

# The Material Culture of Remembrance and Identity:

South Africa, India, Canada & Australia's  
Imperial War Graves Commission Sites  
on the First World War's Western Front



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Exeter College

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
History Faculty, University of Oxford  
Hilary Term (April) 2019



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This thesis examines the relationship between material culture, war memory, and identity for South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia in the First World War's aftermath 1918-1938. Their material culture of commemoration on the battlefields fell under the Imperial War Graves Commission's remit; this complicated the decision-making processes for these sites, and caused them to serve as stages upon which relationships between national, imperial, collective, and individual identities were negotiated and performed in stone. Using five memorials in France and Belgium as case studies and also incorporating cemeteries, this thesis is a transnational, comparative, and interdisciplinary work. It advances new evidence for the spatial and conceptual relationships that existed between landscape, memorial, cemetery, the dead, and the living in imperial remembrance contexts, and uses representative engagements – objects, events, and decisions – to demonstrate how the articulation of identities was embedded in and navigated through them. The chapters interrogate the relationships between place, object, people, and distance, through the lens of absence and presence. They argue that links between landscape, material culture, and the dead created reciprocally conferred meanings; that memorials and cemeteries for India and the Dominions were objects with agency; and that connection across distance was crucial in how these places functioned as sites of identity. The material culture of remembrance is increasingly at the heart of First World War memory; as living memory has faded, it is the tangible remains – artefacts, memorials, and cemeteries – that we ask to tell us stories about our countries, our predecessors, and ourselves. Today, their contemporary relevance is prominently recognised in the public consciousness and media. It is critical that we have an understanding of these sites' significance to the people who derived meaning from them at the time of their creation.



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In the First World War's aftermath, every country involved was facing an important question: *what shall we do with our war dead? And what will this say about us to the world?* For the dominions and colonies of the British empire, this choice had been made for them; they were bound by the non-repatriation policy adopted by the British government. Some countries, like America, allowed the bodies of their war dead to be brought home for burial, while others, including Britain and by extension its empire, created a diaspora of their dead. Bodies would be buried near where they fell, not returned home, and Britain's Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC) would be responsible for the material culture of their commemoration – including for those whose bodies were never found. During the twenty-year interwar period that followed (1918-1938), as memorials and cemeteries for their dead were constructed on the former battlefields of France and Belgium, South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia all navigated the complex intersections of identity, distance, agency, and decision-making posed by the creation of these sites.

This thesis advances new evidence for the spatial and conceptual relationships between landscape, memorial, cemetery, the dead, and the living in imperial remembrance contexts, by using 'representative engagements' to demonstrate how the articulation of identities was embedded in and navigated through these connections. These are defined as illustrative examples that may be utilised to achieve greater understanding about broader phenomena, and take three forms in this thesis: objects (memorials, headstones, grave markers, flowers, ashes, seeds, replicas, models, commemorative medals, publications, photographs); events (unveilings, pilgrimages, radio broadcasts, ceremonies); and decision-

making (about construction materials, designs, locations, labour, finances, repatriation policy, names distribution, ownership, epitaphs, inscriptions).

The thesis is a multisite transnational and comparative analysis drawing upon perspectives from not only global and imperial history but also, most notably, anthropology, geography, memory studies, archaeology, heritage and tourism studies, and visual and material culture theory. Five memorials in France and Belgium, considered alongside cemeteries, are used as case studies to illuminate the relationship between material culture, war memory, and identity for four countries in the then British Empire. This thesis highlights the synergies that existed between memorials and cemeteries – to date these have gone too unrecognised as scholars have tended to treat them as separate commemorative phenomena. It draws upon primary sources located in six countries: archival material from six archives in four countries, and IWGC sites in France and Belgium. This thesis takes a material-culture-centred methodological approach in which the memorials and cemeteries in question are themselves treated as primary sources.

The central contention of this thesis is that beyond being sites of memory and sites of mourning, the memorials and cemeteries representing South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia on the First World War's Western Front also function as sites of identity. They are perennial testaments to those who died, those who missed them, and the emerging nations who lost them. Between 1918 and 1938, the processes through which the living understood and articulated their place in the world with relation to the dead were unstable, due to shifts and uncertainties in the presence or absence of the dead and their bodies. IWGC sites were expressive and emotive locations confronting and articulating this instability; they significantly impacted the relationships between the living and the dead by acting as intersections between national and imperial identities, where these manifested, overlapped, and were negotiated on both individual and collective levels through material culture.

The manifold relationships between absence and presence in relation to the material culture of imperial First World War commemoration is a lens for enquiry deployed throughout the thesis. The ‘absent dead’ were at the heart of the British Empire’s material culture of remembrance, and the nature of these absences – including missing bodies, non-identification, illicit exhumations, cremations, and distant grief – positioned them as a nexus of identities for the Dominions and India. The six types of absence identified and explored throughout the thesis are the missing dead, the unidentified dead, imagined absence, illicit exhumation, cremation, and absence created by distance. It is important to distinguish between these types of absence because each created unique conditions for the intersections and expressions of different types of identity, due to differing triangulations between place, body, name, and mourner; because the six are not mutually exclusive categories; because the latter four are generally underexamined due to the widely-cast shadow of the former two; and because they have a shared function as serving as nexuses of identity, yet despite this commonality have not received sufficient critical attention as a set.

The different types of identity this work engages with are not positioned as dichotomies, but as nested layers; they not only have complex relationships with their ‘opposite’ but are also affected by their intersections with each other. Two of the most significant sets of identity layers that this thesis engages with are national-imperial and individual-collective. ‘National’ and ‘imperial’ identities were not mutually exclusive expressions at the sites in question; they co-existed, both in terms of ‘national’ and ‘imperial’ symbolism and inscriptions being present, and in terms of the explicit nationalism of some of the monuments still being framed within, and sometimes constrained by, the wider umbrella of the Imperial War Graves Commission. Meanwhile, the relationship between ‘individual’ and ‘collective’ identities has three key permutations in this thesis: in stone (the dead), in decision-making (the living), and in the archival source base drawn upon. Through all three

of these manifestations of the relationship between individual and collective identity, this thesis works to both find and amplify the individual while firmly contextualising them within the presence of generally more powerful collectives.

This thesis is an explicitly emotional rather than political history. It is not arguing for an emotional *as opposed to* political history; the historical circumstances examined in this project are steeped in politics, and the political grounding of the circumstances explored is undeniable. However, also undeniable is the emotional side of this historical narrative, and as it is relatively underexamined in comparison to its political counterpart, this thesis predominantly aims to shed light on the former. The social context of the material culture analysed in this thesis is mass death, mass grief, and mass heartbreak, which was made no less painful by the collectiveness of its postwar pervasion. To attempt to write about this clinically would be a betrayal and disservice not only to the war's dead, but to its living – who are now dead too. Emotion is central to the creation of all material culture, and when the material culture in question is commemoration of the dead, this importance is magnified. Objects are promises; when they are focal points for the relationships between the living and the dead, understanding what is being promised, to whom, and by whom inexorably involves emotion.

The interwar battlefield landscape created a world stage for the interplay of identity in performance. Within their mutual membership of the Imperial War Graves Commission, South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia jostled to define themselves not only in relation to the metropole but also to each other. Most of the major memorials examined in this thesis are national in character, whereas the cemeteries in question are deliberately not segregated by nationality, and are instead groupings of the dead based on geographic proximity to site of death. The inherent tension in this difference, which this thesis identifies and explores, highlights the ways in which other dimensions of identity – most notably race and religion –

were at times more powerful factors in the collecting of the dead into commemorative cohorts.

Characteristics of hallowedness are central to the meanings that the landscapes and IWGC sites reciprocally imbue each other with, creating 'hallowed ground' that incurred additional meanings and responsibilities for those who engaged with it. Memorials, cemeteries, and their landscapes were linked conceptually as well as spatially by the dead. The boundary between 'missing' and 'buried' was not a static dichotomy in the 1920s-30s, as new bodies were found, mistakes were discovered, and commemorative decisions were made. The meanings of these sites were thus doubly informed by their locations, due to the relationships between site and body, and site and battle. Sanctification and exhumation, proposals to commemorate the missing with empty graves, and addressing religious differences regarding burial and the ground all further complicated the three intertwined elements of memorial, cemetery, and landscape.

The memorials and cemeteries representing India and the Dominions were not merely backdrops against which identities were performed; they also performed identities themselves. Their 'pouring forth' onto the world stage of the former battlefield landscapes during the interwar period gave scope for both their forms (in stone) and their words (in inscriptions) to convey messages about the people and countries they represented. These objects have their own agency, being able to convey and reinforce identities through their forms and functions. The national Western Front memorials of South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia were the most significant Western Front examples of monumental British imperial commemoration, and thus were concentrated focal points for decisions, attention, emotion, and visitation. These monuments form useful windows through which to examine how identity and memory were expressed, distinguished, and elided along multiple axes. These national memorials were tangible manifestations of each country's navigation between

national and imperial identity; additionally, each had to arrive at a decision regarding the relationship between individual and collective commemoration, mainly through the manner in which names of their missing were inscribed. These memorials, at Delville Wood (South African), Neuve Chapelle (Indian), Vimy (Canadian), and Villers-Bretonneux (Australian), allow a comparative study of where these four countries located themselves along these continuums.

Along with place and object as introduced immediately above, there is a third element to the equation of how identities were performed and navigated through material culture: 'keeping touch', specifically connection across distance. For South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia, the conduits for these connections predominantly took three forms: material items moving in both directions between battlefield landscape and commemorating country (including replica memorials, ashes, seeds, photographs, wooden crosses); involvement in decision-making, or attempts to do so, regarding identification, effects, epitaphs, designs, policies, and domestic stone and labour; and in-person visitation, most notably on organised pilgrimages, and the associated broadcasts, publications, and small material culture outputs that were produced to reinforce and reify a collective narrative of these visits that would also allow them to be shared more widely. Each of these forms emphasise the importance placed on tangibility and participation by those involved in creating and sustaining these connections. The tangible and imagined bonds between these memorials and cemeteries on the Western Front and their domestic communities of the living illuminate both the importance placed on connections between them and the inextricable ways that elements of personal and collective identities were included in these expressions.

The individualism of the dead in commemoration is a hallmark of the memorials and cemeteries in question, yet the role of living individuals is also critical to the range of material culture negotiations examined in this thesis. They sought to create and maintain

connections with these sites and their dead through a variety of tangible methods, including photographs, flora, replicas, publications, visitation, and insisting on input into the design decision-making processes. The transnational and intrinsically comparative structure of this project has allowed for greater precision in examining the spectrum of these connections and how they varied between countries. The role of the living and the connections they created throughout material culture has significant implications for our understandings of contemporary First World War memory, and thus for the relevance of this thesis past its ostensible 1938 end date. The dead are still dead, but now there are new generations of the living who perpetuate forms of these material culture engagements with commemoration; these cannot be properly understood without critical examination, as this thesis provides, of the origins, purposes, and manifestations of these forms of connection.

The material culture of remembrance is increasingly at the heart of First World War memory. As living memory has faded, it is the tangible remains – artefacts, memorials, and cemeteries – that we ask to tell us stories about our countries, our predecessors, and ourselves. Today, their contemporary relevance is prominently recognised in the public consciousness and media. It is critical that we have an understanding of these sites' significance to the people who derived meaning from them at the time of their creation.



*For my mom, who taught me how to cherish by the loving act of listening*  
*For my dad, who taught me the value of gentleness*  
*For Jas, who taught me the fierceness and durability of unconditional love*  
*For Annie, who taught me the power of articulating loving presence*



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## Table of Contents

List of abbreviations, tables, and images

Chapter I: Introduction	1
Chapter II: Hallowed Ground	
1. Introduction	53
2. Battlefield locations and site selection	60
i. Canada	63
ii. Australia	67
iii. South Africa	69
iv. India	76
3. The role and significance of landscape	83
4. Creating and disturbing hallowed ground: sanctification and exhumations	94
5. “His six feet of ground”: presence, absence, and alternative proposals for the missing	105
6. Religious differences regarding burial and the ground	113
7. Conclusions	122
Chapter III: Pouring Forth	
1. Introduction	124
2. Stone	128
i. Beaumont-Hamel – Newfoundland	129
ii. Delville Wood – South Africa	132
iii. Neuve Chapelle – undivided India	139
iv. Menin Gate – Empire Memorial	148
v. Thiepval – Britain and South Africa	152
vi. Vimy and St Julien – Canada	155
vii. Villers-Bretonneux – Australia	167
viii. Cemeteries	174
3. Words	178
i. Memorial inscriptions	179
ii. Inscriptions in cemeteries	185
iii. Inscribing names	200
4. Conclusions	209
Chapter IV: Keeping Touch	
1. Introduction	211
2. Distance and tangibility in war and memory scholarship	211
3. Material culture: battlefield → home	224
i. Photographs	224
ii. Replicas	229
iii. Wooden crosses	238
4. Material culture: home → battlefield	243
i. Ashes	243
ii. Seeds	244
5. Involvement in decision-making	248

i.	Domestic materials and labour	248
ii.	Identification, epitaphs, and effects	251
iii.	Input and dissent regarding designs and policies	254
6.	Visitation	259
i.	Mass pilgrimage and unveilings	260
ii.	Pilgrimage and unveiling attendance privilege	273
iii.	Broadcasts	277
iv.	Publications	280
v.	Medals and models	285
7.	Conclusions	288
Chapter V: Conclusions		289
Bibliography		305

## List of abbreviations, tables, and images

### Abbreviations

AWM	Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia
BL	British Library, London, England
CBMC	Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission
CWGC	Commonwealth War Graves Commission * also used as the abbreviation to indicate archival material from the CWGC Archive, Maidenhead, England
IWGC	Imperial War Graves Commission
LAC	Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada
NAA	National Archives of Australia, Canberra, Australia
NASA	National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

### Tables

3.A. Memorials referred to in this chapter	128
3.B. Main inscriptions on key memorials referred to in this chapter	179-180
3.C. Epitaph examples	197-198

### Images

All photos by Hanna Smyth unless otherwise stated. Permission for reproduction in thesis deposit copy has been granted by all other copyright holders (AWM, BL, CWGC, LAC, NASA, Robert Eveleigh), credited in the captions in formats according to their wishes.

Image number	Caption	Page
0.1	[Cover image, no caption. Vimy memorial, 2017].	n/a
1.1	Typical view of a CWGC cemetery today. Prowse Point Military Cemetery, Belgium, 2017.	18
2.1	View from the Thiepval memorial of the Anglo-French cemetery adjoining it, 2016.	55
2.2a	Preserved battlefield landscape at Vimy, 2016.	57
2.2b	Preserved battlefield landscape at Beaumont-Hamel, 2016.	58
2.3	Théelus cemetery with its Cross of Sacrifice visible, 2012.	61
2.4	View from the Vimy memorial, looking down off the ridge upon which it is positioned, 2016.	63
2.5	Site survey of the Villers-Bretonneux memorial location. Appendix to the architectural brief for the memorial's design competition, 1925. CWGC	67

	WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, “Survey of Site for Proposed Australian War Memorial”.	
2.6a	Delville Wood landscape, 2017.	70
2.6b	Delville Wood landscape, 1918. NASA MPA 3/3/579, “Memorial service at Delville Wood, 1918”.	71
2.6c	Delville Wood landscape, 1916. NASA GG 2238 1/232, “The remains of Delville Wood, July, 1916”.	71
2.7	1916 sketch of unburied dead locations in Delville Wood. AWM 25 135/14, “[untitled sketch attached to letter dated 27 December 1916]”.	72
2.8	Sketch of Neuve Chapelle crossroads location, undated, likely 1921. CWGC WG 861, “Sketch of cross-roads at proposed site of Indian war memorial”.	77
2.9	The architecture of the Vimy memorial, with its clearly defined platform, is a stark example of the delineation of memorial space.	95
2.10	Cross of Sacrifice shadow touching graves, Guillemont Road Cemetery, France, 2016.	97
2.11	Boundary walls encircling, and comprising part of, the Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.	99
2.12	Typical ‘English garden’-style grave horticulture, Passchendaele New British Cemetery, Belgium, 2017.	100
2.13	Behavioural conduct sign at Thiepval, 2016.	101
2.14	Two of Jackie Lantelli’s ‘ghost soldiers’ (fore and left background) stand in front of their own IWGC graves in Slimbridge churchyard cemetery. Photo by Robert Eveleigh, used with permission.	105
2.15a	Headstone design for unknown Muslim soldiers. CWGC WG 1031, “Headstone layout – unknown Mohammedan”.	120
2.15b	Headstone design for Hindu soldiers. CWGC WG 1031, “Headstone layout for isolated Hindu soldiers”.	121
3.1	Beaumont-Hamel memorial, 2016.	129
3.2	Both memorials to the 51st (Highland) Division on the Beaumont-Hamel site, demonstrating the spatial relationship between them. 2016.	131
3.3	Delville Wood memorial, 2017.	133
3.4	Detail of Castor and Pollux element from the Delville Wood memorial, 2017.	134
3.5	Sketch by Herbert Baker of the Delville Wood memorial and cemetery. CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “The South African War Memorial Delville Wood”.	137
3.6	View of the altar stone through the arch of the Delville Wood memorial, 2017.	139
3.7a/b	Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.	142
3.7c	Neuve Chapelle memorial from the air, 1927. BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, <i>Neuve Chapelle: India’s Memorial in France, 1927</i> (no pagination).	143
3.8	Chattris of the Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.	146
3.9	Plan and elevation of the proposed Neuve Chapelle memorial design, 1926. CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Memorial to Indian Troops in France,” <i>The Times</i> 15 October 1926.	148
3.10a	Menin Gate memorial, undated (likely 1940s). AWM 93 12/8/14.	149
3.10b	Menin Gate memorial, 2017.	149

3.11	Tyne Cot memorial (boundary wall of cemetery), 2016.	152
3.12	Thiepval memorial, 2016.	153
3.13	Vimy memorial pylons and base, 2016.	156
3.14a/b	'Mother Canada' and the empty tomb, Vimy memorial, 2016.	158-159
3.15a-c	Allegories on the Vimy memorial, 2016/17.	160
3.16	St-Julien memorial, 2016.	161
3.17	Reproduction of Will Longstaff's Villers-Bretonneux memorial painting, in <i>The Australian Women's Weekly</i> , 5 November 1938. AWM 93 12/8/14.	168
3.18	Site survey of IWGC cemetery adjoining the planned Villers-Bretonneux memorial site, appendix to the architectural brief for the memorial's design competition, 1925. CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery".	170
3.19	Standard IWGC Stone of Remembrance. Villers Station Cemetery, France, 2016.	175
3.20	Standard IWGC headstone. Hooze Crater Cemetery, Belgium, 2016.	177
3.21	Detail of quadrilingual inscription on Neuve Chapelle memorial column, 2016.	181
3.22	Standard Stone of Remembrance. Serre Road Cemetery No.2, 2016.	186
3.23	Standard Cross of Sacrifice. Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, France, 2016.	191
3.24	Detail of the inscribed names on the Vimy memorial, 2016.	204
3.25	Detail of the vertical nature of the inscribed names on the Menin Gate memorial, 2017.	206
4.1	Grave photograph for Pte James Birrell Hay. LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 67.	225
4.2	Delville Wood memorial replica overlooking Pretoria, South Africa, 2017.	231
4.3	Newspaper clipping of the Delville Wood memorial replica unveiling in Pretoria. NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 1, "Delville Memorial at Pretoria: Bronze unveiled yesterday; Sir P. Fitzpatrick's speech; Completion of ten years' task," <i>Star</i> 22 July 1929.	237
4.4	Sketch of the wooden cross being offered to the school in Mowbray Heights described above. AWM 3 1 5 748/001/007, "Cross from Pozieres".	241
4.5a-d	Draft headstone designs sent to Australian military representatives for input, 1918. AWM 25 135/36, "26 January 1918".	257-259
4.6	Aerial view of Vimy memorial unveiling, 1936. LAC, MIKAN number 3224321, taken by the National Film Board of Canada. Public domain because it was subject to Crown copyright and was produced before 31 December 1968.	261
4.7	Indian troops at the Neuve Chapelle memorial unveiling, France, 1927. BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, <i>Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France, 1927</i> (no pagination).	271
5.1	New visitor centre at Vimy, 2017.	293
5.2	Vimy centenary ceremony, 9 April 2017.	295
5.3a	French First World War military cemetery Notre Dame de Lorette, 2016.	303
5.3b	German First World War military cemetery Langemarck, Belgium, 2017.	303



## Chapter I Introduction

The first time I saw the Vimy memorial, I was not thinking about identity. I was sixteen and on a travel scholarship program learning about Canada's role in the First World War. More than a decade later, very little of the actual content I learned remains in my memory; what has outlasted the facts is my memory of emotions. These included feelings of pride at belonging to a national identity, which I was not experienced enough to recognise as an imagined and problematic construct. When I returned to these memorial and cemetery sites ten years later, this time as an educator on the same program, I thought I was approaching them with eyes wider open. In the interim, an archaeology degree had taught me to see objects as sources, and question what and how they can tell us about people who are gone; a museum degree had taught me to look for the hundreds of decisions *behind* final visible results of interpretation, and to look for what was *missing*, not just what was *there*. A museum job had introduced me to the Historical Thinking Concepts pedagogical philosophy, most notably that giving students a toolset for thinking critically about history and its power dynamics was more important than memorising facts; and the beginnings of my Global & Imperial History DPhil had exposed me to the inherent problems of nationalism and our responsibility to decolonise curricula.

