement with peace in the post-World War One era resulted in fierce devotion to the cause. As the well-known U.N.C. writer Hubert-Aubert remarked in 1930, "Peace is our child. Suffice to say, we will not allow anyone to hurt it."[14] Veteran fidelity to the cause of peace has been maintained throughout the ninety years since the 1918 Armistice because it constitutes the principle positive outcome of trauma, with activists of all

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[12] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' pp. 202-208.
[13] Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice à Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3, p. 2.
[14] Hubert-Aubert, 'De notre observatoire: il y a douze ans,' *Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 11e année, no. 590, 11 novembre 1930, p. 1-2, p. 1.

associations and generations of fire continuing to promote the cause at every opportunity, predominantly on Armistice Day.

The passion with which veterans address the topic of peace is complicated because their pro-peace attitudes and activity is often elucidated in terms reminiscent of the battlefield like 'defence,' 'aggressive,' 'fight,' 'kill' and 'battle.'[15] For example, in 1935spokesman for the U.F. and future Nobel Peace prize-winner René Cassin used forceful vocabulary to urge an end to conflict: "Down with war which is at this moment killing, like all the others! This is the unanimous call of Frenchmen. But the Union Fédérale knows that war cannot be killed except by organising peace."[16] The idea of 'killing war' was repeated in 1938 by the A.R.A.C., recognising the irony of celebrating peace on Armistice Day in such a dangerous international situation: "Do we who fought to kill war have the right to shout Victory?"[17] Despite the ideological confusion surrounding the idea of 'fighting for peace,' it is fair to surmise that most *anciens combattants* consider peace worthy of protection - to such a degree that defending peace is fundamental to the veteran persona and an unwavering element of veteran 'memory' and discourse, across associations and generations of fire.

Throughout the decades, veterans have consciously played upon the opposition between peace and war to underscore their devotion to international harmony,

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[15] Pierre E. Landau, in his work on Jewish veterans' press in the 1930s, noted that the headlines of the liberal Association des Anciens Combattants Volontaires Juifs (A.C.V.J.) became increasingly more aggressive in parallel with increasing anti-Semitism in France and as Hitler gained in power. Philippe E. Landau, 'La presse des anciens combattants juifs face aux défis des années trente,' *Archives Juives*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2003, pp. 10-24, p. 14. This trend is also visible in the newspapers under consideration in this thesis.

[16] René Cassin, 'Pas de paix sans courage,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*, 5e année, no. 88, 10 novembre 1935, pp. 3-4, p. 3.

[17] Jean Duclos (Secrétaire Général de l'A.R.A.C.), 'Projet de discours pour le 11 novembre 1938: 20e anniversaire de la signature de l'Armistice,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants*, 8e année, no. 95, du 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1938, p. 3. It is pertinent to ask, as Janine Bourdin has done, what value the pro-peace and apolitical components of veteran commemoration conserved on 11 November 1938, with another major war looming. Janine Bourdin, 'Les anciens combattants et la célébration du 11 novembre 1938,' in René Rémond et Janine Bourdin (eds.), *La France et le Français en 1938-1939,'* Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1978, pp. 95-114, p. 96.

describing themselves intermittently as "soldiers of Peace"[18] or "combatants of peace."[19] The A.R.A.C. in particular never fails to highlight its long anti-war tradition, and especially the pro-peace oeuvre of its influential founder Henri Barbusse. In 1948, one of its journalists adopted battlefield vocabulary to prove his point, drawing attention to the fact that "the rich history of our Association is a succession of great combats carried out for this noble cause [peace]."[20] Decades later, it was claimed that "['War on war'] was the first cry of the A.R.A.C.'s founders in the terrible year 1917. Alas, we still have to cry it out today."[21] Continual reference in veteran discourse to their peace efforts serves to underscore their devotion to the cause and its centrality to their *devoir de mémoire*, an element fundamental to the *poilus*' imagined memory and absorbed by younger veterans.

The veterans' vehement defence of peace begs the question: just how far should they go? Rarely do the veterans themselves grapple with this dilemma; one exception was Paul Galland's thought-provoking article 'To fight for peace?' The

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[18] Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution pour les toasts,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice à Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, pp. 2-3, décembre 1927, p. 2.

[19] Interestingly, in 1969 two *ancien combattant* newspapers employed the exact same words to encourage the veteran population to persevere with its crusade for peace. The *Journal des Combattants* inspired its readers with the emotive play-on-words, "Let us remain combatants but combatants of peace." Anon., Union régionale parisienne - Clichy-sous-Bois, *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 290, décembre 1969, p. 15. This sentiment was echoed by the U.F.A.C.'s "Let us remain combatants, my comrades, but combatants of peace." Paul Manet (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 54e année, nouvelle série, no. 1190, samedi 1er novembre 1969, p. 1.

[20] Anon., 'Une grande tradition de l'A.R.A.C.,' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre. Supplément du Réveil des Combattants*, 3e année, no. 26, novembre 1948, p. 3.

[21] Georges Doussin, 'Guerre à la guerre,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, no. 541, novembre 1990, p. 1. The A.R.A.C. was founded in 1917, a year which had witnessed widespread loss of morale among front line troops. See Nicolas Offenstadt, 'Une mémoire à distances. Les anciens combattants de la Grande Guerre et le souvenir des mutineries de 1917,' *Temporalités. Revue de sciences sociales et humaines*, vol. 5, 'Mémoire et histoire,' 2006, pp. 2-11 for an account of the mutiny. Offenstadt believed between 60 000 and 90 000 French soldiers participated (p. 2); John Horne, who considered the cultural origins of the mutiny, cited the more conservative estimate of 40 000. John Horne, 'Entre expérience et mémoire: les soldats français de la Grande Guerre,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, vol. 60, no. 5, 2005, pp. 903-919, p. 915. Jan Karl Tanenbaum also put the estimate between 30 000 and 40 000. Jan Karl Tanenbaum, 'The French army and the Third Republic,' *Trends in History*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1982, pp. 3-13, p. 10.

question mark illustrates the author's consideration of the ideological and terminological difficulties implied by this idea. He expanded:

> Just as we say "War on war!" we often speak of the "battle for Peace."
> Let us firstly consider that employing this vocabulary is strange at the very least - and then secondly, that perhaps we are right in daring to use it, because it is true that we easily fight over Peace, not only with arguments but also with chairs and fists.[22]

Penned in the context of 1931 France, Galland's article captures the ambivalence towards 'peace' which pervaded much of the decade. With the shadow of fascism hanging over Europe and the civil conflict in Spain from 1936 until 1939, 'peace,' 'pacifism' and 'pacifists' were loaded words and concepts.[23] Simply explained, faced with the spread of fascism, some previously staunch anti-war campaigners began advocating violence while some right-wingers, traditionally more militarily-minded, began to accept the idea of German hegemony in a Nazified Europe.[24]

The veterans, too, were swept up in the 1930s peace debate, with their attitudes reflecting the tensions inherent in French society during this era.[25] Galland, for example, declared he had "nothing against" pacifism, provided its proponents

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[22] Paul Galland, 'Se battre pour la paix?' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 12e année, no. 644, samedi 5 décembre 1931, p. 1.

[23] For an excellent and detailed account of the era's complexities, see Norman Ingram, *The politics of dissent: Pacifism in France 1919-1939*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. Also, Maurice Vaïsse, 'Le pacifisme français dans les années trente,' *Relations internationales*, no. 53, Spring 1988, pp. 37-52.

[24] Didier Bigorgne, 'Les pacifistes et le 11 Novembre dans l'entre-deux-guerres,' *Terres ardennaises*, vol. 12, 1992, pp. 42-48, p. 48; Nicolas Faucier, *Pacifisme et antimilitarisme dans l'entre-deux-guerres 1919-1939*, Paris: Spartacus, 1983, p. 148; Daniel Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France,' *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, Paris, no. 42, April-June 1994, pp. 77-95, p. 82; Gilbert Merlio, 'Le pacifisme en Allemagne et en France entre les deux guerres mondiales,' in Bernard Duchatelet (ed.), *Romain Rolland, une oeuvre de paix. Actes du colloque de Vézelay 4 et 5 octobre 2008*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010, pp. 33-50, p. 46. Simultaneously, however, some pacifists were drawn to collaborationism, seeing in a Hitlerian victory the possibility of perpetual peace. According to one observer in 1930, the war/peace divide in France stemmed from the Dreyfus Affair, during which the army was dissociated from the Republic, and patriotism from democracy. In this context, right-wingers lauded army values whilst left-wingers moved the other way. Siegfried, *France: A study in nationality*, pp. 50-52.

[25] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 254; Lyn Gorman, 'The *anciens combattants* and appeasement: From Munich to war,' *War and Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, October 1992, pp. 73-89, p. 85.

respected liberalism. He also pointed out that while pacifists are often victims, their defence mechanism is often attack.[26] Such comments, while not strictly critical of pacifism, reflect the inward-facing, France-focused policies of the U.N.C. The policies of this association were contrary to those of the left-wing veterans' groups, which continued advocating a more internationalist peace throughout the decade (one historian has remarked that the left wing/right wing divide of the era was in fact a conflict between international and national agendas[27]). While the U.N.C. promoted 'peace' by stressing national security more through primarily unilateral means rather than through the League of Nations, the Union Fédérale placed its trust in the League.[28] The A.R.A.C., true to its communist principles, advocated a purely internationalist peace,[29] although by the late 1930s fascist aggression had turned the group towards anti-appeasement.[30]

The question of Germany dominated discussion of foreign policy - and 'peace' - during the 1930s,[31] and in this respect, too, the groups' responses differed. U.F. leaders attempted to explain Germany's increasing militarism by illustrating the nation's tendency for strong leaders,[32] although from 1930, calls for modernisation of the French army coexisted alongside rapprochement efforts[33] and by 1938 even Henri Pichot, champion of rapprochement, was actively criticising German foreign

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[26] Paul Galland, 'Se battre pour la paix?' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 12e année, no. 644, samedi 5 décembre 1931, p. 1.
[27] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 23.
[28] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' pp. 71-73.
[29] Biondi, *La mêlée des pacifistes 1914-1945*, p. 200.
[30] Gorman, 'The *anciens combattants* and appeasement,' p. 84. Note, however, that for certain veterans, a Germany victory was preferable to Bolshevism. See Gaston Rogé (Président de l'Association des Mutilés et Anciens Combattants de la Région de l'Est), *Les mutilés et les anciens combattants de l'Est au service de la relève: Appel de G. Rogé le 22 juin 1942 à ses camarades de combat*, Nancy, [s.d.], [s.p.].
[31] As a contemporary observer recognised, French preoccupation with 'peace' is inseparable from consideration of 'Germany.' Paul Distelbarth, *France Vivante. II: Images de France*, Paris: Editions Alsatia, [n.d.], p. 36.
[32] Prost believed that the *anciens combattants*' respect for *grands hommes* was one reason why they accepted Hitler's word: Hitler was, after all, a former soldier like them. Antoine Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne 1933-1938,' in Henri Michel (ed.), *La France et l'Allemagne 1932-1936. Colloque tenu à Paris du 10 au 12 mars 1977*, Paris: CNRS, 1980, pp. 131-148, p. 137. Pichot was so devoted to the cause of rapprochement because he believed that veterans were most able to engender mutual understanding between the nations. Claire Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne de 1930 à 1945*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2004, p. 53.
[33] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 83.

policy.[34] Despite also espousing rapprochement, the U.N.C. was in comparison more concerned about German nationalism and rearmament,[35] and more wary about forging cross-Rhine relations.[36] The A.G.M.G.'s attitudes were more versatile, with some leaders advocating policies in line with the U.N.C.'s and some more internationalist.[37] Despite these different interpretations of 'peace,' the vast majority of veterans vehemently advocated an absence of war during this era.[38] Although espousing reconciliation was more difficult after World War Two due to the Occupation and the violence committed against civilians, this was once again the wish of many veterans.[39]

As protagonists in the theatre of war and victims of its trauma, the *anciens combattants* have a particular relationship with peace. They believe that their familiarity with war sets them apart from non-combatants in calling for concord and reconciliation: firstly, they consider themselves particularly responsible for warning against the horrors of war; in addition, by virtue of their wartime experiences veterans are by default considered to be more passionate about the cause of peace

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[34] Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne*, p. 46. Pichot's change of heart has also been dated to March 1939 (Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 163) and early 1937 (Barbara Lambauer, *Otto Abetz et les Français, ou l'envers de la Collaboration. Préface de Jean-Pierre Azéma*, Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001, p. 101).

[35] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 84.

[36] The U.N.C., while instrumental in the establishment of the Ally-only F.I.D.A.C., refused to join the C.I.A.M.A.C. which accepted the veterans of ex-enemy nations. Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' pp. 168 and 212. During the 1930s, the U.N.C. favoured interaction with nationalist German veterans' associations, believed to more accurately reflect public opinion (p. 168). Jean Goy, National President, was a French General Secretary of the Comité France-Allemagne along with Henri Pichot of the Union Fédérale.

[37] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 215.

[38] Bourdin, 'Les anciens combattants et la célébration du 11 novembre 1938,' p. 101. Prost also believed the majority of *anciens combattants* wanted peace, seeing in this unified moral crusade an essential element in the formation of the Légion des Combattants under Vichy. Antoine Prost, 'Les anciens combattants aux origines de la Légion: les mouvements d'anciens combattants,' in René Rémond (ed.), *Le gouvernement de Vichy 1940-1942: institutions et politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin et Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1972, pp. 115-121, p. 118.

[39] Walter Lipgens, 'Le rôle des Associations d'anciens combattants et victimes de la guerre dans le mouvement européen,' in Alfred Wahl (ed.), *Mémoire de la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Actes du Colloque tenu à Metz les 6-8 octobre 1983*, Metz: Centre de Recherche 'Histoire et Civilisation de l'Europe occidentale,' 1984, pp. 99-109, p. 99. One manifestation of this desire was the foundation of the Confédération Européenne des Anciens Combattants (C.E.A.C.) in 1962 which aimed to group together all the European veterans' groups (p. 103).

than those who have never participated in combat.[40] These two sentiments are inherent to veteran 'memory' and have been espoused throughout the decades since 1918 by veteran-activists of all generations of fire. This idea was clearly stated in the *Journal des Combattants*' 1971 Armistice Day manifesto, which claimed that "all human beings, and especially *anciens combattants* because of their painful experience, are bound to be concerned about the evolution of international relations and the Future of the young generations."[41] The author, too young to have participated in World War One, advocated a sentiment reminiscent of his 1914-1918 forebears; he was, after all, evoking a message ingrained in their 'memory.'

As this sentence elucidated, veterans consider themselves obliged to work towards peace, another veteran *devoir* which puts their wartime ordeal to a positive use. The tireless campaign which they undertake aims to simultaneously remind the population of the awfulness of war and make people aware of the benefits of international and domestic harmony. Not surprisingly, the two situations are frequently placed in opposition to emphasise their dissimilarity. In this way, memorialising past warfare is supposed to act as a deterrent against future feuding. The President of the Union Fédérale succinctly summarised the dictum in 1992, writing that "peace - that supreme being - is never assured. Let us be vigilant in defending it. Let us remember the atrocious lessons of History."[42] Past trauma was in this way mobilised to create a more positive present and future; war's lessons were put towards a greater cause.

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[40] A similar point has been made by Antoine Prost. In an article considering the opinions of the French veterans towards Germany in the 1930s, he underscored the veterans' sense of self-importance in believing that they alone had the capability to improve international relations. Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne,' p. 136. In her consideration of the great pro-rapprochement figure Henri Pichot, Claire Moreau-Trichet appreciated that veterans had a dual role in maintaining peace: as witnesses and as guides. Moreau-Trichet, *Henri Pichot et l'Allemagne*, p. 57.

[41] Lucien Begouin, 'Manifeste pour le 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 56e année, nouvelle série, no. 1290, samedi 6 novembre 1971, p. 1.

[42] Pierre Vélon (Président de l'Union Fédérale), '11 novembre,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, des Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 404, septembre-octobre 1992, p. 1.

Given their familiarity with war, the *anciens combattants* play a special role in propagating the memory of past conflict in order to promote peace. At the U.N.C.'s 1990 annual Conference, Veterans' Minister André Meric recognised the importance of memorialising conflict, and the veterans' specific function in this enterprise:

> At a time when the falsification of history drives us to deny the tragedies which we experienced in the past, at a time when profound changes are occurring throughout Europe, you and I together have the duty to be the witnesses of the past so that the horror does not repeat itself and that our children live in a peaceful world. The lessons of History must allow us to tackle the future without fear but [also] without naivety.[43]

Meric reiterated the veterans' - and the Veteran Minister's - obligation to ensure the perpetuation of the messages of the past to ensure harmony. In enacting this duty passed down through the generations of fire, veterans translate the trauma and sacrifice of war into the greatest achievement possible: peace. The interconnectivity of creed and action, and the language used to describe elucidate them, contributes to the invariability of veteran discourse.

To commemorate the last *11 novembre* of the millennium, Jean-Pierre Massaret, Veterans' Minister at the time, again revived the idea of a duty to remember war as a guarantee for future peace. He used the in-vogue phrase '*devoir de mémoire*' to make his argument:

> There is a duty of memory which we owe to the fabulous *poilus* of 1914-1918 who, in the hell of combat, wanted to believe that their war was the last war: we are all required to ensure that liberty,

[43] André Meric, 'Le message "Témoignons du passé pour vivre dans un monde pacifié" de M. André Meric, Secrétaire d'Etat chargé des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre à l'occasion du congrès de l'U.N.C. qui s'est tenu à Troyes les 25, 26 et 27 mai 1990 à l'occasion du 50e anniversaire de la bataille de France, lu par le Préfet de l'Aube,' in *La Voix du Combattant: La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1556, juin-juillet 1990, p. 6.

> equality and fraternity hold up the construction of Peace at the beginning of this twenty-first century.[44]

Despite the fact that Massaret's reasoning and vocabulary echo those of his predecessor Meric, an interesting shift has occurred between the two texts. Whereas Meric assumed remembrance of war for peaceful aims to be a veteran duty, Massaret's words suggest that the population, too, needs to accept responsibility for the accomplishment of this endeavour. The "duty of memory" he espoused was *to* - and not *because of* - World War One soldiers. The reason for this modification lies in part with the audiences which the two Ministers addressed: Meric was speaking to a group of veterans whereas Massaret's text was published inside the cover of the S.G.A./D.M.P.A.-produced *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, available for anyone to read. Context obviously played a role as well: at a time when very few World War One soldiers remained, Massaret deemed it necessary that the population memorialise not only war but also its protagonists.

Massaret's use of the term '*poilu*' is telling: it fails to distinguish between World War One's survivors and victims, and only refers to soldiers of that conflict. The onus has been placed not solely on the war dead, but also on the 'veteran dead,' those ex-combatants whose lives ended not abruptly on the battlefield but decades later of sickness or natural old age. For many citizens, it is easier to connect and empathise with these conflict survivors, with whom they may have had personal interaction, than men who died two or three generations ago. As well, the deaths of France's last surviving *poilus* prompted massive press coverage, informing members of the public about the Great War through tales of the wartime exploits of the ex-servicemen in question.[45] Such individualisation elicited a sense of

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[44] Jean-Pierre Massaret (Secrétaire d'État à la Défense chargé des anciens combattants), 'Message du 11 novembre,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 94, novembre 1999, p. 1.

[45] The phrase '*les derniers poilus*' entered French language during the mid-1990s. Nicolas Offenstadt, 'Le "dernier poilu": une nouvelle icône?' Collectif de Recherche International et de Débat sur la guerre de 1914-1918, CRID 14-18, <http://www.crid1418.org/actualites/dernier_poilu.html> accessed 10 January 2011. In 2001, the O.N.A.C. accounted for each surviving Great War veteran and tracked their disappearance. Just before 11 November 2007, Serge Barcellini wrote an article in which he detailed the rapid decline of these men. Serge Barcellini, 'Les derniers poilus méritent des honneurs particuliers,' *Le Figaro*, 9 novembre 2007. Le Figaro, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/

connection with the veterans which the mass, often anonymous, death of trench warfare rendered impossible. Massaret's mobilisation of the 'veteran dead' therefore heralded a shift in discourse which has occurred recently in tandem with the deaths of the last remaining *poilus*. Despite this changing focus, peace has remained of fundamental importance; the rhetoric of peace has not altered, only the 'vessels' through which the benefits of peace are highlighted. The current shift towards mobilisation of the veteran dead rather than the war dead is one of only a few variances in veteran discourse throughout ninety years. This modification has occurred because of a demographic shift within the veteran population and the increasing pervasiveness of 'memory.' However, while the notion of promoting peace to fulfil a duty to the *mass* of veteran dead is recent, associations have long drawn attention to the aspirations of *individual* veteran dead (especially René Cassin for the U.F. and Henri Barbusse for the A.R.A.C.).[46]

Another long-term trend is the *ancien combattant* technique of couching pro-peace dialogue in terms of civilian and veteran responsibility to the war dead. The veterans believe that they owe it to their fallen comrades to crusade against the revival of killing. The U.F.A.C.'s Armistice Day 1972 message demonstrates not only the importance of memorialising past conflict, but also the centrality of the war dead to this enterprise:

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debats/2007/11/09/0100520071109ARTFIG00290-les-derniers-poilus-meritent-des-honneurs-particuliers.php> accessed 10 January 2011. The widespread interest in the last remaining World War One soldiers has even engendered a Wikipedia site dedicated to the 'Derniers vétérans de la Première Guerre Mondiale.' Wikipedia, <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derniers_v%C3%A9t%C3%A9rans_de_la_Premi%C3%A8re_Guerre_mondiale> accessed 10 January 2011.

[46] Cassin provides a key figure for looking at veteran dead and peace, having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968. One younger veteran described him as an "ardent apostle" of peace. L. K., 'René Cassin,' *Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)*, no. 523, mars-avril 1976, p. 1. Henri Barbusse of the A.R.A.C. is also celebrated for his initiatives: a writer for the A.R.A.C. noted, for example, that Barbusse had called on the veterans of many former warring nations to unite their forces in order to construct a solid peace. Florimond Bonte, 'Oui, nous nous souvenons,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 337, novembre 1973, p. 16. Another A.R.A.C. writer further associated Barbusse with the notion of 'peace' in writing: "You cannot evoke the word 'peace' without thinking of the illustrious founder of our association, Barbusse." Anon., 'Il faut sauver la paix!' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre. Supplément du Réveil des Combattants*, 4e année, no. 34, août 1949, pp. 1-2, p. 1.

> We must perpetuate their memory [the war dead], not to maintain nationalistic feelings or to exalt military virtues but to give homage to those who accepted the sacrifice of their lives so that new generations could construct happy cities in a world of peace.
> Because they did not learn the lessons of the past or imagine active and loyal cooperation, the peoples of Europe allowed themselves to be dragged into a second world war which was just as murderous and even more awful than the first.
> Their voices are being heard not only in France but across Europe. They condemn all forms of violence, work towards the rapprochement of peoples, ask that contemporary conflicts cease for general, simultaneous and controlled disarmament, and demand respect for the rights and dignity of man.[47]

In other words, veterans have a duty, entrenched in their imagined and mythologised memories, to translate wartime suffering into a constructive future for themselves and the population - but also for their fallen brothers-in-arms.

Promoting peace is therefore considered an obligation to the war dead. If peace was the ultimate aspiration of those who gave their lives, as the veterans claim, then in their spokesmen capacity veterans are honour-bound to ensure the continuation of the oeuvre of the fallen. As one Union Fédérale author mentioned in the mid-1930s:

> Those who lie here [in the cemetery] and elsewhere only entered the peace of the dead in order to found the peace of the living.
> From now on it would be sacrilegious for us to let in what the dead hated.
> We owe peace to their sacrifice.
> We pledge to protect and want it.[48]

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[47] Louis Begouin (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), 'Manifeste de l'U.F.A.C. pour le 11 novembre 1972,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 57e année, nouvelle série, no. 1340, samedi 4 novembre 1972, pp. 1 et 8, p. 1.

[48] Henri Maurand, 'A minuit le 11 novembre au Mémorial Lafayette,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*, 6e année, no. 110, 10 novembre 1936, p. 9. The Lafayette Memorial in Marnes-la-Coquette near Paris commemorates the American pilots who lost their lives during World War One, both before and after the United States' official entry into war. For more information about the site, see Ambassade des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, <http://french.france.usembassy.gov/a-zescadrille lafayette.html> accessed 10 January 2011.

It is for this reason that, according to an A.R.A.C. journalist writing two decades after his U.F. colleague, the *anciens combattants* "are determined to do everything to fulfil the vow [they] made together in the trenches: do everything to prevent a new war."[49] This vow obliges veterans to fulfil their duty; it is a 'debt' they owe the fallen. In mentioning the trenches, the author excluded veterans of 1939-1945 or later conflicts from the pro-peace "vow," an interesting omission given the article specifically draws attention to the bloodshed in North Africa and thus recognises the veterans' failure ensure that this promise be respected.

Heralded by their erstwhile comrades as the "best of our youth"[50] or the "best among us,"[51] and by non-combatants as "the best children of the *commune*,"[52] the war dead are seen as supreme examples of sacrifice. The notion of 'sacrifice' - developed as a means of coming to terms with the trauma of the World War One experience but transmitted via imagined memory to veterans of later wars - is utilised to promote a utopian vision which legitimises such bloodshed. The idea of 'sacrifice' adds particular resonance to anti-war/pro-peace operations. As was written in the *Journal des Combattants* after World War Two, "Commemorating the memory of sacrifice prepares the mind to found Peace for the future, to which the *Anciens Combattants* are firmly attached."[53] In this way, 'memory' of war can be translated into the most positive outcome imaginable: peace. In 2000, the U.N.C. reiterated this point of view. Its *11 novembre* message claimed that, although "the threats to world peace are further from us and more diffused, they are no less real.