Thus, when I returned to these sites, I *was* thinking about identity. But that awareness is itself a spectrum, and I always had more to learn. A remark from a Chinese-Canadian student prompted us to add a Chinese Labour Corps cemetery (Noyelles-sur-Mer) to the itinerary; a traditional mourning drum song sung by an Indigenous student at the grave in France of a soldier from her tribe prompted questions about performance and the relationship between object, body, and ritual; and time after time, my students – 15- to 17-year-olds from Canada, France, Britain, Germany, and Belgium – had questions that I did not know the answers to and perspectives I had not considered. This continually emphasised to me both the

vast unknowns within the relationship between material culture, war memory, and identity – especially factoring in temporality and individual experience – *and* the importance of nevertheless still trying to understand more. This thesis is my attempt to do so: it is certainly my most extensive and tangible attempt, but I hope that my most significant contribution is instead the lasting and rippling effect left upon my students and the way they think about and apply these concepts.

This thesis is one of many scholarly works over the last hundred years that focuses on the Western Front. Despite that locale being well-trodden ground in every metaphorical and literal sense of the word, it still offered scope for an approach not taken before: a four-way transnational comparison of British imperial material culture of remembrance, and specifically the ramifications this had for the articulation of identity and the creation of connections.

This project explores how beyond being “sites of memory and sites of mourning”,<sup>1</sup> the memorials and cemeteries representing South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia on the First World War’s Western Front also function as sites of identity. It illuminates how they are perennial testaments not only to those who died, but to those who missed them and the emerging nations who lost them, and discusses the multivalenced nature of how this was manifested in stone. Between 1918 and 1938, the processes through which the living understood and articulated their place in the world with relation to the dead were unstable. Imperial War Graves Commission (‘IWGC’ henceforth in this thesis) sites were expressive and emotive locations, where intersections between national and imperial identities manifested, overlapped, and were negotiated on both individual and collective levels through material culture. The ‘absent dead’ were at the heart of the British Empire’s material culture

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<sup>1</sup> As famously coined by Jay Winter, in *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

of remembrance, and the nature of these absences (including missing bodies, non-identification, illicit exhumations, cremations, and distant grief), positioned them as a nexus of identities for the Dominions and India. These arguments have been elicited by the key questions that drove the research and development of this thesis: for South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia, what was the relationship between the material culture of commemoration for their First World War dead and the expression and negotiation of their identities in the interwar period? And why did it, and does it, matter?

These thesis chapters illuminate the relationship between material culture, war memory, and identity for four countries in the then British Empire, through a multisite transnational and comparative analysis drawing upon perspectives from not only global and imperial history but also, most notably, anthropology, geography, memory studies, archaeology, heritage and tourism studies, and visual and material culture theory.

Relationships are at the heart of this project: between stone and flesh, living and dead, nation and empire, individual and collective, site and object, absence and presence. These elements and the relationships they constituted intersected with each other across multiple planes: they interacted not only in the past to create meaning, but also across time to create interactions between past and present. When Canadian Prime Minister Arthur Meighen vowed in 1921, “across the Atlantic the heart-strings of our Canadian nation will reach through all time to these graves in France”,<sup>2</sup> he articulated two key relationships: the spatial relationship of grief at a distance (“across the Atlantic”), and the temporal relationship between the creation of these sites and contemporary memory (“will reach through all time”). The fact that both relationships are conditional upon and anchored by *place* (“these graves in France”) forms the crux of and rationale for this thesis.<sup>3</sup> Following the position taken by

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<sup>2</sup> CWGC Add 1/1/93, “Canada’s Heroes,” *The Daily Telegraph* 4 July 1921.

<sup>3</sup> This is bolstered by Hoskins’ argument that “one way to connect the individual and the collective is through affording greater attention to the environment in which remembering and forgetting take place.” Andrew Hoskins, “Memory Ecologies,” *Memory Studies* 9:3 (2016), 353.

Glenn Adamson that “various forms of absence are central to the study of material culture”,<sup>4</sup> the relationship between absence and presence is particularly explored throughout the thesis in various iterations of the other elements listed above: presence of stone and absence of flesh, and so on. Six types of ‘absent dead’ are identified in Chapter II, serving as an argument that the dead and their absences caused them to function as a nexus of identities.

This thesis is a transnational and comparative analysis, an approach which is firmly established as a valuable methodology not only within First World War studies<sup>5</sup> but in global and imperial scholarship more broadly. For the purposes of this thesis, ‘transnational’ for brevity is taken here to mean work that both spans and links multiple countries. This project’s transnationality allows an unprecedented comparison of how British Dominions and India used and interwove cultures of commemoration from afar with their unstable and multifaceted conceptions of identity during the postwar period.

‘Comparative’ is not taken as a strict definition in this work. Rather than a bilateral or quadrilateral comparison between nation states, this research involves four entities with a common coloniser, who each had a different relationship with Britain during and after the war but were all subsumed within the IWGC’s purview regarding First World War burial and commemoration abroad. One of the most glaring discrepancies is that South Africa, Canada, and Australia were all Dominions during the First World War, while India was not.<sup>6</sup>

However, India is such a unique case – both in terms of its diverse demographics and its standing at the time within the British empire – that if comparison were undertaken on the

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<sup>4</sup> Glenn Adamson, “The case of the missing footstool: reading the absent object,” in *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, ed. Karen Harvey (London: Routledge, 2017), 240.

<sup>5</sup> This thesis was written as one of ten DPhil theses produced by the Oxford History Faculty’s *Globalising & Localising the Great War* research group 2018-2020, all of which are transnational and comparative projects.

<sup>6</sup> Despite all three of the former being Dominions, it is critical to not let that similarity allow for a homogenising approach to their histories. As Angela Woollacott argues, “how useful is it to group South Africa, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia together as the white settler colonies or Dominions of the empire, when the racial ratios, hierarchies, land distribution, and cultural accommodation were so different among them?” (*To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism, and Modernity* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], 10).

strictest terms, no First World War comparative historian would dare engage with India.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis aims to demonstrate the rich insights that the inclusion of India can contribute to understandings of British imperial material culture of remembrance after the war, arguing that its similarities with the Dominions in this context allow the production of worthwhile insights upon analysis.

In the introduction to their ambitious collection *The Great War and the British Empire*, the editors comment that “almost every author and editor working on the British Empire pleads at the start of their work that there is yet more research to do and that their individual offering cannot claim to be exhaustive”,<sup>8</sup> and this thesis too makes that plea. It has only chosen four countries from within the vast British Empire to examine (the four largest in land area and population except for the metropole), and the resulting analyses make no pretension to identify and articulate either definitive single ‘national’ experiences and responses, or to exhaustively encompass all the experiences and responses that did result from the conflict and its commemoration. While the conflict certainly affected each country’s progression towards independence, the extent and scope of these effects are outside the remit of this thesis. Their interwar battlefield commemoration was a venue in which to solidify various aspects of identity including emerging nationalism, but beyond that intersection the thesis remains focused on the material culture of commemoration rather than following the thread of postwar political developments, which would create an altogether different work.

The four countries whose material culture of remembrance this thesis examines all had a shared characteristic: during the interwar period, they were navigating, redefining, and

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<sup>7</sup> A somewhat rare predecessor is William S. Miller, “Independent Personality: National Identity Formation in Britain’s Dominions and India,” MA thesis, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2011. It examines similarities in recurring processes – although not necessarily the outcomes – of changes that affected the Dominions and India’s self-understandings as ‘nations’ between the First and Second World Wars, and argues that “before convincing the British that they constituted a nation, a colony first had to believe it themselves” (1).

<sup>8</sup> Michael J.K. Walsh and Andrekos Varnava, “The Great War and the British Empire: conflict, culture and memory,” in *The Great War and the British Empire: Culture and Society*, ed. Michael J.K. Walsh and Andrekos Varnava (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 13.

finding ways to articulate how they understood ‘British’ identity, ‘national’ identity, and the relationship between them. This was not a homogenous experience even within each country, let alone across all four. The relationship between these two types of identity existed along a continuum, not a polarity, and the main shared characteristic amongst its expressions was that it was rarely understood or realised as a dichotomy.<sup>9</sup> This thesis follows the philosophy articulated by anthropologists Stewart and Strathern, that memory, place, and landscape act as “crucial transducers” to provide revealing sites where alignments and conflicts between different scales of influence (e.g. in this case national and imperial) are played out.<sup>10</sup>

This thesis is an explicitly emotional rather than political history. On the theme of dichotomies introduced above, this is another false one; this work is not arguing for an emotional *as opposed to* political history. The historical circumstances examined in this project are steeped in politics, and the political grounding of the circumstances explored is undeniable. However, also undeniable is the emotional side, and as it is relatively underexamined in comparison to its political counterpart, this thesis predominantly aims to shed light on the former. As Tarlow posits, incorporating emotion is an under-addressed moral and historiographical obligation when analysing the material culture of death and memory.<sup>11</sup> In her defining work on the role of emotion in academic research on the material culture of death, she argues that it is a disservice to the dead to deny our own emotions while

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<sup>9</sup> For a fascinating example of both the intra-imperial connections between Dominion experiences and the lack of homogenous experiences within them, contrast the four chapters on, respectively, Scottish identity and First World War military participation in Australia, Canada, South Africa, and England, in the edited collection *A Global Force: War, Identities and Scotland's Diaspora*; David Forsyth and Wendy Ugolini (eds) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016). For a more in-depth articulation of how nationalism and imperialism could be reconciled rather than being seen as a polarity, including how imperialism could be used as a “vehicle for a national mission,” (ii) see Kevin Colclough, “Imperial Nationalism: Nationalism and the Empire in late nineteenth century Scotland and British Canada,” PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006. Another work which echoes this argument for overlap (yet warns against conflation) is Krishan Kumar, “Empire and English Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 12:1 (2006), 1-13, who argues that “empire and nation are not set against each other but appear as twin expressions of the same phenomenon of power” (2) specifically in the case of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century (as opposed to early modern) empires.

<sup>10</sup> Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, “Introduction,” in *Landscape, Memory, and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern (London: Pluto, 2003), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 25, 31-33.

researching them, and that “the dead are not just another class of evidence.”<sup>12</sup> The social context of the material culture analysed in this thesis is mass death, mass grief, and mass heartbreak, made no less painful by the collectiveness of its postwar pervasion. To write about this clinically would be a betrayal and disservice not only to the war’s dead, but to its living – who are now dead too. Tarlow also states,

To express a past which involves passion, fear, grief and love is to risk one’s own credibility, to appear soppy, romantic and weak. The emotional in our society is consistently devalued. The associations of overt emotionality are with femininity, weakness. Emotional responses are held to be incompatible with proper rational thought and seriously out of place in an academic discipline...<sup>13</sup>

Andrea Witcomb also addresses the perceived incompatibility between critical historical analysis and emotion, describing how emotive language “produces an uncritical nationalism” according to various scholars, before exploring different relationships between history and emotion. However, her case studies are museum exhibitions, which generally have more scope for – and examples of – uncritical emotional approaches than are acceptable in a scholarly dissertation.<sup>14</sup> Emotion permeates this thesis but does not guide it.

As a female scholar I recognise that my choices of topic and approach may make me particularly vulnerable to criticism. Yet, “history is always and already emotional”,<sup>15</sup> and to ignore this would jeopardise this thesis’s scholastic rigour to a greater extent than the risks incurred by addressing it. Emotion is central to the creation of all material culture – “an understanding of emotional and experiential aspects of human practice in the past is central to our consideration of anything interesting... any aspect of material practice is galvanised by human volition” –<sup>16</sup> and when the material culture in question is commemoration of the dead,

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<sup>12</sup> Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*, 131, 177.

<sup>13</sup> Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Andrea Witcomb, “Beyond sentimentality and glorification: using a history of emotions to deal with the horror of war,” in *Memory, Place and Identity: Commemoration and remembrance of war and conflict*, ed. Danielle Drozdowski, Sarah De Nardi, and Emma Waterton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 205.

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Jewett and Andrew Nurse, “More than a Few Acres of Snow,” *activehistory.ca [University of Saskatchewan / Huron University College]*, 14 March 2017, <http://activehistory.ca/2017/03/more-than-a-few-acres-of-snow/>.

<sup>16</sup> Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*, 33.

this importance is magnified. To adopt a concept introduced by the editors of *Emotion, Affective Practices, and the Past in the Present*, this importance is magnified because memorials and cemeteries hold substantial amounts of “emotional capital.”<sup>17</sup> Objects are promises; when they are focal points for the relationships between the living and the dead, understanding what is being promised, to whom, and by whom inexorably involves emotion. Hilary Davidson’s work has a complementary tenet: she argues that death-related objects are “materialized, invested emotions”,<sup>18</sup> a philosophy this thesis both conforms to and supports without arguing for its total universality. So too does the work of Daniel Miller and Fiona Parrott, which – like this thesis – examines objects through the framework of relationships, arguing that “all relationships [consist] of a tension between idealized and actual categories”, and death- and loss-centred objects provide crucial ways to resolve that tension.<sup>19</sup> In terms of the First World War and emotion, one of the most significant works is Santanu Das’ 2018 *India, Empire, and First World War Culture*; this uses an ambitiously wide variety of primary source types to take an emotion-centred approach to the participation of Indians in the conflict and its effects upon them. This approach is best evoked by his statement that he has tried to capture “the *texture* of experience, thought, and feeling”, by allowing his sources “to open up through their poetics a more complex psychological and sensuous space.”<sup>20</sup> The Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission has also strongly adopted an emotional history approach with their 2018 online exhibition, “Shaping Our Sorrow”, which

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<sup>17</sup> Margaret Wetherell, Laurajane Smith, and Gary Campbell, “Introduction: Affective Heritage Practices,” in *Emotion, Affective Practices, and the Past in the Present*, ed. Laurajane Smith, Margaret Wetherell and Gary Campbell (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Hilary Davidson, “Grave Emotions: Textiles and Clothing from Nineteenth-Century London Cemeteries,” *Textile* 14:2 (2016), 227.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Miller and Fiona Parrott, “Loss and material culture in South London,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15:3 (2009), 502.

<sup>20</sup> Santanu Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture: Writings, Images, and Songs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25-26.

charts the IWGC's work through the lens of the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.<sup>21</sup>

A problematic facet of emotional histories of war and its remembrance is the heightened potential for romanticisation, of people or places. This project does its best to avoid both. The dead it discusses died in a conflict that meant many different things to many different people. People participated for a variety of moral, practical, and enforced reasons; they were not all 'heroes' and did not all die 'for the freedom we enjoy today' (among other overworn clichés heard during the centenary), and are not treated as such here. Similarly, the places where they are commemorated, that these chapters deal with – battlefield commemorative landscapes – are problematically reduced in complexity if we romanticise them. Although in one sense, this thesis is about how these places became beautiful – how pristine immaculate white-stone memorials and cemeteries were created on these destroyed and rebuilding landscapes –<sup>22</sup> it is an inescapable and necessary fact that this thesis is also very much about dead bodies, and the literal and logistical mess they caused.<sup>23</sup>

'Body theory' and the sociology of the body is a complex field which strays too far outside this thesis' scope to properly engage with, especially because dead bodies are a

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<sup>21</sup> CWGC, "Shaping Our Sorrow," 2018, <https://shapingoursorrow.cwgc.org/start/>. These five stages were first introduced by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, in *On Death & Dying: What the dying have to teach doctors, nurses, clergy & their own families* (New York: Scribner [1969] 2014), though they are now not unequivocally accepted as empirically valid.

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of how the classical beauty of many First World War memorials was an embodiment of an "aesthetics of healing" used to salve the destroyed bodies of the dead (137), see Ana Carden-Coyne's chapter "Monumental Classicism: Healing the Western Body" (110-159) in her book *Reconstructing the Body: Classicism, Modernism, and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>23</sup> Three recent or in-progress works by early career scholars directly and extensively address the administrative and logistical concerns of dealing with the dead bodies themselves during the war and its very immediate aftermath; this thesis acknowledges and celebrates their work and intends to pick up one of the threads where their work leaves off. Sarah Ashbridge, "Military Identification: Death, Burial and Identification in the Landscape of Industrial War, 1914-1918," PhD thesis, University of Bradford, forthcoming, examines what happened to British bodies between death and burial and how identification practices changed. Jeremy P. Garrett, "Tribute to the Fallen: The Evolution of Canadian Battlefield Burials During the First World War," PhD thesis, University of Western Ontario, 2018, examines the increased formalisation and modernisation of military burial practice in response to the First World War, using the Canadian dead during the beginning, middle, and end of the conflict as a three-part case study. Romain Fathi, "'We refused to work until we had better means for handling the bodies': Discipline at the Australian Graves Detachment," *First World War Studies* 9:1 (2018), 1-22, spends the first of its three sections detailing the work carried out by the Australian Graves Detachment, formed in 1919 to exhume and rebury Australian dead within a specific sector of the Western Front.

specific subset which are lacking many of the properties accorded to living and moving ones. However, it is worth noting Lisa Blackman's argument regarding the affective properties of bodies, and considering to what extent it applies to the dead: "bodies are not considered stable things or entities, but rather are processes which extend into and are immersed in worlds...bodies are open, defined by their capacities to affect and be affected."<sup>24</sup>

The mass bereavement and commemoration of the First World War dead was infused with emotion both during the interwar period that this thesis examines, and today. Thus, this work interprets and applies Tarlow's position on emotion with a twofold resonance: acknowledging the inherent emotional element of its case studies both for the people experiencing them 1918-1938, and for those remembering them 100 years later. This thesis attempts to navigate the fine line between two truisms which together appear to be a paradox: there is a universality to human emotion, which allows us to connect more deeply with the people of the past, yet it is also problematic to assume that we can definitively know or share the emotions of different people, particularly ones separated from us by time and/or culture. As Metcalf and Huntington argue, "having learned how diverse and complicated the perceptions of such apparently simple matters as space, time and color may be, how can we assume a constancy for such complex states as love and hate, sorrow and joy?"<sup>25</sup> This is echoed by Cannadine in the specific context of death and grief history: "any attempt to trace the evolution over time of an emotion like grief, or even to generalize about such an emotion at a given time in a given society, is an extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible task... the history of death is at least as complicated as the history of life."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Lisa Blackman, *Immaterial Bodies: Affect, Embodiment, Mediation* (London: Sage, 2012), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 43.

<sup>26</sup> David Cannadine, "War and Death, Grief and Mourning in Modern Britain," in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. J. Whaley, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011, originally published by Europa, 1981), 242.

This project is entirely focused on Imperial War Graves Commission sites, and documents that are to, from, or relating to, the IWGC form the vast majority of the archival material upon which this thesis is based. As such, a brief contextual overview of this institution is prudent. The Imperial War Graves Commission was founded by Royal Charter in 1917, in order to expand and continue the work conducted by Fabian Ware on organising and administrating the dead hitherto done under the aegis of the Red Cross. Neither a soldier nor a politician, at age 45 he had been too old to fight in the conflict so became responsible for a mobile unit of the British Red Cross; his unit began meticulously recording and tending all the graves they came across, and soon the War Office gave him permission to standardise and expand this work. The IWGC faced the monumental task of locating, identifying, burying, and commemorating the approximately one million dead of Britain and its empire. The bulk of this work occurred postwar, but IWGC's initial years were while the war was still ongoing, presenting severe logistical challenges such as cemeteries being damaged and graves lost because they were still in active war zones. Its remit, as outlined in its Royal Charter of Incorporation in 1917, was "to make fit provision for the burial of officers and men of Our [sic] said forces and the care of all graves in such cemeteries, to erect buildings and permanent memorials therein, and generally to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of such cemeteries, buildings, and memorials."<sup>27</sup> The IWGC consulted with and had representatives from each of the British Dominions (who also contributed financially in proportion to their numbers of war dead); this did not translate into significant authority or influence over the Commission's macro-level decision-making and policies,<sup>28</sup> though

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<sup>27</sup> For the text of its remit, see the scan of the 1917 Royal Charter at [http://media.cwgc.org/media/394524/royal\\_charter\\_of\\_incorporation.pdf](http://media.cwgc.org/media/394524/royal_charter_of_incorporation.pdf). For the figure of First World War dead, see the CWGC website *Find War Dead* searchable database: <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx>.

<sup>28</sup> Karine Landry, "Fall in Line: Canada's role in the Imperial War Graves Commission after the First World War," MA thesis, University of Ottawa, 2018. Landry reveals and interrogates the distinct lack of not only influence but even of attempted influence that Canada exerted over the IWGC, which was in stark contrast to what she describes as Canada's burgeoning nationalism at the time. For an analysis of how Canada's mandatory inclusion in Britain's nonrepatriation policy influenced Canadian policy in later decades once it had autonomy

Chapter IV of this thesis examines some of these attempts. This organisation also had to navigate both the personal and political factors involved in the creation and perpetuation of war memory; this thesis focuses heavily on the personal, but the dichotomy between the two is somewhat false and the IWGC were deeply involved in mediating and interpreting both.

Intrinsic to the work of the IWGC was the non-repatriation policy adopted by Britain. The war posed fundamental questions to each country involved: *what shall we do with our war dead? And what will this say about us to the world?* Some countries, like America, allowed the bodies of their war dead to be brought home for burial, though this was not done in every case.<sup>29</sup> Other countries, including Britain, created a diaspora of their dead. Britain put a moratorium on the transportation of bodies home – they had to be buried near where they died. This was largely due to logistical and fairness concerns, but met with significant opposition from the public. Both the policy and the wider work of the IWGC did not exist in isolation but rather were influenced by changes in society’s relationship to death, bodies, and mourning over the prior few hundred years; a topic so vast it is outside the scope of this thesis to address. Vanderstraeten aptly sums up this shift by arguing, “the cemetery was ‘reinvented’ around 1800”, and tracing the changes in theology and public health, among others, which were the catalysts for this transition.<sup>30</sup> This theme is also ably explored in a plethora of other works, including those by Thomas Laqueur, Marie Mulvey-Roberts, Andrew Smith, and George Mosse.<sup>31</sup>

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to decide its own, see Derek Congram, “Grave Influence: The Impact of Britain and the US on Canada’s War Dead Policy,” *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 10:4 (2017), 305-323.