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[49] Anon., 'Projet d'allocution pour le 11 Novembre,' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre. Supplément au Réveil des Combattants*, no. 120, 8e année, no. 89, octobre 1955, p. 8.

[50] Anon., 'Projet d'allocution pour le 11 Novembre,' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre.* Supplément du *Réveil des Combattants*, 2e année, no. 18, novembre 1947, p. 3.

[51] Henry Rossignol (Président de l'U.N.C.), 'La leçon des tombes,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 473, samedi 28 juillet 1928, p. 2.

[52] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.

[53] P. Beauvilliers, 'La célébration du 11 Novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 34e année, nouvelle série, no. 187, samedi 22 octobre 1949, p. 1.

May we remember the sacrifices; it is impossible to invent the future without reference to the past."[54] Perhaps the most succinct example of how veterans link sacrifice and peace comes from the U.F.A.C.'s 1998 Armistice Day manifesto which states that "the sacrifices of all the generations of fire must today be translated in terms of peace and hope."[55] Memorialisation of war - and especially the victims - is thus seen as a disincentive to future conflict; the dead are mobilised to ensure war does not break out again. The tactic of 'remembering' war to found peace has been employed throughout the ninety years since 1918; it is well established in veteran 'memory.'

Postulating that the dead fought - and paid the ultimate price - specifically to ensure peace suits the *anciens combattants*' dictum that 'peace' equates to an 'end to war' - namely, the ultimate objective of each warring party. The veterans manipulate this situation in order to stress the pro-peace ambitions of the war dead. One 1937 example from the Union Fédérale reads:

> There is not a veteran who, on 2 November and especially 11 November, does not think with sadness and affection of the numerous comrades cut down by machinegun-fire between 1914 and 1918. No veteran forgets his brothers, victims of war, who only gave the gift of their youth and their life in order to contribute to the establishment of peace between peoples and between citizens.[56]

In such discourse, the dead were not merely killed in battle; they died in the hope of seeing international harmony flourish. Mobilising the fallen in such a way is extremely powerful, designed to maximise the potency provided by the idea of wartime death. This extract also reveals how *ancien combattant* attendance at Armistice Day services, designed to propagate the memory of the war dead,

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[54] U.N.C., 'Allocution pour le 11 novembre,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1659, novembre 2000, p. 9.
[55] Le Bureau National de l'U.F.A.C., '11 novembre: le message de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, no. 629, octobre 1998, p. 9.
[56] Laurent Coupiac, 'L'Appel des Morts Martyrs de la Guerre,' *L'Après-Guerre* (Edition de la Fédération Départementale Aveyronnaise), in *Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses*, 3e année, no. 23, novembre 1937, p. 6.

reiterates the links between the deceased and the veterans who speak in their name, and adds weight to the veterans' pro-peace sentiment.

In opposition to the constructive concept of 'dying for,' veteran journalists and orators repeatedly employ the powerful accusatory notion of 'dying in vain.' Given the unqualified importance of defending peace to veteran self-perception, this tactic is employed often. Drawing the physical landscape into his analogy, Paul Manet declared for his Armistice Day 1962 manifesto that "the men whose blood seeped through the soil of France were convinced that their martyrdom would not be in vain and that they would contribute to the construction of a better and more fraternal world."[57] This comment echoes the Union Fédérale article above: the war dead are positioned as consciously and selflessly giving their lives for the betterment of the world. The continuity of the veteran discursive pattern of peace is visible in Manet's writing: not only did he take up an argument comparable to his predecessor, the same reasons he gave for soldier death also fit an established mould.

The prominent *Journal des Combattants* journalist Jean Volvey adopted the 'died in vain' vocabulary twice in one paragraph to really emphasise his objection to war. 'Peace' as Volvey understood it in the mid-1950s was threatened by mounting Cold War tension, nuclear weaponry and the possibility of German rearmament.[58] Peace was necessary in the future, the author believed,

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[57] Paul Manet, 'Manifeste du 11 novembre,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville*, 47e année, nouvelle série, no. 842, samedi 3 novembre 1962, p. 1.

[58] Targeting a particular weapon (and, therefore, a particular type of war) rather than proclaiming itself against warfare in general, the anti-nuclear movement was a special brand of pacifism with its own problems and strengths. The movement's often broad support stems from its crusade against a weapon which large numbers of people consider odious; its weakness lies in the fact that weapons are just the expression of violent competition between nations, not its cause. Lawrence S. Wittner, 'The transnational movement against nuclear weapons 1945-1986: A preliminary survey,' in Charles Chatfield and Peter van den Dungen (eds.), *Peace movements and political cultures*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988, pp. 265-294, pp. 265 and 287. Maurice Vaïsse has termed anti-nuclear sentiment as "selective pacifism." Vaïsse, 'Le passé insupportable,' p. 27. What Wittner has termed the second wave of post-World War Two anti-nuclearism peaked between 1957 and 1963, exactly when A.R.A.C. fears over the Paris-Bonn were at their peak.

> so that [more] young men will not die in vain, so that great minds will not be stupidly destroyed and can bring the magnificent gifts of their brains to the world, to science and to art.
> [Peace is necessary] so that the tears of mothers and wives will be less bitter because the sacrifice of those they loved the most will not have been in vain.[59]

Volvey cleverly repeated the same phraseology to connect mourning for past death with reasons why future death is unacceptable. Highlighting war's potential to not only waste life but also talent which could contribute in the future (and implicitly, could have contributed in the past) to human civilisation is unusual in veteran discourse, but constitutes an effective way of mobilising the dead to defend peace. The article's title - 'They remain living in our hearts' - further draws the war dead into the discussion of peace maintenance, and constructs an 'us-them' divide (presumably between people of good faith who want peace, and others). Such commentary reminds the population of war trauma in order to promote its antithesis, harmony. Without the installation of peace, soldiers' sacrifices are seen to serve no overarching purpose - the great fear of the veteran community and the reason why, throughout the decades, its leaders and journalists have steadfastly promoted, and attempted to enact in practice, their *devoir de mémoire*.

Other writers have used the 'died in vain' terminology to express concrete grievances. One example comes from the A.R.A.C., commenting on the drama surrounding the remilitarisation of Germany after World War Two[60]:

> Striking up an alliance with the leaders in Bonn, supporting them in their aims of renewed conquest, helping them to build and develop their military power - this does not help France or Peace; this does

[59] Jean Volvey, 'Ils restent vivants dans nos cœurs,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 41e année, nouvelle série, no. 542, samedi 10 novembre 1956, p. 1.

[60] An excellent work on the issue of German rearmament, including its tentative beginnings and public reactions, is David Clay Large's *Germans to the front: West German rearmament in the Adenauer era*, Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

> not aid Franco-German reconciliation. It renews the serious mistakes of the past [and] renders the sacrifices of our dead in vain.[61]

The use of the word 'sacrifice' reminds the audience of the "serious mistakes of the past" and strengthens the A.R.A.C.'s indictment of German rearmament. Particularly interesting is the positioning of a remilitarised Germany as a threat to attempts at reconciliation between the neighbours. While understandable given the countries' conflict-riddled history, and especially the overt expansionist policies of the National Socialists responsible for the most recent Franco-German conflict, this stance - which seems to suggest that militarism is inherent to the German character - could in itself be interpreted as a barrier to reconciliation. Such tactics suit Elliott Pennell Fagerberg's conclusion that the *anciens combattants*' foreign policy was essentially defensive and reactive; the veterans did not put forward suggestions but instead rallied against what they perceived as poor decision-making.[62]

Another dimension of the veterans' use of war to propagate peace-loving sentiment is their desire to protect the youth. Having witnessed the horrors and traumas of the trenches, the *anciens combattants* of World War One were eager to save future generations from a similar misfortune. As one veteran wrote in 1923, "they [the soldiers] suffered too much to not want a better fate for those who come after them."[63] For many ex-servicemen the duty to shield future generations was a personal endeavour. According to Lieutenant Jacques Péricard, writing of his front-line experiences during the Great War, a common theme for debate among soldiers was the "desire to save our children from the horrors we have lived through, [and] the conviction that our sacrifice has not been in vain." A few pages later, Péricard

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[61] Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, '11 novembre 1962,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, nouvelle série, no. 205, novembre 1962, p. 5.
[62] Fagerberg, 'The *anciens combattants* and French foreign policy,' p. 234.
[63] Charles Bertrand, 'La volonté de Paix des Anciens Combattants,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 5e année, no. 222, dimanche 28 octobre 1923, p. 1.

confessed that his words were penned with his three-year-old daughter in mind, so that she might know him if he never returned from battle.[64]

Having preoccupied soldiers during wartime, it is not surprising that post-World War One veteran writing continued to address the notions of sacrifice and protecting youth from war. Yet while the ideas and language of post-war commentary reflected its wartime blueprint, there was one crucial difference: in the post-war situation, veterans were able to draw on the credibility attributed to them by their position as survivors. Reference to fallen comrades was inherent to this situation and inevitably added potency to the veterans' arguments. Occasionally, veteran commentators exercised their right to speak in the name of the war dead, claiming that protecting young people was of primary concern not only for the survivors but also for the fallen. In this vein, soldiers "fell so that their kids would not come and take their place in the mass grave in which they were mowed down."[65] Similar attitudes prevailed after the second global conflict, attesting to the survival of the idea in mythologised memory, with one veteran fervently hoping "that a better future will bring reassurance and happiness to our descendants."[66]

Over the decades, Armistice Day, as the ceremony designed to strengthen the bonds between the living and the dead, has remained a space in which veterans can voice their desire and intention to spare their offspring from conflict. Reflecting in 1946 on the commemoration's role, the National Secretary of the A.R.A.C. remarked that "we will not forget that the ceremonies of *11 novembre* were always the occasion for veterans to loudly and clearly affirm their desire for peace and their will to

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[64] Lieutenant Jacques P. Péricard, *Face à face: souvenirs et impressions d'un soldat de la Grande Guerre. Avec une préface de M. Maurice Barrès de l'Académie française et 35 dessins de la plume de M. Paul Thiriat*, Paris: Libraire Payot et Cie., 1916, pp. 300 and 303.

[65] Gabriel Cudenet ("Paix et Liberté"), '11 novembre 1937,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 7e année, no. 84, 11 novembre au 10 décembre 1937, p. 6.

[66] Anon., 'Le 36e anniversaire de l'armistice du 11 novembre 1918,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 39e année, nouvelle série, no. 442, samedi 13 novembre 1954, p. 1.

protect future generations from the return of a new cataclysm."[67] Reiterating the fact that the dead died to protect their descendants is especially pertinent when veterans address young audiences, whose proximity in age to the dead soldiers is played upon to shock and awaken a sense of duty. In this way, veterans make their 'memory' of trauma more accessible to young people, increasing its impact and the likelihood that its messages will be absorbed.

On Armistice Day, veterans can mobilise the war dead to instil dedication to the cause of peace amongst French youth. As the U.N.C.'s President Hughes Dalleau recently remarked, considering the meaning of 'commemoration' as part of his engagement with the in-vogue topic of 'memory,' "the finality of commemorations is not that children take up their parents' quarrels to make them endure; but on the contrary to show how fragile peace is and that Society will pay a price to re-establish it."[68] Instructing young people about war's horrors as a means of deterring future conflict has become particularly important in recent times as the World War One and Two generations of fire have aged and died. Contemplating the future of war commemoration after the disappearance of World War One survivors, and then after the disappearance of survivors of later conflicts who actively preserve the legacy of the 1914-1918 era (and the 'memory' of their forebears, although this aspect was not recognised), one U.F. journalist wrote:

> When the *poilus* are no longer be with us to remember the far-off sacrifice of their comrades, when we will no longer be here to bear witness to the savagery of the wars which we made, the memory of past holocausts will not have disappeared.
> Let us think of this now, during this anniversary period. Let us prepare the future generations so that they do not forget. Instructed in the mortal dangers which weigh upon them through the race for

[67] A. Duchesne (Secrétaire Nationale de l'A.R.A.C.), 'Le 11 Novembre: Fête de la Paix,' *Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers*, 31e année, nouvelle série, no. 41, samedi 2 novembre 1946, p. 3.
[68] Hugues Dalleau, 'Editorial: Commémorations obligent,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1597, août-septembre 1994, p. 2.

> increasingly destructive weapons, they have no choice but to take the path of solidarity.[69]

The passage encourages young people to follow the example set by French soldiers, making explicit mention of the *poilus* but incorporating later combatants into the scenario through the use of the collective first person 'we.' Writing in 1992 as an *ancien combattant* of the North African conflicts, the former President of the U.F. could not claim *poilu* status but sought to develop links between the generations of former combatants. Such discourse appropriates not only the pro-peace work of the World War One soldiers but also the moral legitimacy with which they were supposed to have carried out this task. The veterans' campaign for international harmony has not waned over the decades; veterans of later wars have promoted this cause just as avidly as their forebears because it is promoted by the memory they appropriated as the most valid justification for past sacrifice, and therefore, the best way of accepting the past and its pain.