<sup>29</sup> For more on American First World War repatriation and mourning, see also G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington DC: Smithsonian, 2004); Tracy Fisher, *Burying America’s World War Dead* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018); Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, and Honor Our Military Fallen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); David W. Seitz, “Grave Negotiations: The Rhetorical Foundations of American World War I Cemeteries in Europe,” PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 2011; Lisa Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York City: NYU Press, 2010), particularly “Part I: Repatriation” (11-81); Susan Grant, “Raising the dead: war, memory and American national identity,” *Nations and Nationalism* 11:4 (2005), 509-529.

<sup>30</sup> Raf Vanderstraeten, “Burying and remembering the dead,” *Memory Studies* 7:4 (2014), 461.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), chapter “The Cemetery and the New Regime,” 211-362; Marie Mulvey-Roberts,

The 'war dead' cared for by the IWGC fall under a broader spectrum than one might think. The conflict created new aspects of identity for many people, and also exacerbated existing ones; these were frequently overlapping and sometimes contradicting. This extended even to death, and affected whether a person was eligible for commemoration by the IWGC. Someone who was killed in a battle was clearly a war death, but other cases were not so clear-cut. Soldiers who died of disease or succumbed to their war injuries after the war was over, civilians killed by enemy action, and non-combatant deaths such as medical services and Labour Corps members all presented more challenging decisions regarding classification as a war death. Officially, the IWGC considered deaths that occurred before 31 August 1921 as 'war dead' falling under their remit.

The fundamental principles of the IWGC's commemoration of the dead were equality and uniformity.<sup>32</sup> The son of Herbert Asquith, the United Kingdom's Prime Minister 1908-1916, is buried in France with the same-sized headstone as untold scores of privates whose families may not have been able to afford a headstone at all.<sup>33</sup> No matter how much money or influence a family had, they could not pay for special graves or have their dead soldiers sent back home to them for burial; and many wealthier families were passionately, publicly disapproving of this restriction on their agency. Each body would be buried as near as possible to where it fell, and if the body was never found then the person's name would be

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*Dangerous bodies: Historicising the gothic corporeal* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); Andrew Smith, *Gothic Death 1740-1914: A Literary History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), particularly chapter "Mourning, memory and melancholy: constructing death in the 1790s-1820s" (44-71); George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). For a valuable longer-range contextualisation, see Jennie Bradbury and Chris Scarre (eds), *Engaging with the Dead: Exploring changing human beliefs about death, mortality and the human body* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017), which combines archaeological and anthropological research to trace how humans' relationships to dead people and their memories have changed over the last several thousand years.

<sup>32</sup> For further discussion of this, among many others see Matthew Stuart Smith, "The Relationship Between Australians and the Overseas Graves of the First World War," MA thesis, Queensland University of Technology, 2010, 18; David Crane, *Empires of the Dead: How one man's vision led to the creation of WWI's war graves* (London: Collins, 2013), 201.

<sup>33</sup> Lieutenant Raymond Asquith, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. Grenadier Guards, died 15 September 1916 aged 37; grave reference I.B.3, buried Guillemont Road Cemetery, France.

inscribed on a ‘memorial to the missing’. Occasionally the principles of equality and uniformity contradicted each other, and religion is a prime example of this. To treat all of its fallen equally, the IWGC allowed for breaks in uniformity to accommodate various religious symbols, and in some cases even differential burial practices, particularly regarding Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu soldiers; this is discussed in greater length in Chapter II.

To what extent the First World War was ‘unprecedented’ continues to be debated by scholars, but an unequivocal truth is that rarely before had so many countries been faced with bodies and missing people to deal with on such a vast scale, combined with a non-repatriation policy and an emphasis on individual identity in remembrance.<sup>34</sup> Other methods of handling war dead, including ossuaries (e.g. historically in France) and mass graves (e.g. how Germany buried its First World War losses on the Western Front, partly due to constraining factors associated with being the defeated party) were quickly deemed unacceptable for British and imperial commemoration. No, each body had to have its own “six feet of ground”,<sup>35</sup> and furthermore, every single person, whether found or missing, had to have their name carved in stone, somewhere.<sup>36</sup> If this could not be on their headstone, it would be on a memorial to the “missing”, a term whose newness and specificity in this context is indicated by its encasement in quotation marks throughout IWGC documents from the time.<sup>37</sup>

Any work dealing with the IWGC is dealing with layers upon layers of ‘memorials’. The IWGC not only created and maintained memorials (as we commonly understand them) and headstones (which were frequently referred to as ‘memorials’), but the entire institution was itself considered a single memorial.<sup>38</sup> Significant scholarship has been undertaken to

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<sup>34</sup> See for example Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, particularly Chapter 4 “War Memorials and the Mourning Process,” 78-116.

<sup>35</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “4 March 1919”.

<sup>36</sup> As with any idealistic principle, in reality there were exceptions— including, problematically, instances of a lack of individual naming for non-white combatants and labour corps members commemorated in non-Western Front theatres.

<sup>37</sup> For one of many examples, see CWGC WG 219/8, “17 March 1924”.

<sup>38</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “War Graves: Statement of Reasons in Support of the Proposal of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” submission to the House of Commons, 24 April 1920.

chronicle the institutional history of the IWGC and the lives of its most important personages; this thesis makes no attempt to do either. Crucial works include Longworth's *Unending Vigil* and Crane's *Empires of the Dead*, which give an institutional and individual history of the IWGC, respectively, and Summers' *Remembered*, which provides a lavishly illustrated and more layperson-oriented account.<sup>39</sup>

However, any overview of the IWGC must include at least introductions to its principal figures. In addition to founder Fabian Ware, among the crucial people who helped to bring these 'silent cities' of the dead to life were three architects, a poet, and a scholar.<sup>40</sup> The IWGC had three principal architects, all British – Edwin Lutyens, Reginald Blomfield, and Herbert Baker – as well as a range of junior architects, literary advisor Rudyard Kipling, and advisor Frederic Kenyon from the British Museum. It also managed both civilian and military staff (British, imperial, and Chinese Labour Corps), particularly in the immediate postwar years 1919-1921 when the highest volume of bodies were needing to be found and/or moved.

Edwin Lutyens left his mark on the material culture of First World War remembrance by creating several of its most well-known iterations. He designed the IWGC Thiepval memorial to the missing of the Somme, the national Australian memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, and the Stone of Remembrance, an architectural feature repeated across the larger IWGC cemeteries (more on all of these to follow).<sup>41</sup> He also created more than sixty war memorials in Britain and abroad and was responsible for designing 140 IWGC

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<sup>39</sup> Philip Longworth, *Unending Vigil: History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 1917-1985* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, [1985] 2010); Crane, *Empires of the Dead*; Julie Summers, *Remembered: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (London: Merrell, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> A fourth architect, Charles Holden, was also important in the IWGC; see Tim Godden, "Refining a Style: Charles Holden, the Imperial War Graves Commission and the birth of British Modern" (PG Cert History of Architecture dissertation, Birkbeck, 2012). See also Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 169.

<sup>41</sup> For more detail on Lutyens and the Stone, see Kingsley Baird, "The material of remembrance: their name liveth forevermore?" in *Endurance and the First World War: Experiences and Legacies in New Zealand and Australia*, ed. David Monger, Sarah Murray, and Katie Pickles (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 263-283.

cemeteries on the Western Front.<sup>42</sup> Before the war, he had been a leading country-house architect and also an architect of imperial Britain, namely in India.<sup>43</sup> His colleague and rival Herbert Baker, whose notable designs include the national memorials at Neuve Chapelle and Delville Wood, was also an imperially-minded architect.<sup>44</sup> As early as 1916, he had a vision for the memorials that would be created in the war's aftermath. He argued, "the outcome of this war will be an uplifting of the ideals of our Nation and of our Empire",<sup>45</sup> and the memorials he designed "promote[d] his vision of a harmonious imperial system across space and time and to represent the grandeur of the British Empire."<sup>46</sup> The third Principal Architect was Reginald Blomfield, former president of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Among other contributions, he came up with the final design for the Cross of Sacrifice that adorns most IWGC cemeteries, designed the Menin Gate memorial, and was responsible for the first three 'experimental' IWGC cemeteries on the Western Front.<sup>47</sup>

The last on this list were not architects but a poet and a scholar. Rudyard Kipling was well-known in Britain at the time of the war, and his son John ('Jack') went missing in 1915. Jack's body was finally identified in the 1990s, and his grave's headstone in St Mary's A.D.S Cemetery now bears his name.<sup>48</sup> Kipling was asked to craft many of the inscriptions for IWGC memorials and also contributed stock phrases – often drawn from the Bible – that are repeated in hundreds of IWGC cemeteries. One of his most famous works, short story "The Gardener," concerns a bereaved mother visiting the IWGC grave of her illegitimate son; he

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<sup>42</sup> Tim Skelton, *Lutyens and the Great War* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd., 2008), 15; for an itemisation and analysis of 'his' 140 cemeteries, see Jeroen Geurst, *Cemeteries of the Great War by Sir Edwin Lutyens*, trans. George Hall and Gerard van den Hooff (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 106-107. Lutyens has been the subject of extensive writing, including Skelton, *Lutyens*, and Christopher Hussey, *The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens* (London: Country Life, 1950).

<sup>44</sup> Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 105.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Andrew Prescott Keating, "The Empire of the Dead: British Burial Abroad and the Formation of National Identity," PhD thesis, University of California Berkeley, 2011, 113.

<sup>46</sup> Keating, "Empire of the Dead," 114.

<sup>47</sup> Crane, *Empires of the Dead*, 116, 168-169; see also Longworth, *Unending Vigil*, 36.

<sup>48</sup> Grave reference VII.D.2. The veracity of Jack's grave identification continued to be debated for the next twenty-plus years; the BBC and other news outlets reported in 2016 that it had finally been fairly definitively confirmed.

wrote this in 1926, clearly informed by both his personal and professional interactions with the Commission.<sup>49</sup> Frederic Kenyon, meanwhile, was an academic and Director of the British Museum. In 1917 the IWGC had asked him to prepare a set of recommendations regarding the variety of proposals and opinions currently clashing over the architectural treatment and layout of the Commission's future cemeteries; his landmark report, "War Graves: How the cemeteries abroad will be designed" (1918), was eventually almost unequivocally adopted as the official position of the IWGC.<sup>50</sup>

An element of 'great man history' is inevitable with such instrumental figures.<sup>51</sup> However, there are thousands more IWGC workers who should not be forgotten: the myriad junior architects of the IWGC,<sup>52</sup> and, despite the comparative dearth of information about them, the stonemasons, gardeners, soldier employees, and administrative staff who laboured to bury the dead and transform the landscapes into the pristinely beautiful sites of memory we see today. This work continues: the CWGC is a major horticultural employer worldwide.<sup>53</sup> In 1960, the IWGC was renamed the 'Commonwealth' War Graves Commission (CWGC), to reflect the changing nature of the British Empire.<sup>54</sup> Today the CWGC commemorates more

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<sup>49</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "The Gardener," 1926, accessed via <http://www.greatwar.nl/books/gardener/gardener.html>.

<sup>50</sup> The CWGC has digitised this document. Frederic Kenyon, "War Graves: How the cemeteries abroad will be designed," report to the IWGC, 1918. <https://www.cwgc.org/-/media/files/cwgc/misc/misc-reports/the-kenyon-report.ashx?la=en&hash=9CFDFBD119F31D2981E54E71AFD934F340528C86>.

<sup>51</sup> The 'Great Man Theory' of history, originating in the 1840s with Thomas Carlyle, argues that historical processes are driven by the actions of significant individuals: "The History of the World, I said already, was the Biography of Great Men" (Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* [London: Chapman & Hall Ltd, 1840], 17).

<sup>52</sup> For more information on the architects (especially junior) of the IWGC, see Tim Godden's research, especially his forthcoming PhD thesis from the University of Kent, "Designing Memory: Experience, memory and design in the cemetery architecture of the Imperial War Graves Commission."

<sup>53</sup> CWGC, "Horticulture," 2018, <https://www.cwgc.org/learn/horticulture-and-works/horticulture>.

<sup>54</sup> This was preceded by a growing conceptualisation of the Empire as a Commonwealth even during the war itself. Concepts of the British empire changed throughout the course of the war; as Gregory Hynes argues, British politicians began to favour the concept of the British Commonwealth of Nations as a benevolent byword for Empire, particularly later in the war and towards the Paris Peace Conference, to court international and imperial opinion. Gregory Hynes, "Greater Britain and the Great War: British and New Zealand Official Propaganda in the First World War," PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2019. For further discussion of the concept of 'Commonwealth' during the war and its aftermath, and of the changing nature of the British empire during the interwar period this thesis examines, see W. David McIntyre, *The Britannic Vision: Historians and the Making of the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1907-48* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

than 1.7 million dead from both the First and Second World Wars, at more than 23,000 cemetery and memorial sites in over 150 countries.



Image 1.1. Typical view of a CWGC cemetery today. Prowse Point Military Cemetery, Belgium, 2017.

Another core component of this thesis which requires contextual overview is First World War memory. For this thesis, the simplest yet most significant point on this theme is that experience (war and postwar) affected memory.<sup>55</sup> This was true at both collective and individual levels, of ‘national’ experiences (e.g. conscription, major battles) and individual ones (e.g. place of death, family circumstances). The experience of distance uniquely combines these two, as distance between battlefield commemorative sites and bereaved next-

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<sup>55</sup> One of the main works that is also a proponent of this is Adrian Gregory’s *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946* (Oxford: Berg, 1994). See also Angela K. Smith and Sandra Barkhof, “Introduction,” in *War Experience and Memory in Global Cultures Since 1914*, ed. Angela K. Smith and Sandra Barkhof (New York City: Routledge, 2018), which explores the ways in which “war, experience, and memory have shaped contemporary societies” by “adding different shades to the palette of collective memory” (2).

of-kin was individually felt and yet experienced on a mass scale. ‘National’ experiences during the war which affected memory are addressed in more detail later in this introduction, and the role of distance in memory and the attempts to bridge it are the focus of Chapter IV (Keeping Touch). While the vast majority of those who participated in the First World War did survive it, for better or for worse the focal point of its memory overwhelmingly remains the dead; as Sally Minogue and Andrew Palmer argue, “our understanding of [the war’s] significance is shaped in on-going processes by ‘texts, rites, monuments’ and, at the heart of these interventions lies our commemoration of the dead.”<sup>56</sup> Although this thesis is arguably contributing to this discrepancy by focusing on memorials and cemeteries, as the following chapters will demonstrate this thesis is actually very much about the people left behind and the decisions they made, not just about the dead.

The submission of this thesis in 2019 positions it at the tail end of the deluge of First World War memory research published during the 2014-2018 centenary period. (Or, more optimistically perhaps, positions it at the front edge of the uncharted territory that is First World War memory scholarship in the post-centenary public consciousness.) Key recent works that shed significant new light on aspects of First World War memory relevant to this thesis include *Landscapes of the First World War*, *Proximity and Distance*, *Commemorative Spaces of the First World War*, and many more.<sup>57</sup> The increased public spotlight on the First

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<sup>56</sup> Sally Minogue and Andrew Palmer, *The Remembered Dead: Poetry, Memory and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 11.

<sup>57</sup> Selena Daly, Martina Salvante, and Vanda Wilcox (eds), *Landscapes of the First World War* (Cham: Palgrave, 2018); Romain Fathi and Emily Robertson (eds), *Proximity and Distance: Space, Time and the First World War* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2020); David C. Harvey and James Wallis (eds), *Commemorative Spaces of the First World War: Historical Geographies at the Centenary* (London: Routledge, 2017); Alice Kelly, *Commemorative Modernisms: Women Writers, Death, and the First World War* (forthcoming 2020); Helen McCartney and David Morgan-Owen (eds), “Commemorating the centenary of the First World War: National and trans-national perspectives,” *War and Society* special issue 36:4 (2017); Mark Connelly, *Celluloid War Memorials: British Instructional Films battle reconstructions, 1921-1929* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2016); Catriona Pennell’s recent work, most notably “A Truly Shared Commemoration?: Britain, Ireland and the Centenary of the First World War,” *RUSI Journal* 159:4 (2014), 92-100, “Learning Lessons from War? Inclusions and Exclusions in Teaching First World War History in English Secondary Schools,” *History and Memory* 28:1 (2016), 36-71, and “Taught to Remember? British Youth and First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours,” *Cultural Trends* 27:2 (2018), 83-98.

World War during its centenary also gave rise to significantly more visits to the IWGC memorials and cemeteries discussed in this thesis, emphasising not only their powerful role in shaping First World War memory (particularly now that living memory of the conflict has been lost), but by extension also the relevance of this thesis to contemporary public memory.

However, First World War memory and the study of it has a much longer history. During the interwar period (1918-1938), battlefield tourism became increasingly popular, with pilgrims and tourists seeking out emotional connections with place-based war memory.<sup>58</sup> It is crucial to note that for a large percentage of these visitors, they were undertaking “personal memory tourism,” revisiting places which they had specifically personally experienced beforehand, and that with the loss of living memory this type of tourism no longer exists for First World War sites.<sup>59</sup> The Second World War added a new layer of experience and memory to that of the First World War; Ashley Garber’s recent DPhil thesis is one of the most significant recent works on this phenomenon, examining how First World War veterans positioned themselves, their war memories, and their rationales for their service in relation to this second global conflict and its servicemen.<sup>60</sup> Later, the ‘memory boom’ of the 1960s, including a rise in oral history recordings and the BBC show “The Great War” (mirrored in Canada by the CBC’s influential 17-part series “In Flanders Fields”, 1964-65), prompted a renewed scholarly and public focus on the First World War and the importance of its memory.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See particularly the work of Simon Gregor, e.g. his forthcoming PhD thesis “Changing Spaces, Fading Landscapes; Battlefield Pilgrimage 1914-1929,” University of Wolverhampton; David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia, and Canada 1919-1939* (Oxford: Berg, 1998); and Brian Murphy, “Dark Tourism and the Michelin World War 1 Battlefield Guides,” *Journal of Franco-Irish Studies* 4:1 (2015), article 8 (1-9).

<sup>59</sup> “Personal memory tourism” is elucidated and delineated most notably by Sabine Marschall, “Tourism and remembrance: the journey into the self and its past,” *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 12:4 (2014), 336.

<sup>60</sup> Ashley Garber, “Toward a ‘Two-War Legion’: Renegotiating First World War Memory in the British and American Legions, 1938-1946,” DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2018.

<sup>61</sup> For a discussion of this memory boom phenomenon, see particularly Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). For the CBC First World War series and its effect on popular memory, see the first half (331-341) of Teresa

First World War memory scholarship in the 25 years approaching the centenary also created an invaluable foundation for the field which this thesis gratefully acknowledges and unabashedly stands upon. An exhaustive survey is outside the scope or purpose of this thesis, but works by Bormanis, Connelly, Cornish and Saunders, Damousi, Foster, Gregory, Inglis, Jalland, Lloyd, Luckins, Nasson, Scates, Sheftall, Todman, Vance, Watson, Winter, and Ziino have been particularly influential and relevant.<sup>62</sup>

In the context of First World War memory, semantics are both important and blurry. Three interrelated terms used both throughout this thesis and across wider public and academic discourse about the conflict are memory, remembrance, and commemoration. For the purposes of this thesis, ‘memory’ is understood as directly and/or indirectly acquired perceptions of the past; ‘remembrance’ is the *action* of remembering;<sup>63</sup> and commemoration is the action or fact of remembering with an emphasis on connotations of mass and/or public experience or ritual. A related and critical concept is ‘collective memory’, for which

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Iacobelli’s “‘A Participant’s History?’: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Manipulation of Oral History,” *The Oral History Review* 38:2 (2011).

<sup>62</sup> See particularly their following works: Katrina Bormanis, “The Monumental Landscape: Canadian, Newfoundland, and Australian Great War Capital and Battlefield Memorials and the Topography of National Remembrance,” PhD thesis, Concordia University, 2010; Mark Connelly, *The Great War, Memory and Ritual: Commemoration in the City and East London, 1916-1939* (Rochester: Royal Historical Society, 2002); Paul Cornish and Nicholas Saunders (eds), *Contested Objects: Material Memories of the Great War* (London: Routledge, 2009); Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jeremy Foster, “Creating a Temenos, Positing ‘South Africanism’: Material Memory, Landscape Practice and the Circulation of Identity at Delville Wood,” *Cultural Geography* 11 (2004), 259-290; Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*; Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War memorials in the Australian landscape* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998); Pat Jalland, *Australian Ways of Death: A Social & Cultural History, 1840-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*; Tanja Luckins, *The Gates of Memory: Australian People’s Experiences and Memories of Loss and the Great War* (Freemantle: Curtin, 2004); Bill Nasson, “Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration,” *English Historical Review* 119:480 (February 2004), 57-86; Bruce Scates, *Return to Gallipoli: Walking the battlefields of the Great War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mark David Sheftall, *Altered Memories of the Great War: Divergent Narratives of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010); Dan Todman, *The Great War: Myth and Memory* (London: Hambledon, 2005); Jonathan Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997); Janet S.K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Winter, *Sites of Memory*; Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves, and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> An important part of First World War remembrance was – and is – remembrance of the sacrifices of those who survived. In focusing on remembrance of the dead, this thesis risks exacerbating an already unevenly weighted general narrative which privileges the dead over the living in remembrance, but this is necessary to explore the intended key questions.

Halbwachs' work is taken as a starting point. A foundational text in memory theory, Halbwachs argues that human memory can only function within a collective context.<sup>64</sup> He also posits that the present “weighs very little” in comparison to the past.<sup>65</sup> His work on the relationship between individual and collective memory is one that by necessity informs my work on how material culture factors into this triangulation: “There are no perceptions without recollections. But inversely, there are no recollections which can be said to be purely interior, that is, which can be preserved only within individual memory.”<sup>66</sup>

The twin pillars of this thesis are memory and material culture, upon which conclusions about identity are drawn and overlaid. Thus, this introduction also needs to situate the forthcoming chapters' arguments by contextualising the relevance of material culture as an entryway into, and valuable source regarding, the experiences and thoughts of people in the past. Material culture has increasingly been turned to as a methodological approach throughout the discipline of history, particularly in the last ten years.<sup>67</sup> Material culture is just stuff: objects.<sup>68</sup> It is all the things that people make, and touch, and use. It is tangible things – things you can see and touch – rather than intangible things, such as ideas or

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<sup>64</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1950, originally published in 1925] 1992).