Given the fact that veterans attempt to promote cross-border harmony on *11 novembre*, internationalism constitutes an important part of the celebration.[70] The war dead are again powerfully incorporated into this aspect of the commemoration. The first reason for their inclusion stems from an understanding of the inherent similarities between humans, regardless of nationality. In this way, some veterans have published articles in which they position the soldiers (at least the rank-and-file) of both ally and enemy nations as having experienced the same fears, dreams and sufferance. For certain conflict survivors, these similarities made it impossible to

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[69] Pierre Vélon (Président de l'Union Fédérale), '11 novembre,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, des Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 404, septembre-octobre 1992, p. 1.

[70] Other war commemorations also encourage a strong internationalist element. For discussion of commemorations of the mid-1990s, particularly the fiftieth commemoration of the Normandy Landings, see Michael Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation, as remembered and commemorated during the Mitterrand years, 1981-1995,' PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1999, pp. 217-224. For Martin, Mitterrand's refusal to invite German representatives to either the 1984 or 1994 Normandy Landing anniversaries attested to the President's desire to balance his Europeanism with the fact that war had pitted France against Germany (p. 221).

hate their supposed adversaries.[71] In a 1937 article entitled 'The call of the dead, martyrs of war,' Laurent Coupiac of the Union Fédérale underscored the universal experiences of the Great War:

> If the Unknown Soldier lying under the Arc de Triomphe and the numerous French and foreign comrades mown down by war could speak, they would repeat what I have written above, because all of them - French, German, Belgians, Russians, Austrians, English, Italians or others - gave their last breath cursing the war and the evil forces which unleashed it. Everyone ardently wished that their children would never know the misery, suffering, torture and agony which were their lot in life.
> Governments, leaders, writers and journalists - do they not hear the call of the dead, the martyrs of the Great War, in 1937 and the years to come?[72]

In this vision, the war dead of all the nations, united by their past suffering and their present anti-war feeling, work together to counter the ignorance of contemporary politicians and potential war-mongers. A similarly accepting view of wartime death was published the same month, also by the Union Fédérale. The well-known veteran-author Léon Viala declared that "what characterised the man of the trenches was that he fought without hatred for his enemy: did the same pity not unite them above death?"[73]

Such readings of war death are not common in veteran writing, and the fact that the U.F. published two articles at the same time tends to suggest this internationalist understanding of wartime death was specific to a distinct time and association. It is unlikely, for example, that writers of the U.N.C. would have espoused the same

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[71] One of Jean-Noël Grandhomme's interviewees declared that "the Germans were like us. I could not hate the German soldiers." Pierre Gardin (101 ans), 1 février 1995, in Jean-Noël Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles: paroles des derniers survivants de la Grande Guerre*, Strasbourg: Editions La Nuée Bleue, 2006, p. 52. Another interviewee took the opposite point of view, claiming "I do not like the Germans; they shot at me." Léon Némery (96 ans), 25 mai 1995, in Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles*, p. 130.

[72] Laurent Coupiac, 'L'Appel des Morts Martyrs de la Guerre,' *L'Après-Guerre* (Edition de la Fédération Départementale Aveyronnaise), in *Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses*, 3e année, no. 23, novembre 1937, p. 6.

[73] Léon Viala, 'Propos d'anniversaire,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*,' 7e année, no. 133, 20 novembre 1937, p. 3.

view. Context was also important: underlining the universalistic element inherent in the symbolism of the war dead was valid for World War One, whose futility allowed for such internationalist interpretation; however, while veterans once again advocated peace within months of the termination of World War Two, the same inclusive discourse regarding the fallen is not recognisable. Following such cataclysmic events as the Occupation and the Holocaust, it was more difficult to reconcile survivors to the actions of the enemy. This accepting, internationalist view is therefore one of very few elements of imagined veteran memory which has *not* necessarily been taken up by veterans of later wars.

A second reason why the war dead are important to *11 novembre* internationalism is the fact that regardless of their origins, the fallen share something which no survivor can truly comprehend: death. Veteran-activists occasionally interpret this sense of macabre common heritage as a factor which unites the victims of all the belligerents in a time and place where nationality bears no relevance. In 1939 Henri Pichot of the Union Fédérale emphasised this point in a desperate effort to reiterate the cost of war and warn against its revival: "And then there are the Dead - ten million of them - those legions of friends and enemies reconciled in death. There are so many Dead!"[74] Such rhetoric expands the *anciens combattants*' "imagined community" of the (French) war dead to include the fallen of all nationalities.

Also seeking to warn people against future war was Abel Gance's *J'accuse*. As with Pichot, Gance sought to demonstrate the bonds shared by the dead regardless of nationality. In a desperate attempt to avert another tragedy, the film's protagonist Jean Diaz stands amid the crosses at Douaumont cemetery and calls the fallen to action. Repeating his commands in French, English and German, attesting to the international nature of war, he cries: "Artillery, cavalry, infantry of every country

[74] Henri Pichot, 'Les Morts, c'est eux, les Saveurs et les Victorieux,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants*, 9e année, no. 158, 10 janvier 1939, p. 3.

[…] My twelve million friends killed in the war […] Arise, all of you! The living are at war again."[75]

The works of both Pichot and Gance demonstrate the fraternity which certain observers claim exists between the victims of World War One, citing statistics to emphasise war's horror and cement anti-war sentiment.[76] Citing the numbers of dead and wounded is a particularly potent method of highlighting conflict's destruction and folly, reiterating not only the immense scale of devastation but also seeking to shock crowds from their potential apathy. This tactic is epitomised in the following citation from the A.R.A.C., very outspoken on issues of nuclear war, appealing to the French public in the era of atomic warfare:

> Do the statistics from 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 not speak for themselves? Do they not dictate our behaviour: do everything so that peace may finally reign on earth?
> In 1914-1918, there was no Hiroshima or Nagasaki… But what if a new world war erupts with weaponry and the art of killing so perfected?[77]

The simplicity and effectiveness of these statistics lead most Armistice Day orators to draw upon this medium to enhance their anti-war/pro-peace rhetoric.

The third element which links fallen soldiers to the internationalism of Armistice Day is the veterans' recognition that war is indiscriminate in its victims. Irrespective of race, class, age, sex or occupation, warfare has killed countless people throughout history. Identifying and reiterating the unsystematic and arbitrary nature of wartime death underscores the futility of conflict, and simultaneously highlights the

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[75] Abel Gance, *J'accuse* [*That they may live*], trans. Pierre van Paassen, video recording, Mad Phat Enterprises Inc., Bakersfield, C.A., [1938].

[76] Note the discrepancy in death tolls. In her consideration of interwar veteran politics in Germany and England, Deborah Cohen cited a total of 9.5 million dead and eight million permanently disabled between 1914 and 1918 for all the belligerents. Deborah Cohen, *The war come home: Disabled veterans in Britain and Germany 1914-1939*, Berkeley, New York, London: University of California Press, 2001, p. 188.

[77] Anon., 'Projet de discours pour le 11 novembre devant les monuments aux morts,' *Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes des deux guerres. Supplément au Réveil des Combattants*, no. 300, octobre 1970, pp. 15-16, p. 15.

advantages of peace. A recent U.F.A.C. *11 novembre* message reiterated war's indiscriminate nature:

> We cannot forget the courage, selfishness, conscience, hope for peace of these youths who endured so much suffering in the trenches and on the battlefields. Be they European, African, American or Asian, they were the main victims.
> Let us perpetuate their memory in time and try hard, in opening up as much as possible to the youth of today, to bring their human ideal of fraternity, dignity, liberty and progress to fruition.
> Let us unite our efforts and forge connections with our comrades throughout the world to contribute to the construction of universal and durable peace, the defence of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, and the construction of a more harmonious world where all people can finally enjoy their right to dignity and happiness.[78]

The U.F.A.C.'s erstwhile President here urged people to accept his very open and internationalist interpretation of war. Specifically, though, he appealed to the *anciens combattants* to act out their vital role in this enterprise. Veterans are responsible, he believed, for encouraging the youth to remember war in order to perpetuate ideals of peace, and for constructing cross-border connections with other former combatants, two duties which turn the war experience into beneficial accomplishments. The comment "Let us perpetuate their memory" attests to the role and obligation of veterans of later wars to continue espousing the imagined memory created in the aftermath of World War One. Peace was central to this narrative as the most powerful justification of soldier death and suffering.

Such activity holds particular resonance on Armistice Day, the date reserved for commemoration of war and its victims. The day constitutes a unique space for international reconciliation, especially between veterans: as erstwhile President of the U.N.C., Jean-Albert Dom, put it in 1976, "Armistice Day, day of glory among

[78] Jacques Goujat (Président de l'U.F.A.C.), '11 novembre: le message de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, no. 618, octobre 1997, p. 9.

days of glory, commemorates a victory but demands reconciliation between men and between those who fought."[79] He continued:

> Yesterday's allies and enemies, today gathered in the camp of free men: let us remember our dead and in their name let us destroy the hatred which animated them yesterday, so that their sons may avoid the sufferings endured by their fathers. Europe is hope. Europe demands fraternity.[80]

Dom here used *11 novembre*, with its memory of war and the war dead, to put forward an argument for the construction of a European Union. To protect their children from the trauma of war, reconciliation - specifically between France and Germany - was considered vital. Five years before Dom's article, the U.F. had pushed for inter-European cooperation using similar arguments:

> The constitution of a United Europe under the form of a Federated State or federations of Nations with common foreign, economic and defence policies was - and remains after two world wars - the dream of the veterans who were the unfortunate actors of these two planetary conflicts which divided the world and produced so many dead and so many ruins.[81]

As the author mentioned, remembering war and its tragic consequences could facilitate international rapprochement. This tactic has been employed by veterans from different associations and generations of fire, reverting to the themes, language and style of the veterans' World War One narrative.

One visible testament to the veterans' pro-peace outlook is the incorporation of representatives of former Allied nations into Armistice Day ceremonies. This

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[79] Jean-Albert Dom (Président de l'U.N.C.), 'Le 11 novembre, journée nationale du souvenir: jour de gloire et de paix,' *La Voix du Combattant/La Voix du Djebel-Flamme*, no. 1418, septembre-octobre 1976, p. 24.
[80] Dom, 'Le 11 novembre.'
[81] Maurice Sieklucki (Vice-Président de l'U.F.), 'L'Europe menacée,' *Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale*, no. 232, novembre 1971, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

tradition has a long history: at Dunkirk in 1927, for example, special mention was made of the fallen of the allied troops:

> The heartbreaking note of the bugle interrupted the charm. Playing the Belgian and English national anthems and *La Marseillaise* constituted a particular homage for those who are sheltered in our cemetery. Flowers were laid on the tombs. From this moment of intimacy with the dead, when each person made a truce with his material thoughts which vibrated with unity, an intense emotion was born which could be read on the hardened faces of many men: the voice of the Dead had been heard.[82]

Especially poignant in this passage is the fact that the author mentioned not just French but also allied fallen. As well as referring specifically to the *anciens combattants*' lost compatriots, the author alluded to the English and Belgian men buried in the cemeteries of his homeland, writing poetically of the "field of rest where, united in death, French, Belgian and English troops sleep."[83] In recognition of the different nationalities, the ceremony at Dunkirk combined traditional rituals of war remembrance with rituals of national symbolism to create a unique arena in which former allies, lying together in the cemetery, could communicate. Recognising the sacrifice of non-French soldiers, and especially incorporating them into ceremonies of remembrance, was one major illustration of the *anciens combattants*' profound desire that the trauma of war be put towards the construction of peace. Such aspirations would only truly be achieved, however, with recognition of former enemy troops as well as allied. Excluding the Germans from such ceremonies, whether this exclusion was deliberate or circumstantial, did not advance internationalism or peace; rather, this omission manifested a more selective and problematical 'peace' in which certain international relations were favoured over others.

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[82] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts : A Dunkerque,' *Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque*, no. 54, 15 novembre 1927, p. 1.
[83] Anon., 'La fête de l'Armistice: Notre Hommage aux Morts: A Dunkerque.'

As well as incorporating the Allied war dead into Armistice Day ceremonies, the veterans encourage living representatives of these nations to participate. Northern French *ancien combattant* newspapers attest to the long-standing involvement of Belgian veterans' groups in *11 novembre* ceremonies in Lille. In 1927, the U.N.C. and the Fédération des anciens combattants belges [Federation of Belgian Veterans] decided to celebrate the important date together, setting the precedent for future bi-national functions.[84] Aimé Goudaert, President of the U.N.C. du Nord, drew attention to the cooperation in his speech at the post-ceremony banquet:

> even this occasion [the celebration of Armistice Day 1927] demonstrates how we provide an example of the solidarity amongst Allied *Anciens Combattants*: the festival was organised in one hundred percent collaboration with our Belgian brothers-in-arms. This occasion also allows us to once more proclaim the real and valuable friendship which links us to the Belgian people. Although they are separated from us by a theoretical border, they are not only our neighbours but also our past allies and our brothers in language, customs and spirit. There is a friendship which links us to the Belgian people.[85]

Oral tributes to the cross-border friendship "sealed in blood"[86] built upon the rituals enacted earlier in the day, when members of veterans' associations from both countries participated jointly in the Armistice Day symbolism. Most poignant, perhaps, was the action in which one French and one Belgian *ancien combattant* laid a wreath of flowers, tied with a ribbon bearing the national colours of the two countries, at the base of Lille's war memorial.[87] In this gesture, the two nations together paid tribute to the sacrifice of the war dead, visibly enacting what veteran discourse proclaims as the greatest wish of soldiers, whether they survived or not: harmony across borders.