<sup>65</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 183.

<sup>66</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 169.

<sup>67</sup> See for example Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (eds), *Writing Material Culture History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Kuechler-Fogden, Mike Rowlands, and Patricia Spyer (eds), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: Sage, 2013); Karen Harvey (ed), *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources* (London: Routledge, 2017). However, its precedent was work done in anthropology, for example Arjun Appadurai's foundational text “Introduction: commodities and the politics of value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3-63, and Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey's *Death, Memory & Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2001). Material culture-based approaches to understanding history were also widely used as early as 19<sup>th</sup> century America, with schools employing “object lessons” to convey historical concepts; see Sarah Anne Carter, *Object Lessons: How Nineteenth-Century Americans Learned to Make Sense of the Material World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), particularly her introductory chapter “Reason From Things,” 1-4.

<sup>68</sup> For a field-defining analysis delving much further into material culture theory than this thesis is able to, see Bill Brown's introductory chapter to *Other Things*, particularly his discussion of the subject-object distinction and its ramifications for the “thingness” of objects (19). Bill Brown, “Things – In Theory,” in *Other Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 17-48. See also Ruth van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock, “Archaeologies of Memory: An Introduction,” in *Archaeologies of Memory*, ed. Ruth M. van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock (Oxford: Wiley, 2007), 1-13, on the role of objects in shaping the mutability and heterogeneity of social memories.

groups or words (though of course it intersects with these). Taking a material-culture-centred approach to a historical topic, as this thesis does, means two things. First, it means that material culture itself is treated as a source of information. However, that can only take us so far. We can talk endlessly about how we should be able to learn from the objects themselves, but we cannot look at a cemetery and instantly know who made the decisions about it and what they said, for example. As Lowenthal aptly argues, “no physical object or trace is a self-sufficient guide to bygone times.”<sup>69</sup> For that we *do* need to look at documents. So, secondly, taking a material culture approach does not only privilege the objects themselves; rather more broadly it means that we are learning about people in history from a variety of sources, but by focusing on the stories of *things*.

The purpose of using material culture as a lens for enquiry is to give us a different way to understand the people of the past. Stuff is all around us, always, and we interact with it all the time – and so did the people of 100 or 1000 years ago. In the case of the First World War, some of the objects that people interacted with are still around today. That means that *we* in 2019 interact with it too – and if we interact with it, we should be trying to understand it. Not only do we interact with objects, but these interactions form critical parts of how we form memories; “memory is performed, mediated, and stored through the material world that surrounds us.”<sup>70</sup> They also play a crucial role in the “organisation of experience” for humans; as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi argues, objects “help objectify the self in at least three major ways”, the most relevant of which for this thesis is that “objects give concrete evidence of one’s place in a social network as symbols (literally, the joining together) of valued

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<sup>69</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 383.

<sup>70</sup> Laszlo Muntean, Liedeke Plate, and Anneke Smelik, “Things to Remember: Introduction to Materializing Memory in Popular Culture,” in *Materializing Memory in Popular Culture*, ed. Laszlo Muntean, Liedeke Plate, and Anneke Smelik (New York: Routledge, 2016), 4.

relationships.”<sup>71</sup> This thesis explores how IWGC memorials and cemeteries served this function for both collectives and individuals in the interwar period.

Two key concepts relating to material culture which this thesis explores are *agency* and *messages*. Can objects have agency? This thesis aims to demonstrate that they can, with limits. They can when ‘agency’ is understood as the ability to affect a person’s thoughts, beliefs, actions, or memories, and when it is acknowledged that the agency of objects is inextricably bound up with the agency of the people who created, maintained, and interacted with them. This follows the stance taken by Jones and Cloke, who define agency and the capacity of non-humans to possess it as follows:

the capacity of humans to act creatively – a basic definition of agency – often leads to the view that we are the only force in the world equipped with agency. We argue, along with others, that this denial of non-human materiality is both deluded and potentially dangerous. Non-human agencies not only co-constitute the contexts of life, but they also frequently reconstitute the fabrics of day-to-day life and the places and spaces in which it is lived.<sup>72</sup>

It also aligns with the position taken in *Things To Remember*, whose authors argue that “inanimate objects and things also have a certain agency of their own, which affects practices of remembering as well as of forgetting”,<sup>73</sup> and that in *Other Things*, which argues that “hybrid objects” are those in which “the unhuman object assum[es] characteristics of human subjects (from animation to *agency* to consciousness) [emphasis added].”<sup>74</sup> A relevant question, which is outside this project’s scope to answer yet is worth bearing in mind, is whether agency can only be *taken*, or whether agency that is *given* (e.g. by an institution or person to an object) still qualifies as ‘agency’. Meanwhile, the term ‘messages’ is taken

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<sup>71</sup> Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, “Why We Need Things,” in *History From Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 22-23.

<sup>72</sup> Owain Jones and Paul Cloke, “Non-human agencies: trees in place and time,” in *Material Agency: Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach*, ed. Carl Knappett and Lambros Malafouris (New York City: Springer Science, 2008), 79. For another useful case study on the ability of objects to have agency, see Miguel John Versluys’ chapter on the agency of objects outside of their original contexts: “Exploring Aegyptiaca and their material agency throughout global history,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization*, ed. Tamar Hodos (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 74-89.

<sup>73</sup> Muntean, Plate, and Smelik, “Things to Remember,” 4.

<sup>74</sup> Brown, *Other Things*, 372.

throughout this thesis to refer to visible, audible, or implicit statements about a person, object, or location's identity or meaning. The wide spectrum of both the messages in question and their manifestations necessitated an umbrella term by which to refer to them collectively.

Drawing together these two strands of First World War memory and material culture, this thesis is located at one of the major nodes where they intersect: memorials and cemeteries.<sup>75</sup> This thesis aims to demonstrate and expand upon a maxim argued by Tarlow: that headstones are memorials not just to people, but to relationships.<sup>76</sup> As introduced above, relationships are at the heart of this thesis; this is because memorials and cemeteries are relationships writ in stone. Relationships are crucial to our understandings of identity and how it was conveyed, because a truism about identities is that they are always defined by their relation to others. Memorials and cemeteries are particularly powerful forms of objects for understanding relationships because, as this thesis' arguments support, they fall under all three categories of "person-object experiences" defined by Wood and Latham: objects as identity, objects as memories, and objects as reverence.<sup>77</sup>

Both 'memorials' and 'cemeteries' have specific connotations which need to be positioned here against their close relations, as this semantic nuance is necessary in the context of this thesis. First, the sites in question referred to as 'cemeteries' are not also called 'graveyards', and these semantics have an underlying relevance to one of the themes of this thesis. A 'cemetery' is "a large burial ground, especially one not in a churchyard";<sup>78</sup> and 'graveyard' is "a burial ground, especially one beside a church."<sup>79</sup> This highlights an important feature of IWGC cemeteries: they were ostensibly secular in that they were never

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<sup>75</sup> This is not their only intersection; museums, archaeology, and ephemera are other notable examples. See particularly Ashbridge, "Military Identification," and Ann-Marie Foster, "The Ephemera of Remembrance in the Wake of War and Disaster, 1899-1939," PhD thesis, Northumbria University, 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration*, 131.

<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth Wood and Kiersten F. Latham, *The Objects of Experience: Transforming Visitor-Object Encounters in Museums* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 57.

<sup>78</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, "Cemetery," <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cemetery>.

<sup>79</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, "Graveyard," <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/graveyard>.

attached to places of worship. However, a reoccurring theme throughout Chapters II-IV is the extent to which religious beliefs nevertheless permeated these places: through headstone and memorial designs, through inscriptions, through failed plans to include temples and mosques onsite, through the IWGC ‘Cross of Sacrifice’ cemetery feature and debates surrounding it, and through the characteristics that IWGC sites and their landscapes share with religiously sacred places. Second, the reverse scenario is the case for the memorials in question, in that a related word – ‘monuments’ – is used interchangeably with ‘memorials’ to refer to these objects. The two terms have different shades of meaning; a ‘memorial’ is “a statue or structure established to remind people of a person or event”,<sup>80</sup> while a ‘monument’ has connotations of commemorating rather than reminding.<sup>81</sup> Their meanings are mutually intelligible enough, and similarly applicable to the sites in question, that they have been deemed appropriate for interchangeable use in the context of this thesis in the interests of semantic variation.<sup>82</sup> However, this differs from the view taken by Marzena Sokolowska-Paryz, who argues that the two are complementary yet starkly different enough that dictionaries are incorrect in treating them as synonyms.<sup>83</sup> She discusses how memorials centre national loss while monuments centre national pride, and highlights this difference as emblematic of the broader relationship between the “grief school” and the “political school” in memory studies, considering Jay Winter to lead the grief school and George Mosse to lead the political school, due to their differing interpretations of memorial and cemetery sites’ functions in national consciousnesses.<sup>84</sup> However, it is worth noting that Winter and Mosse frequently interacted in person at the l’Historial de la Grande Guerre research centre in

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<sup>80</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, “Memorial,” <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/memorial>.

<sup>81</sup> See Oxford English Dictionary, “Monument,” <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/monument>.

<sup>82</sup> In other languages of First World War scholarship, particularly French, the relationships between the approximate equivalents of these terms would not allow so easily for this slippage between them.

<sup>83</sup> Marzena Sokolowska-Paryz, *Reimagining the War Memorial, Reinterpreting the Great War: The Formats of British Commemorative Fiction* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 4.

<sup>84</sup> Sokolowska-Paryz, *Reimagining the War Memorial*, 4.

Peronne and considered themselves consciously in dialogue, and that the contrast between them may now be overstated.<sup>85</sup>

Whether labelled as memorials or monuments, these objects serve many purposes, and this thesis only has the capacity to explore some of them. Though they do much more than merely perpetuate remembrance, it is important to pause here and address the moral value attached to that function; it gave a sense of conviction and righteousness to many if not all of the actors involved with the creation of the sites addressed in this thesis, which is evidenced by many of the examples and quotes throughout these chapters. Paul Connerton argues that “remembering and commemoration is usually a virtue [and] forgetting is necessarily a failing”,<sup>86</sup> and this nearly-universal belief added a depth of moral urgency that raised the stakes in many of the interwar commemorative decisions discussed in this thesis. Ironically, of the seven types of forgetting that Connerton identifies (repressive erasure; prescriptive forgetting; forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity; structural amnesia; forgetting as annulment; forgetting as planned obsolescence; forgetting as humiliated silence),<sup>87</sup> one in particular went hand in hand with the postwar creation of memory sites: forgetting as part of forming a new identity. For the Dominions particularly, battlefield commemorative sites that were useful to the construction and bolstering of national identity (e.g. Vimy) were privileged at the expense of other stories, locations, and experiences.

Though memorials and cemeteries are discussed in general terms at various points throughout the thesis, five memorials from the First World War’s Western Front are taken as key case studies in this work. They are the strongest examples of the intersections of identity

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<sup>85</sup> Adrian Gregory (Winter’s former doctoral student), personal communication, 21 March 2019.

<sup>86</sup> Paul Connerton, “Seven types of forgetting,” *Memory Studies* 1:1 (2008), 59.

<sup>87</sup> Connerton, “Seven types of forgetting,” see particularly 62-64 for the section on forgetting and the formation of identity. For further on this, see Charles B. Stone and William Hurst, who argue for “retrieval-induced forgetting” as another important type, and posit that not all silences are mnemonically equal: “(Induced) forgetting to form a collective memory,” *Memory Studies* 7:3 (2014), 314-327.

that this thesis aims to interrogate, because they are the most significant Western Front examples of monumental British imperial commemoration, and thus were concentrated focal points for decisions, attention, emotion, and visitation. As such, they provide the most fruitful entry points into significant analysis of these intersections and their wider ramifications beyond these specific monuments. Crucially, they serve as prisms and entry-points through which to understand this wider picture, not as blinders serving to exclude it. The five memorials are, in order of construction, the Delville Wood memorial (South Africa, 1926), the Neuve Chapelle memorial (undivided India, 1927), the Menin Gate memorial (British Empire monument, 1927), the Vimy memorial (Canada, 1936), and the Villers-Bretonneux memorial (Australia, 1938).<sup>88</sup> All are in France except Menin Gate (Belgium). All of these monuments fell under the purview of the Imperial War Graves Commission during their creation, yet were designed in consultation with the relevant governments (of the various Dominions or India). Notably, the governments of the host countries of these monuments (France and Belgium) were also consulted, but this thesis focuses on decision-making and correspondence amongst the various relevant actors of the British imperial world, rather than its external relations with the foreign governments whose land these sites were on.

The inclusion of Menin Gate in this list heralds the need for another definition: ‘empire memorial’. All of the memorials examined in this thesis are, inherently, imperial, as their inclusion within the Imperial War Graves Commission construction scheme reflects the political reality that all four countries in question (Canada, Australia, South Africa, and India) were still enmeshed within the British Empire despite increasing independence during the interwar period. The monuments are also in some cases blatantly imperial, in terms of portraying inclusion within British identity in their designs and symbolism, despite also being

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<sup>88</sup> This information is also summarised in Table 3.A in Chapter III, and is frequently reiterated at various points throughout the thesis.

characterised as ‘national’ monuments; this relationship is interrogated throughout the thesis. However, the term ‘empire memorial’ in this work is strictly used only to denote those memorials that commemorate *multiple* nationalities of the dead from within the British Empire: Menin Gate and, in more passing mentions, the Thiepval and Tyne Cot memorials.

A crucial concept elicited throughout this thesis is that the distinction between ‘memorial’ and ‘cemetery’ is not a binary; they are not mutually exclusive categories. Headstones are frequently referred to in archival sources as ‘memorials’, and the complexities between these cemeteries and memorials spatially, thematically, and functionally serve to complicate distinctions between them. The extent, nature, manifestations, and ramifications of this intertwined connection has not been thoroughly addressed previously in First World War Western Front scholarship, particularly with the added layer of the imperial dimension. This provides an exciting opportunity, which this thesis aims to seize, to demonstrate the significance of these elements of this interconnection to the representation and transmission of messages about national, imperial, collective, and individual identities during the interwar period.

The Western Front is arguably the most stereotypical focus for both public and academic knowledge and enquiry regarding the First World War. However, it was the best theatre in which to situate this research, and this thesis will demonstrate that it is still possible to produce new insights about this highly studied region. The Western Front was chosen for this project because there is no other location at which all the British Dominions and India have substantial and therefore comparable sites of remembrance. If this study were situated at Gallipoli, for example, it would become more solely an ANZAC story, to the detriment of its comparative and transnational aims.

This project makes no attempt to conduct quantitative rather than qualitative analysis. The extensive variables involved in transnational comparison in this context would render

quantitative research unsupportable. More at the heart of the matter, however, is that this is a social history rather than a military history thesis. Death and loss can be quantified in military, economic, and demographic terms, but not in emotional, personal, and social ones, and it is the latter sphere in which this thesis is firmly situated.

This project is not only multifaceted but also multi-layered. The different types of identity this work engages with are not positioned here as dichotomies, but as nested layers; they not only have complex relationships with their ‘opposite’ but are also affected by their intersections with each other. Two of the most significant sets of identity layers that this thesis engages with are national-imperial and individual-collective. ‘National’ and ‘imperial’ identities were not mutually exclusive at the sites in question; they co-existed, both in terms of ‘national’ and ‘imperial’ symbolism and inscriptions being present, and in terms of the explicit nationalism of some of the monuments still being framed within, and sometimes constrained by, the wider umbrella of the Imperial War Graves Commission. This umbrella also warranted the designation of a specific term in this thesis: ‘imperial dead’. ‘Canadian dead’ or ‘Indian dead’ etcetera obviously refers to the dead of those countries specifically, and ‘British dead’ is used here to refer to the dead of the metropole. Thus, another term was needed that encompassed *both* of those categories of the dead; the overarching control of the IWGC over the dead from across the British empire meant that there are many policies and decisions referred to in this thesis which were applied across the British, Dominion, and colonial dead. To acknowledge this, the term ‘imperial dead’ is utilised throughout this thesis when it is necessary to refer to *all* the dead of the British empire, including those from Britain itself.

The second set of nested identity layers is ‘individual’ and ‘collective’. The relationship between these two has three key permutations in this thesis:<sup>89</sup> in stone (the dead), in decision-making (the living), and in the archival source base drawn upon. Each of these will now be addressed in turn. First, both memorials and cemeteries are manifestations of different points along the spectrum of balancing individual and collective commemoration. Memorials are bastions of collective commemoration yet are considered here as unique and individual objects, whereas headstones – which do literally conduct unique and individual commemoration – are mainly considered here as a collective, rather than focusing on discrete examples. As will be discussed in Chapter III, the inscription of names serves to individualise, yet on memorials their sheer number together also creates a visual and affective effect; and the blanket policies of IWGC cemetery and headstone design meant that cemeteries, despite visually commemorating the dead on an individual basis, have significant collective and uniform elements as well. Second, the decision-making processes involved in creating these IWGC sites involved both individual and collective actors: the IWGC, the various governments involved, and the next-of-kin were all collective units, yet the individuals within them in many cases had prominent voices and power. This thesis steers firmly away from biographical impulse, often not even giving names unless relevant; for example, when quoting a letter from the IWGC’s Director of Works, it is his position that is considered important for the purposes of this project’s analysis, not his name or individual identity. This thesis is not a comprehensive institutional or biographical history; relevant actors are engaged with when appropriate, but its breadth necessitates an aversion to the tracing of individual narratives within these collective decision-making units. Third, as will

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<sup>89</sup> A fourth permutation, which is beyond the scope of this thesis to address with any depth, is that of individual and collective *memory*. For one theory on how these can be conceptualised within the ‘third wave of memory studies’, see Gregor Feindt, Felix Krawatzek, Daniela Mehler, Friedemann Pestel and Rieke Trimcev, “Entangled Memory: Towards a third wave in memory studies,” *History and Theory* 53:1 (2014), 24-44, particularly their statement that “memory’s entangledness manifests itself in the dynamic relations between single acts of remembering and changing mnemonic patterns” (43).

be discussed further below, this thesis relies entirely on institutional rather than personal archives. However, individual voices can be found within it: particularly in the confidential letters and memos by IWGC staff expressing their opinions, and in the correspondence received by these institutions (IWGC and governmental) from individual members of the bereaved and retained by their archives. Through all three of these manifestations of the relationship between individual and collective identity, this thesis works to both find and amplify the individual while firmly contextualising it within the agency and presence of collectives.

As has been indicated at various points above, there are four countries whose material culture of remembrance and identity form the case studies of this thesis: Australia, Canada, India, and South Africa. Each have specific types of intersections between war experience and identity which make them not only salient but challenging and complicated for any study of First World War memory: most notably distinctions involving race, religion, distance, and multilingualism.

Each were heterogenous societies, with unique characteristics and history shaping their war memories and identities. Yet they also shared enough significant commonalities to warrant consideration together. All four were signatories to the Royal Charter that created the IWGC, and all four fielded distinct armies and/or labour corps units that fought as part of the British forces.<sup>90</sup> This thesis examines them together because in many key respects they were subsets of one whole; because of this, they were interacting not only with the metropole but also with each other.

As introduced earlier in this chapter, experiences affected First World War memories on both an individual and collective level. The memorials and cemeteries commemorating the

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<sup>90</sup> Ireland was not, hence its exclusion from this study in the interests of a cohesive narrative within the constraints of a reasonable DPhil thesis. For more on Irish battlefield commemoration, see the comprehensive work recently published on Irish graves and memorials of the Western Front: Ronan McGreevy, *Wherever the Firing Line Extends: Ireland and the Western Front* (Dublin: History Press, 2016).

dead of Canada, Australia, India, and South Africa cannot be divorced from the war memories of these countries, and those memories cannot be divorced from the wartime experiences that shaped them. Thus, a crucial contextualising element of these IWGC sites is an understanding of the wartime experiences of the four countries in question.<sup>91</sup> Since it is a rare scholar (present author not included, for example) who is equally expert in all four, this section will now briefly address each of these countries' experiences in turn,<sup>92</sup> to lay the groundwork for a common foundation of understanding for the IWGC sites that followed.

In 1914 Canada was automatically at war when Britain was, as a Dominion of the British Empire. The country had a population of approximately 8 million, including a 28.5% Francophone population and 54% of British origin. It had been a Dominion since the British North America Act of 1867 legislated Canadian Confederation, though this originally did not incorporate all of the provinces and territories that eventually came to comprise modern Canada. Most significantly absent was Newfoundland, which remained a separate Dominion until joining Canada in 1949; this gave Newfoundland a specific and different relationship to the war and its memory than the rest of Canada, and its material culture of commemoration thus falls largely outside the scope of this thesis.

Canada's initial contribution to the war's armed forces was the approximately 32,000 men, largely British-born, who enlisted soon after war was declared. They received hasty training in Canada before being sent to England for further training, and went on to serve as the Canadian Division of the British Expeditionary Force. Its first major fighting was in April

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<sup>91</sup> A recent edited collection has several chapters focusing on the wartime experiences and/or postwar political ramifications for each of these four countries, but does not engage substantially with postwar memory and commemoration: Ashley Jackson (ed), *The British Empire and the First World War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016). For additional case studies of British empire participation (largely not including the countries in question) and broader contextualisation of other empires' experiences of the war, see Andrew Tait Jarboe and Richard S. Fogarty, *Empires in World War I: Shifting Frontiers and Imperial Dynamics in a Global Conflict* (London: IB Tauris, 2014).

<sup>92</sup> The four are addressed in turn here in chronological order based on the date each became a Dominion. For a contextual history of the Dominions in the period immediately preceding this, particularly the development of the national-imperial relationship, see John Eddy and Deryck Schreuder (eds), *The rise of colonial nationalism* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988).

1915 in the Ypres salient of Belgium, and included withstanding the first use of chlorine gas on the Western Front, at and around Vancouver Corner (the later location of Canada's St-Julien memorial, discussed in Chapter III). Further 'Canadian Divisions' were raised and sent to the front, eventually transforming into the Canadian Corps and then the Canadian Expeditionary Force.

The most significant battle for Canada's reputation was the attack on Vimy Ridge on 9 April 1917, part of the wider Battle of Arras. Vimy was the first time that all four divisions of the Canadian Corps fought together, was meticulously planned, and included effective implementation of recent tactical innovations such as the creeping artillery barrage. It was praised as a success, particularly compared to the relative lack of British successes along the rest of the Arras front, and did result in a gain of 4,500 yards of ground for the Allies.

However, the German lines then simply moved east a few miles; the outcome of the attack on Vimy had arguably little effect on the overall outcome of the war. This makes its legendary status in Canadian history perhaps somewhat baffling; many scholars have filled volumes explaining its role and significance to Canadian myth-making, including most notably the works *The Vimy Trap* and *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment*.<sup>93</sup> This thesis accepts as a given that Vimy was accorded this significance, and does not attempt to rewrite yet again an explanation of why this was so.

1917 was an important milestone in Canada's wartime experience for another reason besides Vimy: it was also the year that conscription was introduced. Deeply dividing the country along multiple lines, most notably linguistic (Francophone/Anglophone) and geographic (rural/urban), conscription forcibly provided the 100,000+ men that Canada's armed forces needed to stay at full strength until the Armistice.

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<sup>93</sup> Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *The Vimy Trap: or, how we learned to stop worrying and love the Great War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2016); Geoffrey Hayes, Andrew Iarocci, and Mike Bechthold (eds), *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007).

The divide of the 1917 conscription crisis was not the only ugly side of Canada revealed during the conflict; racism and xenophobia were also rampant. At least 9,000 German and Austro-Hungarian immigrants were interned as enemy aliens under the War Measures Act; many of whom were used as forced labour to build infrastructure in Canada's now-famous National Parks. Japanese- and Chinese-Canadians faced significant discrimination when attempting to enlist, often being barred from doing so, and their service did not shift Canadian opinion of their equality within society to the extent that they had hoped. (This was also a time when the Canadian government's official immigration policy for Chinese people was a Chinese Head Tax, and five years postwar, Chinese immigration was banned nearly altogether with the Chinese Immigration Act.) One third of registered Indigenous Canadians (who in Canada are considered to comprise three main groups of peoples: 'First Nations', 'Métis', and 'Inuit')<sup>94</sup> enlisted, despite being discouraged from doing so in the early years of the war; they served in every theatre of the war and more than 50 of them were awarded medals for bravery, yet Indigenous veterans returned home to be given less benefits than their white counterparts. In 1917 the Canadian government also covered up what was technically the largest mass migration in Canadian history: the secret transportation, in locked trains and deadly conditions, of 85,000 members of the Chinese Labour Corps.<sup>95</sup> They arrived in western Canada from China, and traversed the entire length of the country west-east by guarded train en route to France. Canada also employed non-white troops as labour, though not to the extent that South Africa and India did; most famously, the "Black Battalion" (No.2 Construction Battalion), raised in Nova Scotia in 1916, was a segregated non-combatant unit, and remains the first and only all-Black battalion in Canadian military history.

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<sup>94</sup> Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "Aboriginal Contributions During the First World War," 24 October 2014, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1414152378639/1414152548341>.

<sup>95</sup> The 2014 Chinese/Canadian documentary *Tricks on the Dead* by Ying Wang, Aimin Liu, and Jordan Paterson is currently one of the most definitive sources on the subject.

Like Canada, wartime Australia was a white settler Dominion society deeply divided over conscription and allowing significant racism in its policies. However, it also had notably different experiences, most significantly in the extent of its participation on the Middle Eastern front and the role this played in national identity creation. When the war began, Australia's population was approximately 5 million; 330,000 went on to serve and more than 61,000 of those died, giving Australia the highest proportionate death toll vis-à-vis enlistment numbers of any country in the British army.

Australia too was automatically at war in 1914, having become the self-governing Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 but still not controlling its external diplomacy.<sup>96</sup> The conscription crises Australia faced in 1916 and 1917 remain some of the most bitterly divisive in its political history, and were infused not only with anxieties about the responsibilities of citizenship but also class division and sectarianism between Protestants and Catholics, including the sentiments of the Catholic Irish population in Australia.

The first Australian troops to serve overseas in the conflict were those quickly raised in summer 1914 and sent to occupy German colonies in New Guinea and surrounding islands. The first of the eventual five divisions of the Australian Imperial Force departed in November for training in Egypt, and then landed at Gallipoli in April 1915. The Gallipoli landing on 25 April was part of the ill-fated Dardanelles campaign; though Gallipoli was a British-led offensive, it was Australia's first large-scale military action of the war. From then on, Australian and New Zealand troops, known as 'ANZACs', were increasingly mythologised and heroised, particularly in relation to Gallipoli. In similar rhetoric used to describe Canada's relationship to the attack on Vimy, Gallipoli was seen as the 'birth of a

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<sup>96</sup> For an overview of Australia's place within 19<sup>th</sup> century British imperialism and how this affected its development and identity in the decades immediately preceding the First World War, see Luke Trainor, *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism: Manipulation, conflict and compromise in the late nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), particularly 184-188 on how "the ideology of imperialism had to be adjusted to accommodate the nationalist mood" (185).

nation' for Australia. As it lies outside the Western Front, it therefore is outside the scope of this thesis, but its effect on not only Australian collective war memory but also on Australian self-conceptions of national identity is undeniable, and it continues to figure centrally in both.<sup>97</sup>

Australians on the Western Front participated in most major battles from mid-1916 until the end of the war, including the Somme (particularly at Pozières), Fromelles, Bullecourt, Passchendaele, Amiens and Villers-Bretonneux in spring 1918, and various offensives in the Last 100 Days. Villers-Bretonneux – a strategic town recaptured by predominantly the Australians on 24-25 April 1918 – became particularly associated with and representative of Australian Western Front memory, an effect only amplified after its national memorial was erected there in 1938.

Indigenous Australians faced significant discrimination during enlistment and training, though were ostensibly treated – and paid – equally during service itself. Guidance issued in 1916 to military recruiting centres stated, “Aboriginals, half-castes, or men with Asiatic blood are not to be enlisted – This applies to all coloured men.”<sup>98</sup> Much was left up to discretion, and increasing numbers of lighter-skinned Aboriginal men were successfully able to enlist as desperation for recruits rose during the conscription crises; by 1917, a new rule stated that “half-castes” were now officially permitted to enlist.<sup>99</sup> It is unfortunately unknown exactly how many Aboriginal men enlisted, as this was not noted on their attestation papers;

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<sup>97</sup> See Jenny Macleod’s work, particularly *Gallipoli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); also Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates (eds), *Beyond Gallipoli: New Perspectives on ANZAC* (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2016), particularly Tom Sear’s chapter “Uncanny Valleys and Anzac Avatars: Scaling a Postdigital Gallipoli,” 55-82.

<sup>98</sup> Australian War Memorial, “Aboriginal Service During the First World War,” <https://www.awm.gov.au/about/our-work/projects/indigenous-service>. As an example of this theme, for a description of how his lighter skin allowed Karanema Pohatu to enlist in the AIF despite his Maori heritage see Robyn Siers and Carlie Walker, “Ancestry: stories of multicultural Anzacs,” *Commonwealth of Australia*, 2015, 12.

<sup>99</sup> *Australian War Memorial*, “Aboriginal Service During the First World War.”

the best estimate, based partially on decoding the physical descriptions written about new recruits, is approximately 4,000 men.

South Africa had become a Dominion of the British Empire most recently of the three Dominion countries in question here, becoming the Union of South Africa in 1910.<sup>100</sup> With a complex sociolinguistic divide between its two major colonising communities, the British and the Dutch (known as ‘Afrikaners’, a subset of which were the Boers), these communities – and the political ideologies they strove for regarding South Africa as a nation – maintained an oppressive subjugation of the Black South African population, with varying views on the eventual necessity of some degree of African accommodation within their imagined national future.<sup>101</sup> The British victory in the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), which included the death of 28,000 Boers (80% of whom were children) in concentration camps created by the British, was still fresh in memory, prompting very different responses to the outbreak of the First World War from the British and Afrikaner white South Africans. In 1914 the South African government suppressed an Afrikaner rebellion in response to South Africa’s support of Britain’s war involvement, and occupied German South West Africa. Throughout the conflict South Africa played a proactive role in British offensives in German East Africa, while also sending troops and labour to the Middle Eastern and European fronts.<sup>102</sup> Approximately 35,000 Africans were employed in non-combatant roles on the German South-West African front and another 18,000 in East Africa.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> For an introduction to the formation and evolution of imperial identities in South Africa in the decades preceding the war, which shaped how identity was navigated and articulated after it, see Alan Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>101</sup> Jeremy Foster, *Washed With Sun: Landscape and the making of white South Africa* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 29.

<sup>102</sup> For an overview of South African participation throughout these theatres, see Bill Nasson, *Springboks on the Somme: South Africa and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Johannesburg: Penguin, 2007), and on the participation of Black men in both combatant and non-combatant roles, see Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting Their Own War: South African Blacks and the First World War* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).

<sup>103</sup> B.P. Willan, “The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918,” *The Journal of African History* 19:1 (1978), 64.

Mixed-race (“coloured”) infantry served in the former two theatres, though not the latter, where men of colour (mixed-race and Black) served solely in labour capacities under the South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC) and Cape Corps Labour Battalion (CCLB). These units comprised more than 20,000 men, who served under white officers, were not permitted to carry weapons, and were subject to significant attempts to keep them segregated both from white troops and from civilian populations overseas. Despite their status as ‘labour’ rather than armed troops, they still suffered significant casualties, due to disease, accidents, and their dangerous proximity to the front. Serving variously on the African and Middle Eastern fronts initially, both the SANLC and CCLB were eventually sent to the Western Front, where they were tasked with myriad crucial functions including offloading of ships, loading of trains and lorries, building, moving stores, building defences, quarrying, tree-felling, repairing roads, and hay-shifting.<sup>104</sup> Despite their service, these men did not receive increased civil rights in the aftermath of the conflict.

A smaller number of Black South African men were able to serve in a combatant function, with the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cape Corps Battalions. While the use of men of colour for labour roles was uncontested, the raising of Black fighting battalions met with significant outrage and disapproval in South Africa. The Battalions served in East Africa, Egypt, and Palestine.

One of South Africa’s most concentrated losses of white volunteer troops occurred at Delville Wood during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, more than 3,000 men of the South African Brigade captured much of the Wood from the German army and held it for a few days, eventually being withdrawn on the 20<sup>th</sup> when British troops broke

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<sup>104</sup> Anri Delpont, “South African Troops in Europe and the Middle East (Union of South Africa),” 27 April 2017, *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/south\\_african\\_troops\\_in\\_europe\\_and\\_the\\_middle\\_east\\_union\\_of\\_south\\_africa](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/south_african_troops_in_europe_and_the_middle_east_union_of_south_africa); CWGC, “South African Native Labour Corps,” <http://blog.cwgc.org/ss-mendi/sanlc/>.

through decisively.<sup>105</sup> Of the 3,150 South Africans who had participated in the attack, only 779 answered roll call on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The fact that the South Africans managed to hold the Wood allowed for the crafting of a victory narrative for the attack, despite the very pyrrhic nature of its success. The attack was subsequently marked as a significant day in the South African calendar, with ‘Delville Day’ being marked with a special ceremony domestically each year in mid-July through to the 1930s.

Notably, South African labourers also endured a mass loss, yet one that was largely overshadowed by Delville Wood in South African remembrance. This was largely due to the double privileging of *white* and *armed* men over *Black* and *labour* men in the societal hierarchy of value which extended to remembrance, further exacerbated by the fact that this mass loss did not occur on land and thus did not have the power of a defined *place* to firmly anchor it in tangible or intangible memory. The event in question is the sinking of the SS *Mendi*, a ship carrying over 800 members of the SANLC.<sup>106</sup> They were heading to the Western Front to begin their service, having travelled on the *Mendi* from Cape Town; in February 1917, it was accidentally rammed en route off the Isle of Wight, and more than 600 of the men drowned. During the ensuing years of segregation and apartheid in South Africa the loss of the *Mendi* became a symbol of unity and opposition used in South African nationalism,<sup>107</sup> and it has featured more prominently in South African-centric First World War centenary commemorations.

These first three countries all shared not only the status of Dominion within the British empire, but also of being white settler colonies with high numbers of British-born

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<sup>105</sup> For one of the most extensive and detailed near-contemporary accounts of South African involvement at Delville Wood, see the official history written by John Buchan: *The History of the South African Forces in France* (London: Thomas Nelson & sons, 1920), 43-82.

<sup>106</sup> For more on the sinking of the *Mendi* and its ramifications for South Africa, see Norman Clothier, *Black valour: the South African native labour contingent, 1916-1918, and the sinking of the Mendi* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987); Albert Grundlingh, “Mutating Memories and the Making of a Myth: Remembering The SS Mendi Disaster, 1917–2007,” *South African Historical Journal* 63:1 (2011), 20-37; John Gribble and Graham Scott, *We die like brothers: the sinking of the SS Mendi* (s.l.: Historic England, 2017).

<sup>107</sup> Foster, *Washed With Sun*, 33.

citizens. This meant that these three Dominions also had, though with many local variations and shades of intensity, the common experience of high enthusiasm for initial entry into the war. Although by law, they did not have a choice, loyalty to Britain and high numbers of British-born people among their populations meant that, at the outbreak of war, the Dominions embraced their involvement with a substantial amount of zeal.<sup>108</sup> Sentiments such as those expressed in this 1914 poem were widespread:

*We are coming, mother, coming – we are coming home to fight. To defend the Empire’s honour, to uphold the Empire’s might. From the plains of Manitoba, from the diggings of the Rand, we are coming, Mother Britain, coming home to lend a hand.*

*We are coming, mother, coming – save a good place at the front; where the battle wages fiercest, let your children bear the brunt. Tis a long way from Australia, and we’ve earned the right to stand in the first ranks – Mother Britain, have your orders when we land. From the islands and the highlands, from the outposts of the earth, on a hundred ships we hasten to your side to prove our worth. We’ve come to stick through thin and thick and woe betide the ones who dare to smite the mother-might forgetting of the Sons.*

*We are coming, Mother Britain, we are coming to your aid, there’s a debt we owe our fathers and we mean to see it paid; from the jungles of Rhodesia, from the snows of Saskatoon, we are coming, Mother Britain, and we hope to see you soon.*<sup>109</sup>

Unlike the other three, India in the First World War was not a Dominion and not a white settler colony. At the outbreak of the conflict, India had been under direct British rule since 1858, known as the British Raj; this continued until 1947, when the partition of India led to the creation of a smaller India with Dominion status. (It became a Republic in 1950). The First World War is considered a “point of no return” on this journey towards self-government and was a catalyst for Indian nationalism.<sup>110</sup> The ‘undivided India’ that existed in

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<sup>108</sup> For more on the rationales and justifications for the war by the British empire, see Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire 1781-1997* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), 253; Ashley Jackson, *Distant Drums: The Role of Colonies in British Imperial Warfare* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), 8; W.F. Mandle, *Going it Alone: Australia’s National Identity in the Twentieth Century* (Ringwood: A. Lane, 1978), 15; Sheftall, *Altered Memories*, 45.

<sup>109</sup> Herbert Kaufman, “Mother Britain and her sons,” in *Reynolds Newspaper*, printed in New Zealand’s *Wanganui Chronicle*, issue 20219, 11 November 1914, <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/WC19141111.2.33>.

<sup>110</sup> Xu Guoqi, *Asia and the Great War: A Shared History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 61, in his chapter “India’s Great War and National Awakening” (59-93). For a current and thorough overview of the First

1914 is not what we know India to be today: it also included modern India, Pakistan, Burma, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. Throughout this thesis, 'India' will be used to mean the undivided India of the First World War unless otherwise specified. India was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious entity with a wide spectrum of beliefs, traditions, relationships with Britain, and military experiences. The main religions of Indian troops and labourers were Hinduism and Islam, though Christianity, Jainism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism were also practised by members of the Indian forces.

Like South Africa, India also fielded a major labour contingent, though it also had a significant number of combatant units. Having raised 877,068 combatants by 1919, India not only had the largest volunteer army of the First World War but also, arguably, hitherto in history. In addition to its fighting forces, it also raised 563,369 non-combatants who served as labourers in both France and Mesopotamia. Many of the Indian labourers were illiterate, which has prompted historians to interrogate other methods of uncovering and understanding their perspectives and experiences.<sup>111</sup>

Indian combatants served in various battles on the Western Front after arriving in 1915.<sup>112</sup> However, what remains viewed as one of their most significant offensive actions was their role in the attack on Neuve Chapelle in March 1915.<sup>113</sup> Its significance for India's

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World War's political ramifications for India and Indian nationalism in subsequent decades, see Roger D. Long and Ian Talbot (eds), *India and World War I: A Centennial Assessment* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>111</sup> See particularly Das, *India, Empire, and First World War Culture*. For an edited collection of letters by Indians serving in the First World War, see David Omissi (ed), *Indian Voices of the Great War: Soldiers' Letters 1914-18* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999).

<sup>112</sup> For the most thorough and current overview and analysis of Indian troops' experiences and engagements on the Western Front, see George Morton-Jack, *The Indian Army on the Western Front: India's Expeditionary Force to France and Belgium in the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Meanwhile the war was wreaking, and continued to do so in the decades to follow, significant political change in India; for a recent account which is appropriately damning of the effect British imperialism – including the war – had on India, see Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India* (London: Hurst & Co, 2017), especially 221.

<sup>113</sup> For a detailed summary of the raising and actions of the Indian forces on the Western Front, see Rob Johnson, "I Shall Die Arms in Hand, Wearing the Warriors' Clothes': Mobilisation and Initial Operations of the Indian Army in France and Flanders," *British Journal for Military History* 2:2 (2016), 107-119, and 114-116 for a summary of Neuve Chapelle.

First World War memory was twofold: Neuve Chapelle was the first major action undertaken by the Indian army as a single unit, and it resulted in 4,200 Indian casualties.

The deployment of Indian combatant troops to Europe was against British strategic doctrine at the time, and prompted an official complaint from Germany at the inclusion of 'savage' colonial soldiers in a conflict between 'civilised' European nations. Despite loyalty demonstrated by the Indian troops and low desertion rates even when opportunities rose, the British government was suspicious and wary of the Indian soldiers; particularly the 40% of them who were Muslim. The Ottoman government had proclaimed a jihad in 1914, and the question of whether a shared religion with enemy forces was enough of a unifying factor to override the bond of imperial loyalty was a serious concern for the British. In a drastic move, they censored Indian soldiers' letters in an attempt to prevent this.

The composition of the Indian Army during the First World War was significantly affected by 'martial race theory': a construct used to legitimise and strengthen imperial power, particularly on the Indian subcontinent. Becoming more formally codified after the 1857 Indian uprising, martial race theory was the concept that certain ethnic, religious, and/or social groups were naturally more militant, masculine, and loyal, and therefore inherently more suited for military service. It was frequently used by the British in India to exclude the educated populace from the army, in an attempt to increase the likelihood of the Indian army remaining loyal to the British. During the time of its employment, 'martial races' were described as scientific and fixed categories, but in reality their definitions were continually changing to adapt to various political and military conditions. By 1914 men from the Punjab, the North-West Provinces, and Nepal were considered particularly 'martial' and comprised 57% of Indian infantry recruits; this disparity had significant economic effects for these

regions.<sup>114</sup> However, as the losses of the First World War depleted India's forces, the definition of martial races was expanded to include groups from Rajputana, central India, and the central Himalayas.

Another significant aspect of the Indian contingent's composition was its religious heterogeneity. This thesis focuses on challenges that this plurality caused regarding the burial and commemoration of Indian soldiers, but undivided India's multi-religious nature also posed significant quandaries during the conflict itself. Arguably the most notable was the dilemma faced by India's Muslims, who were considered to owe loyalty both to the British Empire (through colonialism) and the Ottoman Empire (through religious affiliation); however, as with any group, it is important to note that there was no uniform 'Indian Muslim experience' of the First World War. On 11 November 1914, upon the Ottoman entry into the war, a *jihad* or Islamic holy war was declared on behalf of the Ottoman government. As Humayun Ansari describes, this declaration,

calling on Muslims all over the world to rise up against its enemies, complicated things considerably. In particular, it provoked complex questions about the relationship of Muslims with the British people and state in the wider Empire as well as closer to home. Many were now faced with uncomfortable dilemmas regarding loyalty and allegiance, and the war, together with its immediate aftermath, tested the limits and frailties of Muslim loyalties.<sup>115</sup>

As stated above, the most widespread two religions followed by the men of India's forces were Hinduism and Islam.<sup>116</sup> Their coexistence within the Indian army posed logistical

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<sup>114</sup> Heike Liebau, "Martial Race Theory," 15 February 2017, *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/martial\\_races\\_theory\\_of](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/martial_races_theory_of). See also Santanu Das on the "Punjabisation of the Indian Army" (76) and the concomitant sociocultural effects on the Punjabi home front: *India, Empire, and First World War Culture*, chapter "Sonorous Fields: Recruitment, Resistance, and Recitative in the Punjab" (75-116).

<sup>115</sup> Humayun Ansari, "'Tasting the King's Salt': Muslims, Contested Loyalties and the First World War," in *Minorities and the First World War: From War to Peace*, ed. Hannah Ewence and Tim Grady (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 36-37.