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[84] Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice a Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3, p. 2. M. De Muysère, in a speech given in the name of the Belgian veterans, remarked upon the importance of the initiative.
[85] Aimé Goudaert, 'Allocution pour les toasts,' in Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice a Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3, p. 2.
[86] Goudaert, 'Allocution pour les toasts.'
[87] Anon., 'La Fête de l'Armistice a Lille,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 77, décembre 1927, pp. 2-3, p. 2.

While inviting Allied dignitaries and troops to partake in rituals of remembrance has a long tradition in France, it is only relatively recently that the same courtesy has been extended to German government and military representatives.[88] In this regard, 11 November 2009 witnessed an important 'first' in the history of Armistice Day, especially in terms of reconciliation and peace. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, was invited to participate in the ceremony alongside Nicolas Sarkozy. Together, the two Heads of State rekindled the Flame and inspected the troops standing at attention around the Arc de Triomphe. Flanked by members of the Franco-German brigade and cadets of both countries, the two leaders then gave speeches emphasising the long-standing friendship between the neighbouring nations, mainly in terms of economic cooperation to avoid any embarrassing references to war.[89] Particularly poignant was the playing of the *Deutschlandlied* while the leaders paid homage to the Unknown Soldier. The U.N.C. claimed that Sarkozy and Merkel's joint tribute "prolonged" the action of Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand at Douaumont twenty-five years earlier.[90] Reconciliation

[88] German troops paraded down the Champs-Élysées for the first time since World War Two on Bastille Day 1994 as part of the multi-national Eurocorps. This decision prompted a plethora of *ancien combattant* commentary, ranging from passive acceptance through to outrage. Reflecting on the situation on Bastille Day 1996 (a date which, interestingly given its republican significance, is celebrated in A.R.A.C. journalism much more often than in the other newspapers under consideration), one journalist wrote, "Two years ago, the government dared to let foreign military units parade down the Champs-Élysées to commemorate the national festival." His use of the verb 'dared' is telling. Guy Lamothe, 'Le 14 juillet, fête nationale,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, no. 605, juillet-aout 1996, p. 3.

[89] Michael Martin has noted that in the 1980s, as the French and German governments together pushed for European integration, war was "reinvented" to represent the progress of Franco-German relations and speeches heralded supra-national ties as deterrents against future conflict. Martin, 'The French experience of war and occupation,' p. 8. This development supports the observation that Franco-German reconciliation was based as firmly in considerations of *Realpolitik* as it was in the need to overcome traditional enmity. Alice Ackermann, 'Reconciliation as a peace-building process in post-war Europe: The Franco-German case,' *Peace and Change*, vol. 19, no. 3, July 1994, pp. 229-250, p. 231. On a political level this may have been the case; however, the veterans had long espoused Franco-German understanding as fundamental to the peace project.

[90] Anon., 'Les cérémonies nationales,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1750, décembre 2009, p. 8. On 22 September 1984, French President François Mitterrand and the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl together paid homage to the fallen of both their nations at Douaumont cemetery. The poignancy of the moment was further heightened by the men's decision to stand hand-in-hand before the monument which became the symbol of Franco-German reconciliation. For William Kidd, this action demonstrated that the historical enmity between France and German no longer formed part of French self-perception. William Kidd, 'Frenchness: Constructed and reconstructed,' in William Kidd and

between former enemies was also taken up at the regional level: while Sarkozy and Merkel were in Paris, a German non-commissioned officer lit the Flame in front of the war memorial at Lille's Place Rihour at the request of local military authorities. In such reconciliatory activity, past trauma was faced - and mobilised to create a united future. The engagement of former enemies in ceremonies of remembrance is perhaps the most tangible sign that 'peace' truly has been achieved.

Youth representatives of other nations are sometimes invited to participate in rituals of World War One remembrance alongside young people of France. Inviting young ambassadors from around the world enacts the veterans' desire to "appeal to everyone's conscience, especially the youth, carriers of hope, to block the resurgence of past demons and work alongside all the peoples of the Earth for the construction of a world of peace, justice and liberty."[91] As with the participation of foreign political leaders in French commemorations, invitations to non-French youth peak and wane depending on the international context.

In recent times, parallel to the mounting promotion of pedagogy, the numbers of youthful overseas participants in commemorations has risen. Armistice Day 2002 witnessed the arrival of 260 children from Strasburg and Germany to sing the *Marseillaise*.[92] Having German children sing the French national anthem was a particularly poignant symbol of cross-border harmony. The theme was repeated in another powerful action: "Grouped in pairs of one French and one German representative, children and adolescents will read texts about the indispensable

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Siân Reynolds (eds.), *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 154-162, p. 157. Such an admission was a major step, because for over a century 'Frenchness' had been constructed in opposition to the 'Other,' Germany. Edmond Marc Lipiansky, *L'identité française: représentations, mythes, idéologies*, Paris: Editions de l'Espace Européen, 1991, p. 4. For an account of the role of political figures in reconciliation, see David Bargal and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Leadership and reconciliation,' in Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov (ed.), *From conflict resolution to reconciliation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 125-148.

[91] Le Bureau National de l'U.F.A.C., '11 novembre: le message de l'U.F.A.C.,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre (A.R.A.C.)*, no. 629, octobre 1998, p. 9.

[92] Mary-Ange Nierderl-Brissaud, 'Le 11 novembre 2002 - 84e anniversaire,' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1680, décembre 2002, pp. 6 et 12, p. 6.

amity between European countries."[93] In 2006, to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the Verdun Battle, 1916 young people from across Europe gathered in the Douaumont cemetery and laid *bleuets* [cornflowers], adopted by French veteran memorialists as the symbol of the *poilu*, on the tombs of fallen soldiers.[94] While embracing French memory of World War One, this simple and moving gesture strove for universalism, joining war dead and youth through ritual and space, and the memory of past suffering.

Such measures of symbolic harmony between ex-enemies are relatively recent; however, veterans have espoused the benefits and desirability of 'peace' incessantly over the ninety years since the end of World War One. In Antoine Prost's view, the veterans' constant pro-peace campaigning during the 1920s and 30s challenged the erroneous but oft-held idea of the groups as inherently bellicose;[95] this thesis has shown that 'peace' has remained central to the *ancien combattant* identity throughout the ninety years since 1919. Few veteran-intellectuals have outlined exactly what the idea entails, but it can be seen that representatives of different associations and generations of fire interpret the concept in their own ways. The divergence of opinion is particularly visible during moments of tension; the political atmosphere in France during the 1930s and the era of nuclear warfare provide two obvious cases in point. Nonetheless, despite these divergent blueprints, campaigning for peace has remained the most important manifestation of the *anciens combattants' devoir de mémoire*, and the discourse promoting this action has changed little in spite of context. The concept is fundamental to veteran 'memory' across all generations of fire, because 'peace,' equating in essence to an absence of war, constitutes the most compelling justification for past sacrifice and suffering. Peace is the ultimate objective of all veteran-activists, regardless of generation, political loyalty or associative membership.

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[93] Nierderl-Brissaud, 'Le 11 novembre 2002,' p. 6.
[94] Anon., 'A Verdun, 1916 jeunes se souviennent,' *La Voix du Nord*, samedi 10 juin 2006.
[95] Prost, 'Les anciens combattants et l'Allemagne,' p. 136.

Conclusion

This thesis has argued that the French *anciens combattants* have continued to 'mobilise' the dead in relation to Armistice Day using similar vocabulary and for comparable reasons throughout the ninety years since the end of World War One. In other words, despite the developments in warfare and the profound social, political and economic transformations which occurred in France, Europe and the world during this period, veteran discourse has remained largely unchanged whether journalists were writing in the immediate aftermath of the Great War or later, whether they were well-known figures in the veteran community or unknown contributors, whether they wrote for a local association in northern France or for a national newspaper with a readership of hundreds of thousands, whether they actually participated in World War One and wrote from personal experience or were veterans of a later conflict. In order to reiterate the empirical observation of this thesis, the invariability of veteran discourse, this conclusion commences with a short summary of each chapter. It then emphasises the reason for the occurrence of this phenomenon (the notion of 'layers' of memory) and reiterates the two explanations put forward in explanation, demonstrating the importance of the discovery and its implications for scholarship. It ends with some comments regarding the future of veteran 'memory' and discourse.

Part I provided the context for discussion of veteran mobilisation of the dead by illustrating the interwoven nature of the veteran-war dead relationship through the key topics of identity, memory and commemoration. The rapport between veterans and the fallen is dependent upon these three phenomena: it is the unique bonds which bind war participants together (whether they survived or not) which initially engenders mobilisation of the war dead; the most important reason for mobilising the dead is to memorialise their sacrifice; and these desires are enacted during commemoration.

As argued in Chapter Two, fallen soldiers form an integral part of the veteran 'identity' because veterans' groups exist in large part to perpetuate the memory of war and its victims. Regardless of their associative affiliations - and despite the differences between the generations of fire - the journalists and leaders whose discourse has been considered in this thesis all confess to the powerful bonds which join them to the dead. For the *anciens combattants*, this connection obliges them to remember (or more exactly, memorialise) the dead, an activity which constitutes the veterans' twofold *devoir de mémoire*: to ensure that the war dead are not forgotten and that their sacrifice is venerated.

The increasing pervasiveness of memory studies in the academic and popular realms, considered in Chapter Three, has encouraged French *anciens combattants* to participate in the trend. Especially during the last couple of decades, veteran-intellectuals have embraced the terminology of memory, and have on occasion even contributed to developing the discourse surrounding the issue. Despite only recently engaging with 'memory' as a theoretical rather than a practical term, the veteran community has been preoccupied with the necessity of remembering/memorialising war and the fallen since the aftermath of World War One. The major weakness of the *anciens combattants*' theoretical consideration of 'memory' is their failure to recognise the difference between memory and myth, a distinction made clear in this thesis by the notion of 'layers' of real, imagined and mythologised memory.

The most obvious manifestation of the veterans' long-held belief in the necessity of memorialising warfare was the campaign they carried out in the early 1920s to institute *11 novembre* as an official public holiday. Chapter Four showed that despite attributing numerous meanings to Armistice Day, the veterans have primarily associated the date with the fallen, even using them to underscore other elements of the commemoration. As participating in displays of remembrance such as Armistice Day constitutes the most visible manifestation of the veterans' *devoir de mémoire* towards their fallen comrades, veteran-activists incessantly encourage -

demand, even - that members of their community and the wider public attend such services. Ideally, participants and spectators should also absorb the messages of the ceremony, and in particular take the opportunity to commune with the dead.

Armistice Day therefore provides people with a unique occasion to connect with the fallen. Part II considered the primary means by which veterans facilitate this interaction: the enactment of rituals and the use of spaces associated with the war dead. Chapter Five focused on the *11 novembre* rituals, which in creating moments of living-dead communion were of fundamental importance to veterans attempting to come to terms with the mass death of World War One. The importance of these customs has not diminished with time; in fact, veterans of later wars consciously adopted the practices of their forebears as a means of externalising their own trauma. Veteran discourse clarifies not only how specific practices and symbols such as the procession, the minute of silence, the wreath-laying service and the Eternal Flame are intended to generate connection with the fallen, but also how such ritual activity allows the *anciens combattants* to evoke the war dead for their specific purposes.

Chapter Six demonstrated that veterans are also aware that certain spaces allow for communion with the dead via their implicit or explicit connection to the fallen (battlefields versus constructed monuments and cemeteries). It is however surprising that, while the veterans acknowledge the potency of such spaces in terms of mobilising the dead, there is little mention of the messages embedded in them. The inscriptions and sculptures of war memorials for example, which range from patriotic to pacifist, often reflect the sentiments of the *anciens combattants* and could have been capitalised upon to support the causes for which the veterans call upon the dead.

By virtue of their unique position as former participants in war (interpreted and promoted by the veterans as a moral and civic duty to defend and champion France's values and interests), the veterans consider themselves more in tune with

issues relating to the nation than other citizens. For this reason, they mobilise the dead - primarily through reference to either the positive notions of 'sacrifice' and 'dying for' or their more accusatory counterparts 'dying in vain' and 'blood debt' - to promote or defend a certain vision of post-war society. Veteran-activists so fervently mobilise the dead to promote their visions of a better France because lives were wasted if the 'justification' for soldier death fails. Part III highlighted the four primary issues which prompt veterans to mobilise the dead: to express disillusionment with contemporary policy or attitudes; to promote the three key value systems of republicanism, patriotism and civic responsibility; to call for unity at the veteran, national and supra-national levels; and to campaign for peace.