<sup>116</sup> Followed most notably by Sikhism, but in terms of treatment of the dead, Sikhs were often categorised with Hindus. However, there was a significant Sikh presence in the Indian forces, and they feature prominently in the film footage of Indian forces held by the Imperial War Museum: e.g. Geoffrey Malins and Edward George Tong, "With the Indian Troops at the Front [Part 1]," 1915, *Imperial War Museum*, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060022700>.

challenges both during the conflict (e.g. regarding food preparation and consumption) and its commemorative aftermath, the latter of which is discussed particularly in Chapter II.

This thesis' case studies, of the national Western Front memorials of Australia, Canada, India, and South Africa, are examined through a variety of fields intersecting with global & imperial history: most notably anthropology, memory studies, geography, and material culture theory. The anthropological concepts employed here largely revolve around death; drawing on works by social anthropologists (such as Hallam & Hockey, and Renshaw) and archaeologists (such as Tarlow) to contextualise the roles that mass death, absence, emotional graves, and materiality of the dead played in the messages conveyed by the case study sites in question. Memory studies is a highly interdisciplinary field, weaving together history, social science, and psychology; Joan Tumblety, among others, provides a thorough overview of its evolution, and also argues for the need to be aware of distinctions between examining memory as a historical source and memory as a historical subject in its own right.<sup>117</sup> Examinations of how memory is articulated and shaped are crucial to this thesis, as this project focuses on one subset of it: how this was done in stone. Two of the most basic yet crucial tenets of memory formation are the relationships it has with connection and identity, which are also major themes of this thesis. Potter and Modlin aptly summarise these relationships by arguing, "even the memories that we view as personal are framed through our interactions with others... memory is also strongly tied to identity. What we remember and how we remember connects us to groups."<sup>118</sup> Key works that have enhanced this work's understandings of memory – and, particularly salient for this thesis, war memory and collective memory – include Halbwachs, discussed above, and Nora, whose work on "lieux

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<sup>117</sup> Joan Tumblety, "Introduction: working with memory as source and subject," in *Memory and History: Understanding memory as source and subject*, ed. Joan Tumblety (London: Routledge, 2013), 1-16.

<sup>118</sup> Amy E. Potter and E. Arnold Modlin Jr., "Introduction," in *Social Memory and Heritage Tourism Methodologies*, ed. Stephen P. Hanna, Amy E. Potter, E. Arnold Modlin Jr., et al (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 2-3.

de memoire” revolutionised understandings of the relationships between place and memory.<sup>119</sup> Exemplifying the blurry boundaries between the fields this thesis draws upon, Nora’s work lies at the intersection of memory studies and geography. The geographical concepts utilised in this work focus mainly on the ways in which landscape is mutable, multivalenced, and has a reciprocal relationship with the formation and reinforcement of memory. Key works subsequently discussed in depth, particularly in Chapter II, include Osborne, who probes the relationship between landscape and time; his key themes include the intersections – and differing speeds – of space and time, landscapes as grammar, landscapes as anchors, and landscapes as stages for mass re-articulation and re-performance of identity.<sup>120</sup> Material culture theory too lies at the intersection of fields, as well as being one of the fields at whose intersection this thesis lies: most notably, material culture theory straddles archaeology, museum studies, history, and pedagogical theory. The most crucial concepts from this field employed throughout this thesis are that objects are a significant primary historical source; objects have agency; objects can perform; the spatial relationships of objects and the ways in which they are interpreted hold significant power to convey meaning; objects cannot be understood without considering the gaze of their intended and actual audiences; static objects do not have static meanings; and that objects hold immense power as historical teaching tools, of increasing significance now that living memory has faded.

This thesis is able to be so ambitious – in terms of the fields, countries, types of site, chronology, and structure it employs – because it does not attempt to do so exhaustively. Rather, it interacts with and combines these factors through the lens of representative

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<sup>119</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations* 26 (1989), 7-24.

<sup>120</sup> Brian Osborne, “Landscapes, memory, monuments, and commemoration: Putting identity in its place,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies Journal* 33:3 (2001), 39-77.

engagements: illustrative examples that may be utilised to achieve greater understanding about broader phenomena. The categories of representative engagements explored here can be subdivided into three streams: objects (memorials, headstones, grave markers, flowers, ashes, seeds, replicas, models, commemorative medals, publications, photographs); events (unveilings, pilgrimages, radio broadcasts, ceremonies); and decision-making (about construction materials, designs, locations, labour, finances, repatriation policy, names distribution, ownership, epitaphs, inscriptions).

These ‘representative engagements’ are located within and deeply contextualised by a specific timeframe, whose bookends also serve as the temporal constraints of this thesis. We begin with 1918, the year the Armistice allowed the Imperial War Graves Commission (founded the previous year) to properly begin its work constructing cemeteries in a landscape that was no longer an active war zone. We end with 1938, which has twofold significance.<sup>121</sup> First, it marks the year in which the last major First World War memorial of the interwar period was erected on the Western Front (Australia’s at Villers-Bretonneux); second is that it marks a periodisation watershed – the last year before the Second World War began, a conflict that both materially impacted the sites in question and intangibly altered irrevocably how people viewed and remembered its predecessor. The lives of monuments, cemeteries, and landscapes do not pause during wartime, and the Second World War is an important part of the biographies of these places and objects. However, that conflict adds an immeasurably complicated further layer to these already complex sites, and it is outside the scope and capabilities of this thesis to give it the treatment it requires and deserves. This twenty-year window of 1918-1938 saw both the creation and completion of nearly every Western Front IWGC cemetery (largely 1918-early 1920s) and the development and erection of every major

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<sup>121</sup> For an overview of political developments during this time period and their ramifications for the changing nature of the British imperial world-system, see John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise & Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chapters “Making imperial peace, 1919-1926” (359-417) and “Holding the centre, 1927-1937” (418-475).

Western Front memorial commemorating the dead of Britain and its empire (largely late 1920s-late 1930s).

To examine this two-decade time period, this thesis draws upon a variety of sources, with some important omissions in terms of both type and location of source. Archival research was conducted at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission archive (Maidenhead, England); the British Library (London); Library and Archives Canada (Ottawa); National Archives of Australia (Canberra); the Australian War Memorial (Canberra); and the National Archives of South Africa (Pretoria). India is omitted from this list due to its different status within the empire at the time (unlike the other three countries this thesis focuses on, it was not a Dominion 1918-1938), and thus the differences in volume of relevant material available in Britain itself. With the rest of this thesis' research travel deemed crucial and already accruing significant expense, and there being sufficient material relating to India's Western Front commemoration available in British archives, India was designated as the country not to personally travel to for research.

The types of primary materials being used and omitted have also shaped this project in specific ways. The primary research discussed above focused almost entirely on institutional/official memos and letters, speeches, photographs, sketches/plans, and newspaper clippings, plus occasional publications (books and pamphlets) and video footage. Purposefully absent are personal letters (except when sent to state/institutional recipients and therefore retained in those files), published or unpublished memoirs, and oral histories. This is due to the complexity of the four-way transnational comparative framework of this thesis: it is already nigh impossible to 'balance' the four countries in question, even when examining solely the same types of sources which have relatively uniform availability across all four countries. (Indeed, this thesis has aimed to approximate an overall 'balance' between South African, Canadian, Indian, and Australian content throughout the thesis as a *whole*, as

achieving perfect balance within each *section* or even chapter was not feasible). The paucity of these types of ‘individual’ sources for certain subtopics and certain countries, as well as the impossibility of conscientiously factoring in the width of the spectrum of individual experiences such sources represent, meant that their inclusion was wholly unsuited for the aims of this project. This focus on institutional rather than personal correspondence and memoirs also reflects this thesis’ focus on the *creation of and decision-making processes leading up to* these sites, rather than their subsequent reception and impact.<sup>122</sup>

Another type of primary source is crucial to this thesis: the sites in question themselves. As discussed above, the approach taken here is that objects and landscapes are primary sources, and can be ‘read’ to produce significant insights. They cannot be understood divorced from the archival documents that detail how and why they were created, and thus this thesis is firmly grounded in its archival research; however, they should also not be the hollow centre, supposedly at the heart of this thesis yet entirely talked *around* rather than considered as valuable sources in their own right. This is avoided by foregrounding throughout the chapters, particularly Chapter III, what the form and design of these sites can tell us about the messages about identities that they articulated and reinforced. The main case study sites examined here are the four Western Front ‘national’ memorials in France of Australia, Canada, India, and South Africa (Villers-Bretonneux, Vimy, Neuve Chapelle, and Delville Wood respectively) and the Western Front ‘empire memorial’ of Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium. Other significant Western Front memorials drawn in as foils for specific aspects of these monuments include St-Julien (Canadian), Beaumont-Hamel (Newfoundland), and Thiepval (British and South African). In contrast, the cemeteries in question are taken as a unified albeit heterogenous collective, and are addressed

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<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, an aspect of the decision-making which the institutional sources consulted were not able to adequately support is the financial aspect: final financial details, budgets, and cost breakdowns between IWGC, governmental, and other organisational contributions for the creation and upkeep of the memorials in question were not uniformly or thoroughly available enough to allow this.

predominantly in collective terms. Cemetery-specific examples are occasionally given that serve as evidence for broadly applicable arguments; however, due to the greater overlap in shared characteristics, and shared decision-making processes, between IWGC cemeteries compared to that between the IWGC memorials listed above, no specific cemeteries are singled out as in-depth case studies.

Writing in *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War*, Allen Frantzen argues that “to write meaningfully about memorials when so many thousands exist is impossible.”<sup>123</sup> This thesis fundamentally disagrees with that conclusion. Specific memorials are examined as case studies here, but this thesis will have failed if it does not provide a new lens through which to consider these memorials that can be readily applied to other First World War monuments. It has been written under the conviction that it should aim to add to the potential for meaningful interpretation for memorials beyond those it directly addresses. When applying the same concept of “to write meaningfully about memorials when so many thousands exist is impossible” to cemeteries, Tim Godden’s recent work has adeptly demonstrated otherwise.<sup>124</sup> This thesis does not aim to provide conclusions about specific cemeteries, but rather to encompass them as part of a multifaceted analysis that demonstrates the relationships between memorial, cemetery, landscape, and the dead. Accordingly, examples have been selected from various cemeteries to illustrate specific concepts throughout the work.

The structure of this project takes the form of three major interrelated chapters, with bookending introductory and concluding chapters. They telescope in focus, moving from broad (Chapter II, on landscapes and sites) to more fine-grained (Chapter III, on the memorial and cemetery objects themselves) and back out to even broader (Chapter IV, on

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<sup>123</sup> Allen J. Frantzen, *Bloody Good: Chivalry, Sacrifice, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 198.

<sup>124</sup> Tim Godden, “Designing Memory: Experience, memory and design in the cemetery architecture of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” PhD thesis, University of Kent, 2019.

forming connection across distance). The chapters are not divided chronologically (e.g. ‘Chapter II: 1920-25’) or geographically (e.g. ‘Chapter II: India’), as either approach would have too drastic of a siloing effect to even preserve, let alone satisfactorily elicit, the interconnections between this thesis’ case studies that a thematic approach can draw forth.

Instead, following this Introduction (Chapter I) we begin with Chapter II: Hallowed Ground, which articulates and analyses the wider contexts of these memorials and cemeteries as components within landscapes, focusing on the role of landscape and ‘place’ in meaning-making for these locations, the significance and creation of these sites as ‘hallowed ground’, and how the spatial and conceptual links between landscape, material culture, and the dead resulted in reciprocally conferred meanings for each of these elements.

Chapter III: Pouring Forth, which centres a close examination of the memorials and cemeteries as objects, is appropriately at the heart and apex of this thesis. It examines what these memorials and headstones looked like, and why, and what aspects of identity elements of their design materialised or reinforced. It discusses both the form and design of the case study objects in question, and the inscriptions found upon them. For both stone and words it is not only the final result that is deemed significant, but equally as crucially the decision-making processes that led to them and the other ideas and options discarded along the way.

With the prior two chapters focusing on *place* (Hallowed Ground) and *object* (Pouring Forth), Chapter IV: Keeping Touch acknowledges that there is a crucial third element to this equation that must be considered: connection, and specifically connection across distance. Due to the distance between these places and many of the people they were meaningful to, how did those people create tangible and imagined bonds with these sites across the sea? This chapter identifies, details, and analyses the three predominant forms this connection took: material items, involvement in decision-making (or attempts thereof), and visitation.

The titles for Chapters II-IV are drawn from primary source quotations which serve as epigraphs introducing key themes. Following these three core chapters, Chapter V: Conclusions, which is similarly anchored by an epigraph, serves to tie these strands together and highlight the wider applicability of this thesis' conclusions beyond the specific case studies it addresses.

This introductory chapter has served to outline the key arguments of the thesis; delineate its temporal, chronological, and geographic bounds; define its methodologies, key terms, and source materials; and position it in relation to the various fields it sits at the intersection of. It has also provided salient contextual information on the Imperial War Graves Commission, the evolution of First World War memory scholarship, and the First World War experiences of the four countries this thesis looks at. With all of these elements now in place, the next chapter (Chapter II: Hallowed Ground) takes the memorials and cemeteries of this thesis and places them within the wider contexts of their landscapes, arguing that the dead played a multifaceted role in connecting these elements and articulating how and why the relationships between them significantly added to and altered their meanings.

## Chapter II Hallowed Ground

*“Their graves are scattered far and wide; by mount and stream and sea.  
Every Australian who travels abroad should regard it his duty  
to pay a visit to the ‘hallowed ground.’”<sup>1</sup>*

– Joseph Lyons, Prime Minister of Australia, 1937

Memorials, cemeteries, and their landscapes were linked conceptually as well as spatially by the dead. The boundary between ‘missing’ and ‘buried’ was not a static dichotomy in the 1920s-30s, as new bodies were found, mistakes were discovered, and commemorative decisions were made. The meanings of these sites were thus doubly informed by their locations, due to the relationships between site and body, and site and battle. Sanctification and exhumation, proposals to commemorate the missing with empty graves, and addressing religious differences regarding burial and the ground all further complicated the three intertwined elements of memorial, cemetery, and landscape.

This chapter will articulate and analyse the wider contexts of these memorials and cemeteries as components within landscapes, focusing on the role of landscape and ‘place’ in meaning-making for these locations, the significance and creation of these sites as ‘hallowed ground’, and how the spatial and conceptual links between landscape, material culture, and the dead resulted in reciprocally conferred meanings for each of these elements.

The identities and locations of the dead and their commemoration were not stable during the interwar period. Exhumations, name changes, differential religious burial practices, and being shifted in and out of the ‘missing’ designation, for example, all contributed to the blurring of many lines in categorising the dead and fixing individual points of remembrance for them. The category of ‘missing’ continues to evolve even today. First

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<sup>1</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 2, “Message from Prime Minister [1937]”.

World War bodies are still found in the landscape, usually by farmers.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, they can be identified either by components of their uniform, their personal effects, and/or DNA testing.<sup>3</sup> Once a name can be associated with the body, that name technically should no longer be recorded on a memorial to the missing. While today such adjustments occur in a trickle, they were occurring in a flood during the immediate postwar period of the 1920s and 1930s when the national memorials to the missing were being built.<sup>4</sup>

No examination of First World War memorials is complete without also discussing cemeteries, because the two are deeply linked both intangibly and often tangibly. The Vimy, Villers-Bretonneux, Delville Wood, Neuve Chapelle, and Thiepval memorials share sites with formal burials in IWGC cemeteries, and these burials are a visible reminder of the sacrifices made for the sentiments expressed on the memorials.

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<sup>2</sup> For a recent example, see La Boisselle Study Group, “British First World War soldiers identified through DNA testing,” 8 September 2016, <http://www.laboisselleproject.com/2016/09/08/british-first-world-war-soldiers-identified-through-dna-testing/>.

<sup>3</sup> In an excellent example of interdisciplinary research, forensic archaeologist Dr. Layla Renshaw at Kingston University London specialises in human identification, genetic testing and contemporary public understanding and participation in the recovery process of British and Australian First World War soldiers on the Western Front.

<sup>4</sup> Adjustments due to discovering errors in name-spellings or assumed names were also prevalent. See CWGC WG 219/10/1 “6 August 1930”, “24 May 1930”, “30 April 1930”, “19 May 1930”, “14 February 1930”, “9 September 1929”, “18 August 1930”, “22 April 1930”.



Image 2.1. View from the Thiepval memorial of the Anglo-French cemetery adjoining it, 2016.

The dates of death on the headstones often make this link explicit. Less visible are the interconnections between memorial and cemetery that the dead themselves provide. The distinctions between types of tangible remembrance points are artificial— or perhaps, practical— in that they are based entirely on date of death, location of death, and presence or absence of a body, rather than the emotional and experiential connections between those being commemorated. A poignant letter from a bereaved British parent illustrates this point:

[October 1919] Thanking you for your letter of 4<sup>th</sup> inst. in reference to a memorial to be placed in some British cemetery to my son D.H. Christie 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. 16<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regt. Killed in action 21/9/18 and whose body was never recovered. I wish to inform you that it would be a satisfaction to his parents to have it placed in Corbie cemetery near Amiens near the grave of his brother, R.F. Christie, Lieut. R.E., died of wounds 16/12/15.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “11 October 1919”. The ‘memorial’ in question refers to the IWGC’s early plan to distribute names of the missing on panels among 85 Western Front cemeteries (CWGC WG 219/1, “Draft proceedings of the third meeting of the committee on memorials to the missing, 6 July 1921”).

This request was not granted. The 22-year-old Richard Christie's body is in grave I.B.2 at Corbie Communal Cemetery; his brother, the missing Denis, is listed alongside 9,836 other names on the Vis-en-Artois memorial, 54 kilometres away.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the proximity between the Dominion memorials and formal cemeteries, the preserved landscapes surrounding them also mean that the landscapes themselves are burial grounds.<sup>7</sup> The emotional resonance of these memorial sites, amplified by the fact that they are usually closely associated with formal and informal burial grounds, effectively sanctifies them as secular sacred spaces. Also contributing to their designation as hallowed ground is their focus on sacredness and not utility: as James M. Mayo argues, memorial sites which are low-utility (like IWGC sites, which do not serve other practical functions) become sacred because they are “not heavily laden with uses that may compete or conflict with the message.”<sup>8</sup>

Moving from the hallowed nature of IWGC sites generally to IWGC Dominion memory sites specifically, Katrina Bormanis argues that the Dominion memorials in particular fall under the ‘fields of care’ framework set out by Kenneth Foote, in which five characteristics are used to quantify sacred or sanctified sites.<sup>9</sup> As Bormanis explains them in the context of the Australian, Canadian, and Newfoundland Dominion memorials, these characteristics are as follows:

Firstly, such sites are clearly demarcated from the milieu that surrounds them, and all bear some marker indicating the specifics of what occurred there. Secondly, these sites are nearly always immaculately kept for at least several years, if not decades, or even centuries. Thirdly, in sanctifying a site, a transfer of ownership usually occurs, whereby custody of the site shifts from private to public hands. Fourthly, these sites,

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<sup>6</sup> As per the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's online database.

<sup>7</sup> Burials are not the only below-ground landscape elements that give First World War battlefields significance; as (most notably) Iain Banks and Matthew Leonard elaborate in detail, *fighting* occurred underground too. Iain Banks, “Digging in the Dark: The Underground War on the Western Front in World War I,” *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* 9:3 (2014), 156-176; Matthew Leonard, “Making Sense of Subterranean Conflict: Engaging Landscapes Beneath the Western Front,” PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> James M. Mayo, “War Memorials As Political Memory,” *Geographical Review* 78:1 (1988), 63.

<sup>9</sup> This premise forms the central argument of the thesis. Bormanis, “Monumental Landscape,” working from Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

once consecrated, invite ongoing ritualized commemorative activity, usually in the form of perennial memorial ceremonies or pilgrimages. Fifthly, once sanctified, a site frequently gathers layers of meaning that usually (but not always) bear some relational kinship to the original commemorative enterprise.<sup>10</sup>

Both the memorials and the cemeteries of the Imperial War Graves Commission representing Australia, Canada, India, and South Africa on the Western Front meet these requirements.

Nearly all of Foote's five 'fields of care' criteria are applicable to domestic commemorative locations as well. Yet although memorials and cemeteries in any location inspire an instinctive reverence, a crucial feature of the sites examined in this thesis is their intrinsic tie to their landscapes. Intangibly, it is the *location* of these sites that is a crucial factor imbuing them with an aura of sacred space; and tangibly, some of them remain surrounded by battlefield landscapes that have been preserved to considerable extents.<sup>11</sup>



Image 2.2a. Preserved battlefield landscape at Vimy, 2016.

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<sup>10</sup> Bormanis, "Monumental Landscape," 11-12.

<sup>11</sup> Foster, "Creating a Temenos," 269, 274; Jacqueline Hucker, "'Battle and Burial': Recapturing the Cultural Meaning of Canada's National Memorial on Vimy Ridge," *The Public Historian* 31:1 (Winter 2009), 101-103; Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 1; John Schofield, *Combat Archaeology: Material Culture and Modern Conflict* (London: Duckworth, 2005), 45; Vance, *Death So Noble*, 60. For greater detail on this topic in relation to the Vimy Memorial, see Natalie Bull and David Panton, "Drafting the Vimy Charter for Conservation of Battlefield Terrain," *Association for Preservation Technology International Bulletin* 31:4 Managing Cultural Landscapes (2000), 5-11, which includes the full text of the charter.



Image 2.2b. Preserved battlefield landscape at Beaumont-Hamel, 2016.

These memorials and cemeteries would not have the same meanings if they were located in other places. They are battlefield and battlefront sites, and they cannot be fully understood if they are divorced from the landscapes surrounding them. These men are buried and commemorated in the territory they ostensibly fought to hold, though with the collection on memorials of names from a disparate geographic range of death locations, in many cases this concept became more abstract than literal. The landscapes of IWGC remembrance were both the products and expressions of relationships: various types of relationships intersect through their shared participation in these sites, ranging in scope from those between countries to those between individuals.

This focus on the role and meaning of landscape in relation to IWGC sites has given this chapter its name: “Hallowed Ground”. More specifically, the title derives from the quote

given as the opening epigraph, made by the Australian Prime Minister remarking on the Australian dead under IWGC care: “Their graves are scattered far and wide; by mount and stream and sea. Every Australian who travels abroad should regard it his duty to pay a visit to the ‘hallowed ground.’”<sup>12</sup> This quote was chosen firstly because it emphasises the centrality that characteristics of hallowedness have to the meanings that the landscapes and IWGC sites reciprocally imbue each other with, as will be discussed further throughout this chapter.<sup>13</sup> However, it is also a salient choice to open this chapter with because it ties together the themes of all three main chapters of this thesis. The movement and materiality implicit in “their graves are scattered” is an early hint towards the conceptualisation of IWGC site creation as an active process of “pouring forth”, as discussed in Chapter III; and the phrases “far and wide” and “duty to pay a visit” are signposts towards two of the key themes of Chapter IV: distance and how it is bridged. The first sentence of the epigraph is also relevant because of its additional context: though unattributed by the Prime Minister, it is unequivocally a near-direct quote from the 1828 poem “Graves of a Household”, which opens thus:

*They grew in beauty, side by side,  
 They fill'd one home with glee;—  
 Their graves are sever'd, far and wide,  
 By mount, and stream, and sea.  
 The same fond mother bent at night  
 O'er each fair sleeping brow;  
 She had each folded flower in sight,—  
 Where are those dreamers now?<sup>14</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 2, “Message from Prime Minister [1937]”. Australia did indeed encourage its citizens to make the journey, with for example the High Commissioner for Australia issuing a special book with Australian-specific cemetery information, *Information for visitors to Australian soldiers’ graves in France and Belgium*, undated (AWM 4 1 [853]).

<sup>13</sup> Use of the term ‘hallow’ to emphasise the meaning of a battlefield landscape had a significant precedent in the Gettysburg Address, in which President Lincoln stated regarding the American Civil War battlefield he stood upon, “we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.” Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Address,” 19 November 1863, transcript of copy held by Cornell University, [http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good\\_cause/transcript.htm](http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good_cause/transcript.htm).

<sup>14</sup> Felicia Hemans, “Graves of a Household,” in *Records of Woman: With Other Poems* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1828). The remaining stanzas detail the grave locations of four (presumably adult) children from one family, three brothers and a sister, in the forests of North America, the ocean, Spain, and Italy respectively.

The only distinction between the poem and the Prime Minister's words is the single adjective describing the graves. In the poem they are 'severed'; in Lyons' remarks they are 'scattered'. What is the difference? The role, or hindrance, that landscape plays in the connection of these graves to each other. While the original poem details the ways in which landscape features disconnect the graves (unless you read 'by' to mean 'next to'), throughout this chapter it is argued that landscape served to connect disparate grave (and, more widely, IWGC) sites both spatially and conceptually through its conferral of shared meaning upon them.

### **Battlefield Locations and Site Selection**

The location of these sites on and within the battlefield landscapes, regardless of the extent to which these landscapes are visibly extant, magnifies the perception of these sites as hallowed spaces. This was evinced by Canadian Prime Minister Arthur Meighen in his speech at the unveiling of the Cross of Sacrifice at the IWGC cemetery Thélus in 1921:

We live among the ruins and the echoes of Armageddon. Its shadow is receding slowly backward into history. At this time the proper occupation of the living is, first, to honour our heroic dead; next, to repair the havoc, human and material, that surrounds us; and lastly, to learn aright and apply with courage the lessons of the war... in earth which has resounded to the drums and trappings of many contests, they rest in the quiet of God's acre with the brave of all the world.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> CWGC Add 1/1/93, "Canada's Heroes," *Daily Telegraph* 4 July 1921.



Image 2.3. Thélus cemetery with its Cross of Sacrifice visible, 2012.

For Australia, Canada, India, and South Africa's Western Front memorials, the hallowedness of their locations did not equate to monopoly of focus for collective or individual remembrance. Their four national memorials were built upon battlefields significant to their respective countries, due to the fact that these sites had been venues of great loss, great victory, or both. These particular battles were focal points for the formation of national identities for these countries, but did not necessarily immediately become the sole loci for each country's war remembrance.<sup>16</sup> There were three reasons for this: firstly,

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<sup>16</sup> For example, Teresa Iacobelli argues that it was at first the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres to which special meaning for Canada was attached: "Canadian newspapers wrote of it as a baptism by fire, as the first true test of the Canadians, and one that its soldiers passed gloriously... however, in the postwar national memory 1915 would come to be completely overshadowed by the 1917 Battle of Vimy Ridge." Teresa Iacobelli, "Creating Memory: Commemoration, Popular Media and Evolving Narratives of the Great War," unpublished conference paper (First World War Commemoration & Memory conference, Manchester, February 2016), 2. For a detailed tracing of how memory of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ypres has evolved, see Ryan B. Flavelle, "The Second Battle of Ypres and 100 Years of Remembrance," *Canadian Military History* 24:1 (2015), 209-245. It is possible that the later controversies over the 3<sup>rd</sup> battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) subsequently rendered the Ypres Salient too problematic of a memory site.

domestic commemoration, particularly in the form of national memorials, and including the selection of ‘Unknown Soldiers’ for symbolic tombs in subsequent decades, has also been substantially significant to these countries’ relationships with their war memories.<sup>17</sup> Second, it was often not until later in the memorialisation process on the Western Front that single sites were settled upon to represent each country. For example, the open design competition for Canada’s monument called for a design that would be repeated at eight Western Front locations associated with Canadian participation; it was not until the winning design by Walter Allward was chosen that this was reduced to one site, Vimy, due to the striking nature and originality of his design.<sup>18</sup> Third, the Western Front was not the only theatre of the war, and for some countries, their emerging sense of nationalism also became tied to their experiences on other fronts. Among this chapter’s countries, this was particularly the case for Australia: it was not on the Western Front but rather at Gallipoli where the national ANZAC myth was formulated, and thus the Western Front has had to jostle with Gallipoli in competition as *lieux de memoire* in Australian First World War memory.<sup>19</sup> In addition to 11 November, most countries have an additional specific day of First World War remembrance at their memorials based on a relevant anniversary: for example, for Canada it is the Western Front date of 9 April, when the battle for Vimy Ridge began. Interestingly, for Australia it is 25 April, a day that holds double significance: it is the anniversary of both the Gallipoli

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<sup>17</sup> Bormanis, “Monumental Landscape,” chapter 4 (“What Remains: Repatriating and Entombing the Australian and Canadian Unknown Soldiers of the Great War in Canberra and Ottawa,” 282-337). See also Inglis, *Sacred Places*. Capital cities are particularly centres for domestic commemoration – for a thorough examination of this phenomenon for the Canadian and American contexts, examining the material culture of World War commemoration in Ottawa and Washington DC, see Eric Weeks, “Memory and Meaning: Constructed Commemoration in a Nation’s Capital City,” PhD thesis, Bowling Green State University, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Some of the other seven contending sites still received memorials. For example, the second-place design in the Canadian competition went on to be constructed as the St-Julien ‘Brooding Soldier’ memorial, a Canadian monument yet not ‘national’ in the same sense that Vimy is.

<sup>19</sup> Substantial literature exists on Gallipoli, ANZAC, and the digger myth. See for example Luckins, *Gates of Memory*; Mandle, *Going It Alone*; McLeod, *Gallipoli*; Bruce Scates, “Manufacturing Memory at Gallipoli,” in *War Memory and Popular Culture: Essays on Modes of Remembrance and Commemoration*, ed. Michael Keren and Holger H. Herwig (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009), 57-75; Graham Seal, *Inventing ANZAC: The Digger and National Mythology* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2004); Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994).

landings (1915) and ostensibly the day that Australia liberated Villers-Bretonneux (1918).<sup>20</sup> The Australian case particularly demonstrates the degree to which this war prompted an elastic sense of identity: spanning continents, and creating links between disparate physical spaces and the groups of people who attached deep meaning to them.

Despite some countries having multiple contending locations for monumental remembrance, by 1938 Canada, Australia, South Africa, and India did each have a national memorial at one Western Front battlefield location of particular significance. The following subsections will discuss the significances and ramifications of their four locations.

#### *Battlefield Locations and Site Selection: Canada*



Image 2.4. View from the Vimy memorial, looking down off the ridge upon which it is positioned, 2016.

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<sup>20</sup> Romain Fathi argues, however, that 25 April was not the most significant date for the Australians at Villers-Bretonneux, but was chosen for commemoration due to its coincidence with the Gallipoli anniversary: “Australian national interventions [in shaping commemorative practices] thus transcended historical realities and recrafted traditional local collective remembrance”. Romain Fathi, “A Piece of Australia in France’: Australian Authorities and the Commemoration of Anzac Day at Villers-Bretonneux in the Last Decade,” in *Nation, Memory and Great War Commemoration: Mobilizing the Past in Europe, Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Shanti Sumartojo and Ben Wellings (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), 278.

The Vimy memorial is situated on a specific geographic feature (the eponymous ridge), rather than merely being situated *somewhere* within the landscape of a battle with exact location determined by practicality. This had repercussions for the perceived relationship between landscape and memorial. While preserving the battlefield landscape is one type of memorialisation (most prominently seen at Beaumont-Hamel, Newfoundland's national memorial), Vimy ridge, as a discrete feature, explicitly elicits the potential for a war memorial itself to be natural rather than anthropogenic. Canada's Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King thought that the real memorial at Vimy was the ridge itself: in 1922 he wrote in his diary,

I made a strong plea for conserving a tract of one or two square miles of Vimy ridge as consecrated hallowed ground around Allward's memorial to be erected. The real memorial being the ridge itself, one of earth's altars...<sup>21</sup>

However, not everyone thought that Vimy was the sole or obvious choice for Canadian commemoration on the Western Front. In 1923 Herbert F. Chettle, IWGC Director of Records, wrote to HC Osborne, the IWGC Secretary at Canada's Department of National Defense:

I expect it is much too late to raise any objection to the commemoration of the rest of the Canadian "Missing" ['rest' meaning, apart from its missing in Belgium; the subject of the letter is the Menin Gate memorial in Belgium] at Vimy, and, in any case, Canadian sentiment is a better guide in the matter than my own; but I have never been able to understand why the fame of Courcelette should be entirely overshadowed by that of Vimy and the Canadian achievement in the Battle of the Somme, remaining without a visible monument in that region.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Jacqueline Hucker, "After the Agony in Stony Places," in *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment*, ed. Geoffrey Hayes, Michael Bechthold, and Andrew Iarocci (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), 283. Canadians seem to have a particular penchant for using the language of memorialisation in reference to living things; another fascinating example is Susan Fisher arguing that "children and young people were the raw material – the stone, the bronze – for the most important monument to the war dead: a better Canada" (*Boys and Girls in No Man's Land: English-Canadian Children and the First World War* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011], 13).

<sup>22</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 1, "7 February 1923".

Indeed, Courcellette had been one of the eight battlefield sites originally intended to house “eight memorial monuments to be erected in France and Belgium.”<sup>23</sup> In the instruction booklet for the Canadian Battlefields Memorial Commission design competition, it states “these [eight] sites may be regarded as similar in character, and the design submitted in this competition should be applicable to any one of them.”<sup>24</sup> This is very revealing about the Committee’s view of the significance and ability of the landscape to imbue meaning, since by dint of their mass-applicability clause, they were robbing the monuments themselves of any ability to convey site-specific meaning.

From north to south, the planned eight sites were: St-Julien, Passchendaele, Observatory Ridge, Vimy Ridge, Dury Crossroads, Bourlon Wood, Courcellette, and Hospital Wood.<sup>25</sup> When the design competition opened in December 1920, these were still war-torn landscapes: competitors were reminded that

at present these sites are in a devastated zone, but it may be presumed that in time the typical French and Belgian landscape will be restored. This landscape is characterized by a spaciousness about halfway between that of rural England and of our Prairie Provinces. This is due to three factors: the grouping of farmhouses in villages, the absence of fences and hedges, and the great height of French trees.<sup>26</sup>

The instructions’ specifics for the Vimy site justify its inclusion by summarising the events of the attack on the Ridge in April 1917, before situating the theoretical Vimy memorial of the future within the landscape of the present:

The site chosen is... situated at the highest point on Vimy Ridge (Hill 145 on tactical maps) and commanding the country for many miles in every direction... To the northward may be seen the Lorette Ridge, which the French troops so gallantly

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<sup>23</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41), “Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920”.

<sup>24</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41), “Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920”.

<sup>25</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41), “Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920”.

<sup>26</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41), “Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920”.

defended in 1914, with an estimated 50,000 killed. To the south-west, against the skyline, three miles distant, stands one of the most picturesque ruins in France, viz., the church of St. Eloi. To the south... the city of Arras can be seen. Within two hundred yards of the selected site and to the eastward, the ground slopes very steeply to the plain below, with a difference in elevation of about three hundred feet. To the north and east, the shattered steel-work of numerous mine superstructures rise above the plain to an approximate height of one hundred feet.<sup>27</sup>

This passage aptly captures the contrasting land usage needs of various parties in postwar France, with commemorative and economic elements coexisting in a rebuilding country. Within the Vimy landscape, at least, they were coexisting, but at other proposed IWGC memorial sites they created a conflict of priorities: most notably at Neuve Chapelle (India) and Delville Wood (South Africa), as will be discussed in subsequent subsections.

These eight memorials were intended to be seen as a collective, both in conceptualisation during the planning process and in visual terms within the landscape:

The aim of the Commission is the erection of a series of monuments having a cumulative effect due to similarity in scale and general form as landmarks...thus the visitor to the battlefield would readily recognize the characteristic Canadian monuments among the many to be erected. Their value as landmarks is to be kept in view. Some will be within sight of each other.<sup>28</sup>

This concept of a spatial relationship between a single Dominion's memorials on Western Front landscapes is heavily suggestive of a performative approach to memorials, both internally and externally. Internally, the memorials' meanings are posited as being shaped by their relation to each other and performing a function as a component within a collective whole; while externally, the intention to create a collective material imprint upon the landscape, "among the many to be erected", implies a treatment of the battlefield landscape as a stage upon which jostling identities are being materially performed in stone.

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<sup>27</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41), "Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920".

<sup>28</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41), "Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920".

*Battlefield Locations and Site Selection: Australia*

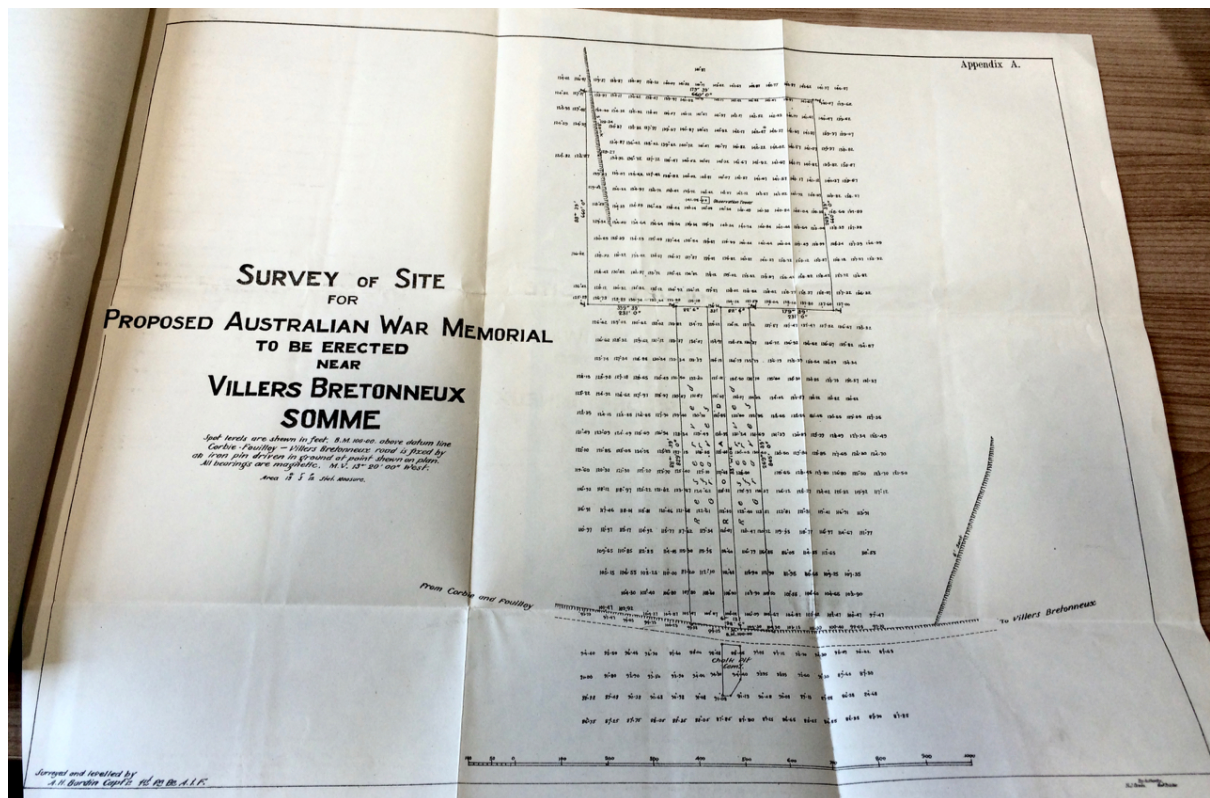


Image 2.5. Site survey of the Villers-Bretonneux memorial location. Appendix to the architectural brief for the memorial’s design competition, 1925. CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, “Survey of Site for Proposed Australian War Memorial”.

Similar to the Canadian case, Australia’s eventual national memorial location, Villers-Bretonneux, was not the sole or obvious choice for Australian monumentalisation on the Western Front. The IWGC Director of Records suggested in 1923 that the names of Australia’s missing be divided among four memorials, to correspond with four “outstanding operations” conducted by the Australian forces during the war: in the Ypres salient, at Fromelles, between Bapaume and Pozières, and at Villers-Bretonneux.<sup>29</sup> At the time, the number of Australian missing estimated for France and Flanders was 19,300, but it was recognised that by the time records were fully sorted out the number would likely be reduced to 18,000.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> CWGC WG 219/9, “15 November 1923”.

<sup>30</sup> CWGC WG 219/9, “15 November 1923”.

The theme we see emerging from Canada's multiple-memorials situation manifests even more extensively in the Australian context. The spatial relationship *between* Australia's memorials is framed as important in this correspondence: "whatever proportion it were decided on [allocating numbers of missing amongst the various proposed memorials], it would seem to be fitting that the Australians at any rate should be commemorated at both ends of the road which they travelled in 1918."<sup>31</sup> The use of "both ends of the road" here delineates a fixed and firmly bounded space that has been imbued with Australian sacrifice. It implies that memorials were needed to serve as fixed points upon which a net of remembrance could be cast over the intervening space. This evokes a different connotation both for memorials and for the concept of 'hallowed ground': that this sanctity could be overlaid upon the earth by the presence of memorials marking its boundaries.

The location of Australia's Villers-Bretonneux memorial also incited a storied affair concerning the decision-making process for inscribed names of the missing. In 1922, it was suggested that if Australia was not willing to divide its missing among multiple memorials and alongside British names, that Amiens would be the best place to collect them in commemoration if a single 'Australian' site was needed.<sup>32</sup> It was acknowledged that "of all the Australian operations on the Western Front", it was Villers-Bretonneux that had "most impressed the public imagination", but this was given as a reason for Amiens' selection (proximity to Villers-Bretonneux) rather than as the rationale for *a* or *the* memorial to be at Villers-Bretonneux itself.<sup>33</sup>

The debate over dividing Australian names did not reach a quick resolution. Further complications arose during the planning for the Menin Gate memorial, when Australia threatened to withdraw permission to have Australian names on the monument.<sup>34</sup> Along with

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<sup>31</sup> CWGC WG 219/9, "15 November 1923".

<sup>32</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "30 August 1922"; CWGC WG 219/9, "30 August 1922".

<sup>33</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "30 August 1922".

<sup>34</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "8 May 1924".

Tyne Cot, the Gate was intended to be an empire memorial, including Dominion and Indian names (divided chronologically between the two memorials).<sup>35</sup> However, Australia wanted to list all of its Western Front missing by name on one memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, so its proposed solution to the Menin Gate conundrum was to have some names repeated on both memorials.<sup>36</sup> This proposal did not become reality because it violated the IWGC's policy of having only a single site of individual named commemoration for each fallen soldier.<sup>37</sup> By 1930, it was agreed that Australia's Belgian missing would be listed on Menin Gate and Tyne Cot, leaving only its missing in France to be listed at Villers-Bretonneux. At the time, this total was estimated to be 18,557 names,<sup>38</sup> but the number of names of Australians missing in France was finally discerned to be 10,982, which were eventually inscribed on the memorial.<sup>39</sup> In the ensuing 79 years since its unveiling, dozens of Australian 'missing' have since been identified and buried, reducing the number of people officially commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial to 10,728 as of March 2019.<sup>40</sup>

#### *Battlefield Locations and Site Selection: South Africa*

A letter from the IWGC Director of Records in July 1933 outlines the significance and state of the location for South Africa's national memorial in France:

Delville Wood, which now covers nearly 60 hectares / 148 acres, was the scene of fierce fighting between the South African Brigade and German troops from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1916; and on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 1921 it was duly sold by the owners to the Government of the Union of South Africa under express authority from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1920.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "29 July 1927", "17 November 1926".

<sup>36</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "3 May 1924".

<sup>37</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "8 May 1924".

<sup>38</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "December 1930".