While the *anciens combattants* do not hesitate to demonstrate their discontent with contemporary society, they more often mobilise the dead to encourage rather than to criticise. In terms of motivating the French people - especially youth - to live out the values of republicanism, patriotism and civic responsibility, Chapter Seven showed that the veterans mobilise the image of the soldier-citizen, sacred in France and inherent to the nation's memory since the *levée en masse* of the revolutionary wars. The appellation encompasses living soldiers, but it is the sacrifice of the dead which exemplifies this potent combination of moral merit and devotion to the state. In this way, the dead are positioned as embodiments of France's purest civic virtues whom survivors should aspire to emulate.

Chapter Eight dealt with unity, a notion crucial to *anciens combattants* throughout the decades since 1918. While the war dead are mobilised implicitly in veteran appeals for unity because they are central to the ideal of camaraderie upon which *ancien combattant* conceptions of 'unity' are founded, explicit mention of the war dead serves to add moral, historical and emotional force to such appeals. Despite the fact that the treasured solidarity of the 'veterans' community' is in actuality a myth (the veterans have only ever acted en masse to defend France or their financial situation at key moments of crisis), the notion is fundamental to veteran self-perception. The concept is important for veterans because it helps them come to

terms with their past trauma, but also to use this energy to better society. Additionally, unity among the veteran ranks is believed to provide an example for unity on a national and supra-national scale.

The veterans' desire for unity beyond borders is one expression of their abiding wish for peace, the theme of Chapter Nine. While few veterans have considered exactly what 'peace' entails, the most fundamental definition of peace as an absence of war has remained constant across generations of fire. Veterans unfailingly refer to the dead when remembering war for two reasons: firstly, because a return to warfare would constitute the worst betrayal of the sacrifice of the fallen; and secondly, because advocating peace (and working against future conflict) constitutes the greatest testament to veteran ability to face their trauma and put it to positive use.

This thesis has demonstrated that veterans 'mobilise' the war dead in relation to Armistice Day and that the same modes and justifications for this action have been used over ninety years. Given the huge political, social and economic changes which have occurred during this period, and especially given the vastly diverse experiences of the different 'generations of fire,' this finding is astonishing. This thesis has responded to the question as to why such a phenomenon has occurred with the idea of 'layers' of memory. It posits that the act of sharing and exchanging real memories after 1918 produced a homogenous narrative of the Great War experience which was ingrained in associative space and disseminated to the veteran community through imagined, and later mythologised, memory. So firmly embedded was this World War One 'memory' that, had they so desired, veterans of later wars would have found it difficult to alter the narrative or its language. Yet, while some of the associations founded specifically for veterans of these later wars tried to emphasise the differences between the Great War and 'their' conflicts, it seems that veterans who joined pre-existing groups such as the A.G.M.G., the A.R.A.C., the U.F. or the U.N.C. did not wish to assert the characteristics distinctive

to their generation of fire, instead embracing - and espousing - the ‘memory’ of their forebears.

This study has posited two interrelated theories as to why an imagined memory developed after World War One and why this ‘memory’ was adopted by veterans of later wars. Firstly, veterans found ‘safety’ in its language and codes. This safety was on the one hand emotional. Veterans of the Great War found in the narrative promoted by their associations a means of coming to terms with the past. This narrative, developed to justify and help survivors deal with the very real trauma provoked by the first industrial ‘total war,’ enabled veterans of later wars to face their own traumas. Although their wars had been fought in different locations, with different tactics and weapons, against different enemies and with different agendas, the Great War discourse - and its accompanying ‘identity,’ creeds and duties - resonated with veterans of later wars. On the other hand, inserting their wars into the sacred legacy of World War One - and thus classifying themselves alongside the *poilus* - provided powerful legitimacy for participants of the morally problematic World War Two and conflicts of decolonisation. The consequence of this authority for men and women who sometimes faced strong disapproval or apathy from the state and the population cannot be overstated.

In adopting the *poilus*’ imagined memory, veterans of later wars have also taken on its creeds and responsibilities. The second explanation for the continuity of veteran discourse over the decades since 1918 is thus the reciprocal interaction between veteran ideology, practice and language. Two issues in particular have been fundamental to the veteran ‘identity’ and agenda since the development of an imagined memory soon after the Great War: unity and duty. In the case of unity, veterans lauded camaraderie as a positive consequence of an otherwise horrific ordeal, and attempted to transpose the ‘fraternity’ of the trenches into post-war society. This desire to transmit war’s lessons also resulted in the *anciens combattants*’ self-imposed duty to remember and memorialise (certain elements of) the war experience. Both these ideals were vital to attempts to come to terms with

the past, helping veterans externalise their trauma and convert it into something positive. The fact that these ideals were not only enshrined in language but also intended to be carried out in practice further explains the unchanging nature of veteran discourse. While evoking war fulfilled the veterans' moral duty, it also had practical benefits: only with knowledge of war could people recognise and respond to the veterans' unique situation. In addition, by transforming the ideal of unity into reality and acting en masse, veterans had more chance of gaining and benefiting from the recognition they sought. In other words, unity and duty had not only moral, but also tangible, advantages. The dual function of these dogmas provides a compelling reason why veterans of later wars fostered the 'memory' and discourse of the *poilus*.

The primary observation of this thesis, namely, the continuation of certain discursive patterns throughout the decades since World War One, as well as the hypotheses put forward to explain it, has empowered an original way of understanding the French veteran community. This reading was reached through combining previously little-considered sources, a unique long-term perspective, an original problematic and recent theory on 'memory.'

In terms of sources, this thesis considered articles published over the ninety years between 1919 and 2009 in five national veterans' newspapers and in newspapers from northern France. As many of these articles have not been previously studied, or considered in such a long timeframe, this study has enabled reflection on the *ancien combattant* community from a new perspective. In considering veterans in France, historians have tended to focus on a single generation of fire (for example Antoine Prost) or, more rarely, on a single organisation (for example, Sophie Delaporte), or, even more unusually, on departmental associations. This thesis has combined Prost's 'horizontal' with Delaporte's 'vertical' approach, as well as introduced examples from the Nord to balance national perspectives with regional. In addition, no historian of the *anciens combattants* has conducted an analysis with a comparable long-term timeframe. Resulting from this varied source base, this

thesis considers a larger sample group than existing scholarship, making its conclusions relating to the behaviour of the French veterans more indicative of the 'movement' as a whole.

The practicalities of including both national and regional examples, and of reading ninety years' worth of material, were made achievable by concentrating on one aspect of *ancien combattant* discourse: the veterans' mobilisation of the war dead in relation to Armistice Day. While scholars of 'war culture' have noted the importance of the dead to commemoration, and remarked on the bonds between veterans and the dead, none have so far made the interrelationship between veterans, their fallen comrades and memorialisation of war the focus of their work. Further, this thesis, very much a product of its memory-obsessed time, approached the subject of French veterans and examined the phenomenon of static discourse from a perspective which would not have been conceivable two or three decades earlier. These theoretical advances have not only altered how historians approach the sources; the sources themselves have changed as a result of the pervasiveness of 'memory' in contemporary society. The paradigm of 'memory,' combined with an awareness of their ageing population, have encouraged (a select few) veteran-writers to introduce the in-vogue language of 'memory' into their discourse, one of very few examples of variation over the ninety years. Scholars considering the veterans before the 1980s or 90s would have been privy neither to the memory theory adopted by this thesis nor to the source development.

The discovery of the fundamentally unchanging nature of veteran discourse has important implications for scholarship, particularly in the realms of veteran studies, memory studies and war culture. Firstly, given that the overriding discovery of this thesis is the near-unchanging nature of veteran discourse (and the 'memory' it relays) over ninety years, this thesis obviously reinforces many of the conclusions advanced by past scholars of the *anciens combattants*. For example, the pro-peace tendencies displayed by the majority of veterans in the interwar period which Prost so admirably brought to academic attention almost forty years ago are inherent to

veterans of *all* generations of fire. This long-term approach has therefore served to reiterate and reinforce scholars' discoveries pertaining to a specific association or a specific generation of fire. As well as building on past studies, however, the idea of an inherently unchanging veteran discursive pattern also has a second implication for scholarship on veterans: the possibility of consolidating disparate findings into an overarching pattern.

This study advances the hypothesis that veteran discourse has remained essentially unaffected by contextual particularities because of the existence of 'layers' of veteran memory. It is argued that the idea of real, imagined and mythologised memories could prove beneficial for scholars of memory studies. Firstly, by clearly delineating the processes of individualisation, socialisation and fossilisation which occur when people claim to 'remember,' the initiative proposes an alternative to the problematic 'collective memory' paradigm so widely espoused in popular and academic discourse. Secondly, it makes explicit how the passing of time results in increasing distance from the event 'remembered,' clarifying the issue of memory 'transferral' between age groups. Most importantly, the concept of mythologised memory - the adoption of a 'memory' and its accompanying 'identity' and mindset - could be usefully applied to explain the behaviour of countless other social groupings.

In finding that veterans have continued to espouse similar themes in a near-identical language throughout the ninety years since 1918, this thesis also has implications for the study of war culture. In analysing the cultural consequences of the First World War, it reinforces the findings of Jay Winter, Paul Fussell, Adrian Gregory, Annette Becker and others whose work shows that an appreciation of the legacy of 1914-1918 is needed in order to "understand Europe today."[1] Several pertinent

[1] Jay Winter in Jay Winter and Robert Wohl, 'The Great War: Midwife to modern memory?' in Jay Winter (ed.), *The legacy of the Great War: Ninety years on*, Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2009, pp. 159-184, p. 173. Paul Fussell, too, noted in the Preface to his magisterial *The Great War and modern memory* that the "dynamics and iconography" of the first global conflict influenced all areas of public life after the conflict's end. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. ix.

issues are revealed by the fact that veterans of later wars have adopted the discourse and 'memory' developed to describe the World War One experience, a few of which are outlined below.

This thesis has suggested that veterans of the Second World War and later found security in the existing veteran discourse (at least as it pertained to mobilising the fallen on Armistice Day). Firstly, by assuming their forebears' 'memory' and the language needed to express its responsibilities and creeds, these veterans could also appropriate its authority. Thus, just as the *poilus* sought legitimisation for their actions in, and declared themselves descendants of, the revolutionary armies of An II, indelibly connected to the image of the soldier-citizen and enshrined in French republican myth, particularly the second and third generations of fire sought reassurance in the example provided by soldiers of the Great War. This cycle of reliance on past models for legitimisation might suggest an inherent dissatisfaction with one own generation's experience of (conscripted) soldiering and its aftermath; in other words, a preference for myth over memory. In addition to lending legitimacy to veterans of later wars, the Great War narrative provided comfort. Veterans adopted its language patterns and dogmas because they had been developed - and proven - to help survivors externalise and come to terms with the experience of wartime engagement and death. The ability of veteran discourse to address traumas for which it was not specifically intended demonstrates its power.

It was not only the discourse relating to Armistice Day which veterans of later wars took up; it was also Armistice Day itself. The continuing celebration of *11 novembre* despite its progressive recession from contemporary reality implies that the date has been imbued with a sacredness which time and external factors have failed to erode. Rather, the rituals and spaces developed - and ever since, associated with - commemorating the fallen continue to exert a power over participants and spectators alike. Much like the continuation of veteran discourse, Armistice Day obviously still fulfils an important function. In the aftermath of World War One the commemoration provided a forum for displays of patriotic sentiment, fulfilled a

powerful social function in gathering people together, and, most importantly, enabled survivors to share their grief with the community. Today, its chief function is void; there are barely any people alive who can truly remember the victims. Yet the date continues to be commemorated and the fallen remain its pivotal element. While the fallen are obviously incorporated into ceremonial liturgy, their centrality to remembrance of war seems to represent something even greater: the undeniable power which the dead exercise over the living. Such a conclusion reinforces the unchanging nature of remembrance discourse despite the shifting functions it fulfils.

This thesis has demonstrated that although veterans are today no longer personally connected to the men who died in the World War One trenches, they are just as committed to memorialising these victims (admittedly alongside the fallen of their wars) as were the *poilus*. The perseverance of a *devoir de mémoire* to memorialise conflict victims, while explained by the continuation of a fossilised veteran discourse imparting a well-entrenched 'memory,' also suggests an ongoing affiliation with the war dead. The bonds which connect soldiers to their fallen comrades appear neither to lessen with time nor with the ever-increasing numbers of war victims. Bearing testimony to these relationships through mobilising the dead is important for survivors of any conflict, in large part because it helps them come to terms with war death.

This behaviour supports the hypothesis that veterans construct an "imagined community" of war dead; it is not the individual who is mourned but rather an anonymous, faceless and nameless mass.[2] Memorialising the collective over the personal was an element intrinsic to World War One, which as the first 'total' war involving industrialised weaponry mobilised greater numbers of conscripts - and resulted in larger numbers of dead - than ever before. Yet beyond World War One, and even for World War Two which was commemorated largely through the

[2] An individual is mourned through 'passive mobilisation' of the dead, which occurs when friends and family talk of a dead soldier (and enact real memory); 'active mobilisation' occurs when leaders and journalists of the veteran community draw on imagined or mythologised memory and refer to 'the dead' as an entity. In the language of this thesis, therefore, an individual is *remembered* whereas the mass is *memorialised*.

exploits of a few key individuals, the construction of the dead as a group, and its importance to veterans, has persisted.

This thesis ends with a meditation on the future of French veteran 'memory' and its discourse. Given the seismic changes occurring within the *ancien combattant* world at this time, such a consideration is pertinent but constitutes a foray into the unknown. The recent death of the last *poilu* has heralded the first important transformation of the community. With no remaining witness to World War One, the possibility of accessing real or imagined memory of the era has disappeared;[3] veterans - and the public - must rely on mythologised memory of the 1914-1918 years. In other words, the 'memory' espoused by today's veteran-leaders and -writers is entirely devoid of experience, or, expressed another way, relies far more on myth than memory.

The second major change affecting the veteran community is the steadily declining number of *anciens combattants*. Veterans of the fourth generation of fire will prop up the ranks, but being comprised of professional members of the armed forces rather than civilian conscripts, this group is much smaller (and much less of a 'generation') than generations one, two and three. In parallel with declining numbers of former soldiers, however, is the increasing interest and participation of state and pedagogic actors in remembrance of war.[4] Their involvement with issues

[3] Writing in 2006 with the death of France's 'last' *poilu* an imminent reality, Jean-Noël Grandhomme recognised that this death would not only herald the end of World War One memory but also the end of an era in which France was predominantly rural and Christian. Jean-Noël Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles: paroles des derniers survivants de la Grande Guerre*, Strasbourg: Editions La Nuée Bleue, 2006, p. 216.

[4] Fabrice Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation du répertoire d'action des associations d'anciens combattants et de victimes de guerre. Des mutations pilotées par les représentants de l'Etat,' in N. Dahan et E. Grossman (eds.), *Les groupes d'intérêt au XXIe siècle: Renouveau, croissance et démocratie. Colloque du Cevipof les 24 et 25 septembre 2004*, Paris: IEP Paris, 2004, p. 19. Prost and Winter have also pointed out the role of historians and politicians in remembering conflict. Antoine Prost and Jay Winter, *Penser la Grande Guerre: un essai d'historiographie*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004, p. 235. The O.N.A.C. is granted €225 000 annually to spend on memorialising. Minisère de la Defense et des Anciens Combattants, <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/sga/le-sga-en-action/memoire-et-patrimoine/memoire/actions-pedagogiques-et-lien-armee-societe/actions-pedagogiques-et-lien-armee-societe> accessed 10 January 2011.

of memorialisation is drastically changing the identity of the *monde combattant*.[5] One serious consequence of this developing identity is the Great War's recession even further into the realm of myth: people who have never been in the armed forces cannot even transmit mythologised memory of World War One as understood by combatants of later wars but only mythologised memory as understood by non-combatants.[6]

Nonetheless, while the numbers of *anciens combattants* are diminishing and the group's physiognomy is changing, their activism has not waned. In fact, in terms of the memorialising enterprise, veterans are today more engaged than they have been in the past, partly because 'memory' is so in vogue and partly because they realise what is at stake as the Great War recedes further from contemporary reality (and into myth, although this aspect has not been recognised). "The *monde combattant* has not disappeared," claimed an A.G.M.G. journalist bravely in 2002, a mere two years before his association was disbanded due to declining membership. The writer defined the role of veterans over the next twenty years as "establishing a real link with the upcoming generations," and advocated "adapting our language and our behaviour to go and meet them […] while continuing to contribute to a better world."[7] It would seem that herein lies the crux of the problem: while efforts are being made to modernise the *ancien combattant* outlook and image, this thesis has demonstrated not only that veteran language has remained little changed over the nine decades since World War One, but also that any attempt to alter this language would likely prove unsuccessful given the veterans' deeply-entrenched 'memory.'

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[5] Hamelin saw this development as proof of the community potential for adjustment. Hamelin, 'Vers une normalisation,' p. 23. It appears, however, more a situation of accepting change or perishing.

[6] Just as memory is malleable, so too is identity. Pablo Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology: Themes and issues,' *Time and Society*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2001, pp. 29-44, p. 33. The appointment of a civilian to the position of Veterans' Minister is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of the propagation of a non-combatant mythologised memory of World War One. For comments expressing surprise at the ability of the newly-appointed (civilian) Veterans' Minister Jacque Floch to relate to the *anciens combattants*, see Mary-Ange Niederl-Brissaud, 'Je cherche le consensus…' *La Voix du Combattant*, no. 1669, novembre 2001, p. 8.

[7] Jacques Goujat, 'Le rôle des associations d'anciens combattants dans notre société: la véritable image du monde combattant et sa modernité,' *Mutilé-Combattant et toutes victimes de guerre. Organe de l'Association générale des mutilés de la guerre et de l'Union nationale des mutilés, réformés et anciens combattants*, no. 666, juillet-août-septembre 2002, pp. 9-10, p. 10.

Indeed, the continued employment of language and imagery invented to describe the Great War experience is one key manifestation of its continuing influence on contemporary culture.[8]

Language is the primary medium for transmission of memory, claimed one sociologist.[9] If the same 'memory' is being passed on - as is the case with the *anciens combattants*' 'memory' of World War One as expressed via the mobilisation of the dead on Armistice Day - then it would appear logical that the same language is needed to continue expressing this memory. The very real problem facing the veteran community is thus its inability to reach out to members of the French public, and particularly the youth, largely by virtue of its archaic (and perhaps overly moralistic) language.

There is an inherent paradox here: how are the veterans to perpetuate the memory which they see as their duty - and which requires them to mobilise a distinct rhetoric - yet also forge relationships with young people who have grown up in a digital era which revolves around a vastly different terminology of computer jargon, text messaging, the influence of English, and other novel modes? The fact that today's generation, for the most part removed from the actualities of war, is not wholly capable of comprehending the notion of 'sacrifice' around which war discourse revolves[10] provides a supplementary problem. As the Great War recedes ever-further into the past and people become progressively more removed from its reality, the veterans' duty to memorialise the experience becomes, paradoxically, both increasingly urgent and increasingly difficult. The veterans are faced with the seemingly irreconcilable problem of looking to the past whilst trying to reach forward and connect with France's young people. To frame this dilemma in terms of language: the discourse within which the World War One 'memory' is embedded becomes more important and sacred as a means of transmitting the past, yet

[8] For an account of the survival of terminology and iconography of the Great War, see Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory*.
[9] Jedlowski, 'Memory and sociology,' p. 31.
[10] Adrian Gregory, *The silence of memory: Armistice Day 1919-1946*, Oxford; Providence, R.I.: Berg, 1994, p. 227.

progressively less comprehensible to those it seeks to educate. It is the seemingly irreconcilable dilemma between memory and its language which faces *ancien combattant* memorialists today, and no solution seems imminent.

National veteran newspapers

Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre (A.G.M.G.)

janvier 1916 - décembre 1930
Bulletin de l'Association Nationale des Mutiles de la Guerre. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide

janvier 1931 - décembre 1948
Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides de Guerre, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants. Office de Renseignements et d'Entr'Aide

janvier-février 1949 - août-décembre 1949
Bulletin de l'A.G.M.G. Invalides des Guerres, Veuves, Orphelins, Ascendants et Anciens Combattants

janvier-février 1950 - février 1957
Mutilé-combattant. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre, Anciens Combattants, et toutes Victimes de Guerre

mars 1957 - janvier-février 1974
Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et A.C. et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés A.C. (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)

mars 1974 - mars-avril 1976
Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (A.G.M.G. et U.N.M.R.A.C. réunies)

mai-juin-juillet 1976 - janvier-février-mars 1984
Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (A.G.M.G.-U.N.M.R.A.C. et A.F.N.)

avril-mai-juin 1984 - octobre-novembre-décembre 1988
Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, 39/45, T.O.E., A.F.N.)

janvier-février 1989 - janvier-février 1992
Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)

mars-avril 1992 - 2004
Mutilé-combattant et toutes Victimes de Guerre. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre et de l'Union Nationale des Mutilés, Réformés et Anciens Combattants (14/18, T.O.E., 39/45, Indo., A.F.N.)

Association républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre (A.R.A.C.)

octobre 1919 - août 1920
Le Combattant. Organe d'action et de défense des victimes de guerre

1920 - 1923
L'Ancien Combattant anti-guerrier

1923 - janvier 1924
L'A.R.A.C.

janvier 1924 - juillet 1926
L'Anti-guerrier

juillet 1926 - juin 1927
Le Combattant

1927 - 1930
Le Feu. Organe de l'Association républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre

janvier 1931 - décembre 1931
Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats (I. A. C.). Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824

janvier 1932 - 16 octobre au 10 novembre 1938
Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I. A. C. Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824

11 novembre au 10 décembre 1938 - [at least] septembre 1939

Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants

[uncertain] - décembre 1982
Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre

janvier 1983 - décembre 1993
Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre

janvier 1994 - janvier 2008
Le Réveil des Combattants. Mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre (A.R.A.C.)

2008 - présent
Le Réveil des Combattants

[at least] octobre 1946 - [at least] octobre 1970
Bulletin d'information. Edité par l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de guerre. Supplément au Réveil des Combattants

1964 - [at least] octobre 1972
Les Nouvelles du Réveil. Supplément du Réveil des Combattants

1975 - présent
Les Cahiers Henri Barbusse

Journal des Combattants

6 May 1916 - 1924
Journal des mutilés, réformés et blessés de guerre

1924 - [uncertain]
Le Journal des Combattants

octobre 1945 - décembre 1957
Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres, mutilés, invalides, blessés et malades, veuves, orphelins, ascendants, victimes civiles, sinistrés, combattants de 14-18, de 39-45 et de la Résistance, prisonniers

janvier 1958 - présent

Le Journal des Combattants et de toutes les victimes des guerres. Hebdomadaire indépendant fondé en 1916 par André Linville

Union Fédérale des Combattants (U.F.)

mai 1916 - [uncertain]
Journal des mutilés, réformés et blessés de guerre

octobre 1918 - [at least] 26 août 1922
Après la bataille. Bulletin officiel hebdomadaire de l'Union Fédérale des Associations françaises de Mutilés, Réformés, Blessés et Anciens Combattants de la Grande Guerre, de leurs Veuves, Orphelins et Ascendants

17 octobre 1920 - décembre 1920
Bulletin de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises de Blessés, Mutilés, Réformés, Anciens Combattants de la Grande Guerre et de leurs Veuves, Orphelins et Ascendants

5 décembre 1920 - 26 septembre 1926
La France mutilée. Bulletin de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises de Blessés, Mutilés, Réformés, Anciens Combattants de la Grande Guerre et de leurs Veuves, Orphelins et Ascendants

2 octobre 1926 - [uncertain]
Journal des mutilés et réformés. La France mutilée

15 novembre 1931 - 15 décembre 1934
Les Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Association Françaises d'Anciens Combattants et de Victimes de la Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale

1 janvier 1935 - 25 juillet 1939
Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Combattants

novembre 1935 - juin 1939
Notre France. Union Fédérale, combattants et victimes de la guerre - jeunesses

septembre 1939 - juin 1940
Les Heures de la guerre. Journal de Combattants pour tous les Français

[uncertain] - mai-juin-juillet 1952
Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises des Combattants et Victimes des deux Guerres et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale

août-septembre 1952 - décembre 1994
Cahiers de l'Union Fédérale des Associations Françaises d'Anciens Combattants, de Victimes de Guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale

1er bimestre 1995 - 4e bimestre 1995
Cahiers. Journal de l'Union Fédérale

septembre 1995 - novembre-décembre 2002
Cahier-Journal de l'Union Fédérale des associations françaises d'anciens combattants et victimes de guerre

janvier-février 2003 - présent
Cahier-Journal de l'Union Fédérale des associations françaises d'anciens combattants, victimes de guerre et des Jeunesses de l'Union Fédérale

avril 1948 - [uncertain]
Journal de l'Union Fédérale des Associations d'Anciens Combattants, Victimes des deux Guerres et Groupes de Jeunes (Région Parisienne)

janvier 1931 - [uncertain]
Le Front. Journal de l'Union des mutilés et anciens combattants de la région du Nord. Journal mensuel réservé aux membres de l'Union

Union Nationale des Combattants (U.N.C.)

13 juillet 1919 - 1933
La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants

1933 - samedi 1 février 1936
La Voix du Combattant. Organe hebdomadaire de l'Union Nationale des Combattants

vendredi 1 février 1935 - [at least] lundi 1 juillet 1935
L'Action combattante

samedi 8 février 1936 - [at least] samedi 8 juin 1940
La Voix du Combattant et de la Jeunesse. Organe hebdomadaire de l'Union Nationale des Combattants

[uncertain] - 1952
La Voix du Combattant

1952 - décembre 1957
La Voix du Combattant des guerres 1915-1918, 1939-1945 et des T.O.E.

5 janvier 1958 - mars 1976

La Voix du Combattant: Toutes les générations du feu

avril 1976 - octobre 1992
La Voix du Combattant/La Voix du Djebel-Flamme

novembre 1992 - présent
La Voix du Combattant

Regional veteran newspapers

L'Ancien Combattant du Nord
[organ of U.N.C. du Nord]

Le Combattant du Pas-de-Calais et du Nord. Journal trimestriel de la Fédération départementale de l'Union Fédérale des A.C., de Résistants, de Victimes de Guerre (Mutilés - P.G. - Déportés - Orphelins - Veuves - Ascendants)
[departmental journal of the Union Fédérale]

Le Mutilé de Cambrésis

Le Mutilé du Hainaut. Organe de l'Union des Mutilés et Reformés de Valenciennes et Environs

Le Patriote de Flandres

Le Mutilé de Flandres. Organe mensuel des Mutilés et Réformés de l'arrondissement de Dunkerque

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Anon., 'L'ossuaire de Douaumont,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 160, avril 2006, p. 4

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Appendix I
Translation and language

Translation difficulties are an integral part of working with multiple languages, and translating from French into English is no exception. In recognition of the complexities involved in translation, this Appendix highlights some of the difficulties encountered by the author/translator of this thesis when translating veterans' writing from French into English. It then provides some information relating to the discrepancies in meaning between the English and French words for 'Armistice Day,' 'war memorial' and 'veteran,' which demand comment given their centrality to the thesis.

According to Henri Meschonnic, author of a seminal French-language work on *traductologie* (the study of translation), translation is an act of interpretation.[1] Two factors come into play in this instance: the tastes of the translator and the lapse of time between the publication of the original text and its translation.[2] Presumably the context in which a translator operates also bears upon his work. As well as constituting an act of interpretation, Meschonnic also considered translation an act of "collective amnesia" because, as few people see the text in its original form, the translated version is absorbed as truth despite the manipulation it has undergone.[3] Meschonnic's interpretation is apt, and particularly pertinent given the centrality of 'memory' to this thesis.

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[1] Henri Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, Lagrasse: Verdier, 1999, p. 21. There are four key forms of translation, according to Meschonnic: suppression or omission of words; additional words; displaced words; and, "non-concordance" (when the same meaning can be translated with many words) and "counter-concordance" (when multiple meanings are contained within a single word). The discrepancies between the original and translated language mean that it is often impossible to translate an original text word-for-word (pp. 27-28).
[2] Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, pp. 30 and 19.
[3] Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, pp. 17-19.

Cultural specificities create issues for translators,[4] and the 'culture' of the French veterans - in other words, the 'memory' that has been passed down through the generations of fire - posed challenges for the author/translator. In particular, three factors inherent to veteran discourse made for problematic translation. Firstly, the fact that veterans of later wars have adopted the discourse of their forebears means that the style and tone of much veteran writing is old-fashioned and often out-dated. Secondly, veterans have produced articles since the end of World War One with the express purpose of propagating, and instructing others about, the war experience. Given that the rationale behind veteran writing is memorialisation of war and especially its victims - a duty so important that it is considered fundamental to the *ancien combattant* 'identity' - their writing tends towards the verbose and the oratory in order to evoke an emotive reaction from the readership and drive the article's message home. The highly repetitive nature of veteran discourse, also designed to reiterate the moral embedded in the text, constituted the third issue facing the author/translator; just how many examples of reiteration were necessary to demonstrate the pattern?

The language and style combine to make veteran writing awkward and stilted, even in the original French. In order to better judge how to translate *ancien combattant* discourse, the translator read through English-language veteran articles from across the decades, which (interestingly but not surprisingly) also employ a grandiose, somewhat old-fashioned language. This basis of comparison gave her an idea of how to structure her translated texts.

In creating the final translation, a decision was made on a case-by-case basis whether to closely translate the French and maintain the slightly uneasy wording, or adopt a more liberal translation which made the English passage easier to 'digest' but was less faithful to the original document. Mostly, a combination of the two options was decided upon. The difficulty can be demonstrated with one example: the oft-used first person plural form (as in "*Souvenons-nous*") rousing veterans to

[4] Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, p. 11.

action en masse. This phrase could have been translated as either "Let us remember" or "Let's remember." The first translation is overly formal in English; however despite its more common employment and its successful demonstration of the oratory qualities of veteran writing, the latter translation loses the element of formality on which veteran discourse is so dependent. After much deliberation, therefore, in this case the translator opted for "Let us." Hopefully, the end result captures the style and tone of the original text while allowing the thesis to flow.

The Appendix now provides more information regarding the differences in meaning between '*11 novembre*' and 'Armistice Day,' '*ancien combattant*' and 'veteran,' and '*monument aux morts*' and 'war memorial.'

11 novembre

This thesis considers *ancien combattant* discourse which mobilises the fallen in relation to the annual commemoration of 11 November 1918. On this day, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the Armistice which officially ended the First World War was signed at Compiègne. In English-speaking countries, this day is known as 'Armistice Day,' alluding specifically to the document which announced the end of the hostilities. In France, however, the commemoration is known as *11 novembre* which literally means 'the eleventh of November.' The words '*11 novembre*' refer to the date of 11 November as well as the commemoration. In avoiding reference to the Armistice, and the implications of victory and defeat, the meaning of *11 novembre* is much more ambiguous and malleable than that of 'Armistice Day.'

Ancien combattant

Literally, '*ancien combattant*' means 'former combatant,' and yet is equated with the English terms 'veteran' or 'ex-serviceman.' These words carry a slight but noteworthy difference in meaning. In the English language, the term 'veteran' refers to "someone who has served in the armed forces of their country, especially during

a war."[5] In comparison, the label 'former combatant' is less restrictive, in theory more easily allowing for the inclusion of men and women who did not "serve in the armed forces" but still fought for their country.

Another important language issue is grammar. In French, '*ancien combattant*' is both a noun (*l'ancien combattant* = the veteran) and an adjective. In certain cases, the English translation of the adjectival use of '*ancien combattant*' produces a similar meaning to the original French. For example, the expression 'the veteran mentality' is a loyal translation of '*la mentalité ancien combattant*,' maintaining the original words and implications. Occasionally, however, the exact sense of the adjective cannot be directly translated. The literal translation of the widely-propagated French expression '*le mouvement (ancien) combattant*' is 'the veteran movement,' which sounds wrong in English. Changing the phrase to include the possessive produces the more aesthetically-pleasing 'the veterans' movement;' however, the sense has been subtly changed.

Monuments aux morts

Another term to contemplate is why the '*monuments aux morts*' (in French literally, 'monuments to the dead') are called 'war memorials' in English. Ken Inglis, in his highly instructive essay on war memorials and history, suggested two reasons for this difference.[6] The first is that, while monuments in France were erected in honour of the war dead, memorials in English-speaking countries also honoured surviving combatants. A plausible explanation for this discrepancy may be that the French army was composed largely of conscripts, called up by the state to fulfil their civic duty. Other national armies were composed of both conscripts and volunteers, or purely volunteers. The courage and community-mindedness of such action was worthy of honour.

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[5] *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1987, p. 1622.
[6] K. S. Inglis, 'War memorials: Ten questions for historians,' *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains*, no. 167, 'Les monuments aux morts de la Première guerre mondiale,' 1992, pp. 5-21, p. 10.

The second explanation is also terminology-based. For the governments of English-speaking countries, the issue of monumentality versus utility in the construction of war memorials was significant. Should money be spent in building a purely symbolic object of tribute, or would it be better to erect or extend a community building? Given the utilitarian approach adopted by countries such as the United States, the word 'monument' proved too restrictive. On the other hand, such debates were unknown in France, which considered the sacrifice of her *enfants* worthy of the money.[7]

[7] Inglis, 'War memorials,' p. 10; Annette Becker, 'Les monuments aux morts: des œuvres d'art au service du souvenir,' *Les Chemins de la Mémoire*, no. 144, novembre 2004, pp. 7-10, p. 8.

Appendix II

Poetry

In translating veteran poetry, the author/translator opted, as best as possible, to preserve three elements: the flow, rhyme and meaning of the text.[8] In order to accomplish this aim, the poetry was not translated line-by-line but rather as an overall verse, and certain words were replaced with synonyms. The original poems, and their translations, are cited below.

Chapter Four

Original

Que devons-nous aux Morts? Rendre leur mort féconde,
Et, pour qu'il n'en soit pas d'oubliés en ce monde
Grouper chacun les noms dont nous nous souvenons
Et ne pas vivre un jour sans réciter ces noms![9]

Translation

What do we owe the Dead? Enrich their deaths, we should,
So that they not be forgotten in this world:
The names he remembers, each person should write
And each day that he lives, these names should recite!

Chapter Five

Original

La mort touche nos rangs en terrible cadence
Notre devoir est fait! A nos Fils les Drapeaux!
A eux d'en assurer la garde, la défense,
Quand les derniers Poilus passeront les Flambeaux![10]

Translation

At a terrible rate, death touches our ranks
Our duty is done! Give the Flags to our Sons!

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[8] It is a commonly-held belief that translating poetry is more difficult than translating prose. Henri Meschonnic, *Poétique du traduire*, Lagrasse: Verdier, 1999, p. 29.

[9] Edmond Rostand, in Henri Becquart, 'Fêtons le 11 novembre,' *L'Ancien Combattant du Nord*, no. 64, novembre 1926, p. 2.

[10] Henri Soupa (Montauban), 'Onze novembre 1918,' *Mutilé-combattant. Organe de l'Association Générale des Mutilés de la Guerre, Anciens Combattants, et toutes Victimes de Guerre*, no. 321, octobre 1955, p. 1.

When the last *Poilus* will pass on the guard, the defence,
It's their turn to take up flame that still burns.

Chapter Six

Original
Ardennerwald, Ardennerwald
Ein stiller Friedhof wirdst du bald
In deiner tiefen Erde ruht
So manches tapferes Soldatenblut.[11]

Translation
Wood of the Ardennes, Wood of the Ardennes,
You will soon be a quiet cemetery
In your deep earth lies
The blood of brave soldiers.

Original
Quand ils reviendront de la grande guerre
Avec la musette à leurs flancs poudreux
Quand ils surgiront de dessous la terre
Le grand ciel sera trop petit pour eux.[12]

Translation
When they return from the great war,
Haversacks at their powdery sides;
When they will arise from beneath the earth,
The great sky will be too small for their size.

Original
Les morts ne sont pas ceux dont le corps froid et nu
Repose sur le sol : leur âme, inviolée
Tresse à l'Arc de Triomphe une couronne ailée,
Et la flamme veille auprès du Soldat Inconnu.[13]

Translation
The dead are not those whose cold, naked bodies
Lie on the ground. Their perfect souls
Weave a winged crown at the Arc de Triomphe
And the flame watches over the Unknown Soldier.

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[11] Léon Nonnenmacher (99 ans), 6 et 12 février 1995, in Jean-Noël Grandhomme, *Ultimes sentinelles: paroles des derniers survivants de la Grande Guerre*, Strasbourg: Editions La Nuée Bleue, 2006, p. 68.
[12] Pierre Paraf, 'Quand ils reviendront,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe mensuel de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre*, novembre 1970, nouvelle série., no. 301, p. 15.
[13] André Lamandé, 'Anniversaire,' *La Voix du Combattant. Organe officiel de l'Union Nationale des Combattants*, 6e année, no. 275, samedi 8 novembre 1924, p. 1.

Original

Au milieu du froid cimetière
Ou sur les places aux jeux bruyants
Ainsi qu'une idole de pierre
Il se dresse, le Monument!

[…]

Il arbore, hochets de gloire
Médailles, crois, lauriers sculptés,
Pour s'efforcer de faire croire
Que ces morts sont récompensés.

Et parmi les hochets il ouvre
Un livre aux funèbres feuillets
Qu'une liste de noms recouvre
Comme d'un barbare couplet.[14]

Translation

In the middle of a cold cemetery
Or where noisy games are played,
A stone worthy of idolatry -
The monument - is placed.

[…]

Displaying symbols of exaltation -
A sculpted laurel, medal or cross -
It endeavours to make us have faith in
The belief they have been recompensed.

And among the symbols you find
A book filled with funerary words.
The names, line after line,
Are like those of a barbarous verse.

[14] Germaine Sillon (de la F.O.P.C. Tours), 'Le monument,' *Le Réveil des Combattants. Organe de l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants, Victimes de la guerre et Anciens Soldats et Marins I.A.C.* Inscrite au *Journal Officiel* du 30 septembre 1922, no. 157 637, p. 9824, 3e année, no. 34, octobre 1933, p. 1.