<sup>39</sup> CWGC, "Cemetery details: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial," <http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/93000/VILLERS-BRETONNEUX%20MEMORIAL>.

<sup>40</sup> CWGC, "Cemetery details: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial."

<sup>41</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "10 July 1933".

Compared to the other three countries addressed here, the selection of Delville Wood for South Africa was relatively straightforward: both in terms of the ease with which the land was actually acquired, and more significantly a lack of competing battlefield locations holding similar South African significance in France.<sup>42</sup> At Delville Wood another aspect of the site's significance held particular ramifications: the presence of bodies in the earth, outside of formal cemeteries.

If the presence of unburied bodies in the ground gave sanctity to a memorial site, then Delville Wood was particularly sanctified during the interwar period. Even today it is estimated that at least 100 bodies are still undiscovered and unidentified in the earth at this site.<sup>43</sup>



Image 2.6a. Delville Wood landscape, 2017.

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<sup>42</sup> As Nasson describes it, “There was little need to search for an appropriate commemorative spot. The obvious symbolic point on the Somme battlefield had to be Delville Wood, a bushy patch of land to the north of the small town of Longueval which, in July 1916, had been a stiffly defended forest enclave on the German second line. Invoked as ‘the full epic’ of ‘tortured humanity’, or the fabled ‘site of a South African epic’, the Delville Wood battle would go down in First World War history as a celebrated icon of colonial settler valour and sacrificial heroism under fire.” (“Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration,” 58).

<sup>43</sup> Foster, “Creating a Temenos,” footnote 83.



Image 2.6b. Delville Wood landscape, 1918. NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Memorial service at Delville Wood, 1918".



Image 2.6c. Delville Wood landscape, 1916.  
NASA GG 2238 1/232, "The remains of Delville Wood, July, 1916".

Discovering unburied bodies of this nature occurred more frequently during the interwar period, not to mention during the war itself. In the winter of 1916-17 the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Infantry Brigade were stationed in the area, and were providing reports of unburied British (including South African) and German bodies they were digging up and reburying in the hundreds: for example, 532 British and 195 German from 6-17 January 1917 alone.<sup>44</sup> A December 1916 map sent by the 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Division Sanitary Section to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Division gives a sense of the relationship of the bodies to the landscape, with notes including “good many scattered dead near small trees here” and similar varieties, and describing the sketch overall as “Delville Wood showing principal area where unburied dead are to be found. Estimated number of dead in the wood 300.”<sup>45</sup>

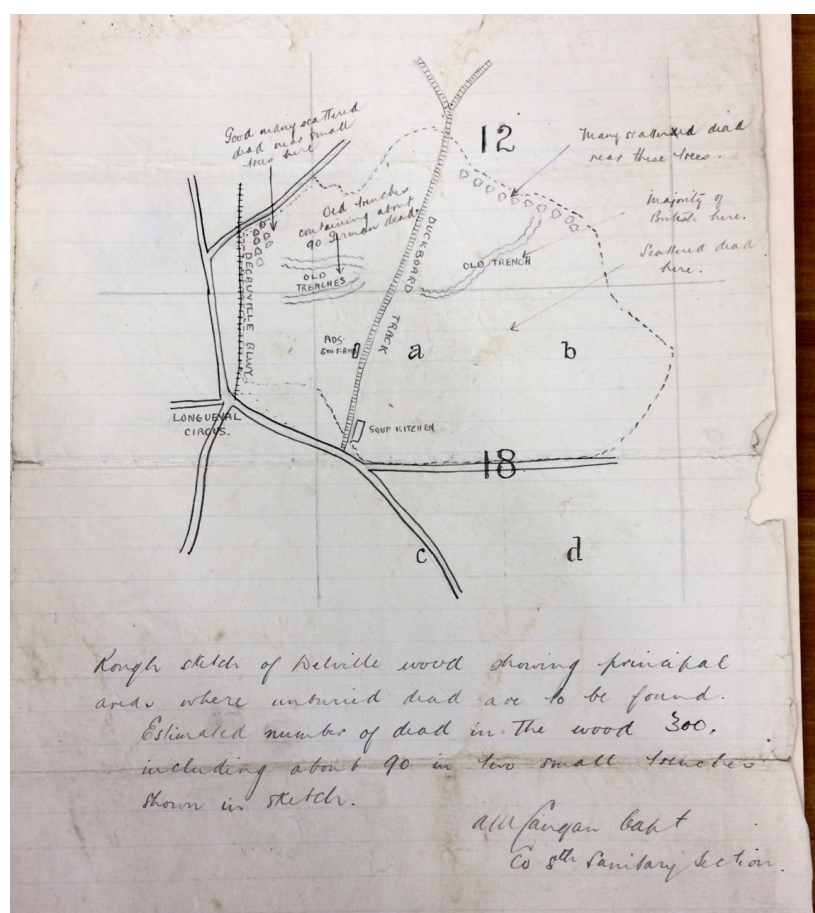


Image 2.7. 1916 sketch of unburied dead locations in Delville Wood. AWM 25 135/14, “[untitled sketch attached to letter dated 27 December 1916]”.

<sup>44</sup> AWM 25 135/14, “Burial of dead at Delville Wood Jan 6-17”.

<sup>45</sup> AWM 25 135/14, “[untitled sketch attached to letter dated 27 December 1916]”.

This ongoing process of discovery and reburial continually challenged, and required redefinitions of, the relationship between memorial, cemetery, landscape, and the dead at this site. For example in 1922, the remains of Pte J.H. Perkins, 3<sup>rd</sup> South African Infantry, were discovered lying between the memorial and its attached cemetery, along with nine other South African soldiers.<sup>46</sup> This caused a chain reaction: Perkins' 'remains' were *already* lying in an identified grave in the cemetery, after having been found under a cross marked with his name in 1917.<sup>47</sup> However, since the 1922 discovery had an identity disc, it was decided that disc trumped cross as conclusive proof of identity and the remains in the marked grave were reburied as unidentified so that Perkins' real body could lie underneath his name.<sup>48</sup>

The clearing and replanting of Delville Wood at an indeterminate time in the 1920s turned up "so many bodies" that it was thought few further remains would be found;<sup>49</sup> yet, further discoveries of unburied bodies at Delville Wood continued into the 1930s.<sup>50</sup> In December 1933, 48 British imperial bodies were found, with 22 confirmed as soldiers of the South African Brigade and the 26 others as British.<sup>51</sup> An additional 20 bodies were also found and identified as Germans.<sup>52</sup> Searches such as these highlighted the shared ownership of these locations: the French authorities had to request permission from the South Africans to undertake a body search at Delville Wood, which was granted by the President of the Union government.<sup>53</sup> This request was not taken lightly; it had originally been posed to the High Commissioner for South Africa, who felt compelled to refer it to the Government of the

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<sup>46</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, "23 March 1923".

<sup>47</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, "23 March 1923".

<sup>48</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, "23 March 1923".

<sup>49</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "8 August 1933".

<sup>50</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "5 February 1934".

<sup>51</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "11 January 1934".

<sup>52</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "6 January 1934".

<sup>53</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "24 October 1933". See CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "31 July 1933", for detailed description of how the French conducted their body searches, and how the IWGC was notified and took over if the found dead were ascertained to be British.

Union.<sup>54</sup> This referral caused a significant delay, but “in view of the importance attached by South Africa to the question, such delay is inevitable.”<sup>55</sup> The French authorities had turned up “several thousand bodies, British, French, and German” conducting similar searches over the past two years.<sup>56</sup> Based on this discovery rate, the IWGC assumed that the requested search, at a location that had “been the scene of fierce fighting,” would “result in the discovery of many, and the identification of a certain number, of those who were killed in the Wood during the war”, and so the Commission recommended that the search be approved with the caveat that “the site of the South African monument and the lawn in front of it should be exempted from the search.”<sup>57</sup>

A significant factor in the importance South Africa attached to the body search request was concern for “the feelings of the relatives of the dead and others in South Africa.”<sup>58</sup> One can assume that the *results* would not be objectionable— that no relative would be upset at having their lost one’s body found and identified— and evidence indicates that it was the *process* which was the potential root of concern, i.e. the treatment of the ground itself (and its possible contents) during the search.<sup>59</sup> Upon receiving the request, the South African High Commissioner replied requesting to be “informed in detail of the methods of working employed by the search parties”, and was “particularly anxious to know if the service involves a complete turning over of all the ground save under the monument and lawn.”<sup>60</sup> The Commission also recommended that the case of Delville Wood was

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<sup>54</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “15 August 1933”.

<sup>55</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “15 August 1933”.

<sup>56</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “17 July 1933”.

<sup>57</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “17 July 1933”.

<sup>58</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “28 July 1933”.

<sup>59</sup> Unwritten codes of behaviour concerning treatment of the ground were of concern in other Dominions in addition to South Africa. In Canada, the IWGC faced a public relations crisis in 1918, rising from a flurry of panic when unfounded rumours, subsequently requiring extensive debunking by the IWGC via reports from army units in France, circulated that Canadian graves in France were being obliterated by careless treatment from local farmers. LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 322 folder W18/26 (3), “13 March 1918”, “15 March 1918”, “18 March 1918”, “19 March 1918”, “21 March 1918” (telegram), “21 March 1918 (letter), “2 April 1918”, “4 April 1918”, “5 April 1918”, “18 April 1918”.

<sup>60</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “26 July 1933”.

exceptional enough to warrant having one of the IWGC's own men onsite while the French conducted the search.<sup>61</sup> The geographically distant yet emotionally ever-present South Africans' attachment to this specific location was used to justify such concerns: that Delville Wood "occupies a peculiar position in the minds of the people of South Africa", and thus the "feeling" in the country on the matter must first be obtained.<sup>62</sup>

The French also attached a different meaning to the Delville Wood ground. It was important to them economically, and the presence of the Delville Wood memorial was interfering with the local farmers' crops. Since the site of the wood "ha[d] been placed at the exclusive disposal of the Government of South Africa" via the sale of the land, the French considered it the South Africans' job to control the population of rabbits in the wood.<sup>63</sup> By 1932 this had not been done, and the farmers whose land adjoined the memorial were threatening litigation over crop damage. A memo from the IWGC's legal branch explains, "a situation that might not be regarded as particularly serious in a country like this [England] is a very different matter where every inch of ground is cultivated."<sup>64</sup>

This raised a recurring question, both for the IWGC and for us: what is conferred on the land (sanctity, ownership, redemption, economic value) by the presence of other materials in it or on it (bodies, crops, memorials)? How are these meanings reconciled when they conflict? As has been demonstrated in the Canadian and Australian cases above, and in the Indian case below, this question manifested itself in some form for all of the case study locations in question.

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<sup>61</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "17 July 1933".

<sup>62</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "26 July 1933".

<sup>63</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "Reference no: FR/M/103".

<sup>64</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, "10 May 1932".

*Battlefield Locations and Site Selection: India*

Contradictory wording contained within the speeches at India's national memorial unveiling highlights one of the fundamental questions posed by the First World War's circumstances of mass carnage and foreign burials. Does the presence of a body in the ground, or a memorial above it, confer moral ownership of that piece of earth to the nation whose soldier(s) are present there in body or in name? (Legal ownership was a different matter, and the French and Belgians granted cemetery land in perpetuity to Britain for its British and empire burials.) In its prefacing text, the 1927 guidebook for the memorial providing transcriptions of the unveiling speech texts asked "may we not also look upon [its] inscription as marking the place where we leave France and enter upon that tiny plot of French ground that is for ever India?"<sup>65</sup> Yet, shortly afterwards in the guidebook, in the text of the speech by Lord Birkenhead (Secretary of State for India, who had served with the Indian Corps during the war), the reverse conceptualisation is posited: that "in an *alien* soil we leave the troops where they died" [emphasis added].<sup>66</sup> This went in tandem with concomitant reassurance from Marshal Ferdinand Foch (French general and Supreme Allied Commander during the war) to the Indians present at the unveiling, to "tell all India that we shall watch over their graves with the devotion due to all our dead."<sup>67</sup>

This Indian memorial was called Neuve Chapelle, and was located at a crossroads in the area of the battle of the same name.

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<sup>65</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

<sup>66</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

<sup>67</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

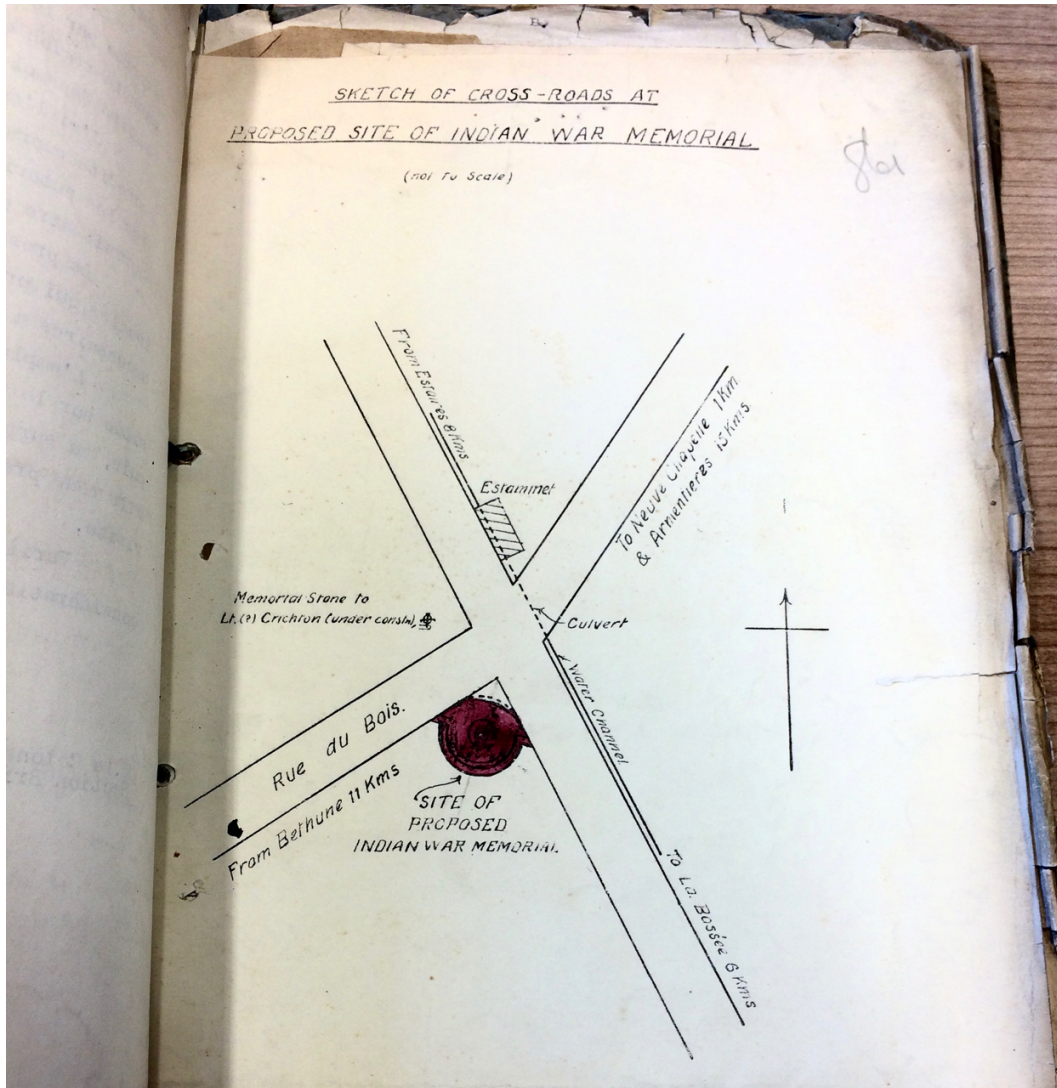


Image 2.8. Sketch of Neuve Chapelle crossroads location, undated, likely 1921. CWGC WG 861, “Sketch of cross-roads at proposed site of Indian war memorial”.

F.H. Kisch, Lieutenant-Colonel with the Royal Engineers, was asked by the India Office to select a location for undivided India’s war memorial in France on behalf of the Indian Government, and he received permission from both the British War Office and the French authorities to do so.<sup>68</sup> His 1921 memo outlines with great specificity the justifications regarding which quadrant of the selected crossroads the memorial would be erected in: the other three quadrants formed by the intersection of the two roads were variously ruled out due to drainage issues, an existing estaminet, and the presence of an individual memorial.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle,” 8 November 1923; CWGC WG 861, “Memorandum: site for Indian War Memorial in France”.

<sup>69</sup> CWGC WG 861, “Memorandum: site for Indian War Memorial in France”.

This land was under cultivation at the time, but the owner was willing to sell.<sup>70</sup> Paradoxically, its *proximity* to cemeteries was considered positive, as was its *distance* from other memorials. The presence of IWGC cemeteries at Pont Logy and Pont du Hen nearby, including Indian burials, “ensures full facilities for the care of the [memorial]”, but “the monument is likely to be the most important in the arrondissement of Bethune.”<sup>71</sup> The India Office clearly accepted the decision of its appointed scout and submitted a formal request two months later to erect “A General Memorial to Indian Units” at the site.<sup>72</sup> The site was eventually purchased on 20 February 1924.<sup>73</sup>

The road to this purchase was not smooth. Difficulty had ensued in the intervening three years: 1924 documents confirming the sale mention that “there had been some trouble in acquiring” the site, but that “we have after all been able to get the site originally chosen at Neuve Chapelle.”<sup>74</sup> In October 1923 the land’s owner had refused to sell, claiming it was not a question of money but rather inheritance complications, which prevented building upon much of the land along the road in question. The only locations that he *could* build on were two parcels: one, the proposed Neuve Chapelle memorial site, and the second, a neighbouring piece of land already occupied by a Portuguese First World War cemetery.<sup>75</sup> Due to the owner’s refusal, that same month the Secrétaire-General of the IWGC’s Comité Mixte Franco-Britannique served as location scout in an attempt to secure something suitable nearby.<sup>76</sup> However, he “[could] find nothing suitable for the Monument as designed”, as most sites did not have the necessary amount of roadside frontage, were not for sale, or would require negotiations with up to three different landowners.<sup>77</sup> The size specifications were

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<sup>70</sup> CWGC WG 861, “Memorandum: site for Indian War Memorial in France”.

<sup>71</sup> CWGC WG 861, “Memorandum: site for Indian War Memorial in France”.

<sup>72</sup> CWGC WG 861, “6 September 1921”.

<sup>73</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Extract from letter... dated 5.11.25”.

<sup>74</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “26 March 1924”, “11 February 1924”.

<sup>75</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle”, 27 October 1923.

<sup>76</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle”, 27 October 1923.

<sup>77</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle”, 27 October 1923.

fairly large: in November 1923 the IWGC Principal Assistant Secretary was checking with the Director of Works, “The size you gave as necessary is 63 metres on each road. Is this an absolute minimum?”<sup>78</sup> The best option was the abandoned site of a proposed Garwhal Rifles monument, 550 metres away, but the site was not big enough and also crossed the boundary into a different administrative commune of France.<sup>79</sup> Any other site chosen for the memorial would not have had the same significance that made the original site most desirable: as the India Office explained to the IWGC Secretary in October 1923,

in the event of the owner of the site for the Neuve Chapelle Indian Memorial, chosen by Lieutenant Colonel Kisch, not being prepared to sell the land, there will be no objection to the memorial being erected on the alternative site proposed by you. It is however hoped that the original site can be obtained since it is on the site of a most important salient of the line held by the Indian Corps in 1914-1915.<sup>80</sup>

As the scramble to obtain an alternative site continued, those involved were forced to prioritise and be clear on their requirements for the site. If it could not be on the exact salient site which the original option provided, it should at least be “within the limits of the area of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 1915”, “on the main road and, if possible, at a Cross Roads”, and “that the monument should face towards the enemy lines.”<sup>81</sup> With these three criteria in place, the range of options was limited even without considering the dimension specifications outlined above; “to face the enemy lines, the Monument should, therefore, be by preference in the Commune of Richebourg l’Avoué and on the North side of a Cross Roads. There are four such Cross Roads within the area of the battle, but no owner will sell his land.”<sup>82</sup> The Principal Assistant Secretary clarified to the Director of Works that

the original site was selected as being a suitable centre to commemorate the exploits of the Indian troops in December 1914, March 1915, and September 1915. Can you give me a short memorandum giving the limits of the area in which the Indian troops

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<sup>78</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle,” 8 November 1923.

<sup>79</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle,” 27 October 1923. The measurement of 550m has been ascertained by the author using Google Maps; thanks to the precision of the archival maps, the exact locations could be easily located in 2019 to calculate the distance between the two points.

<sup>80</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “4 October 1923”.

<sup>81</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “17 December 1923”.

<sup>82</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “17 December 1923”.

fought on these occasions which I can send to Major Ingpen with 1/10,000 maps to help him in selecting a suitable site. If there is any difficulty in identifying the areas covered in each of these occasions then the battle of Neuve Chapelle (March 1915) should be taken as the one to be primarily considered.<sup>83</sup>

After Christmas 1923 a new site had still not been chosen, and it was “not a case where we can ask the French government to intervene” to force the owner of the original site to acquiesce.<sup>84</sup> Baker was being asked to modify his original design to fit the dimensions of an alternate site, “so as to get it on to the ground.”<sup>85</sup> The use of ‘ground’ to mean ‘get it built’ highlights this memorial’s relationship with place: its mere existence was not the only priority, it was incorporating it into and onto its intended landscape that was the crucial action impatiently waited for.

The difficulties that finding a site for the Neuve Chapelle memorial was creating in the fall/winter of 1923 presented the IWGC with a new monetary problem as well. “In the case of other Missing Memorials up to date we have obtained the land free, but this does not seem possible here” – and the Principal Assistant Secretary argued that India could not be asked to pay for the land purchase of its memorial site:

In my opinion the Commission will have to find any purchase money necessary. We told the Indian government that if they would join in the Commission scheme for commemorating the Missing their liability would be limited to their pro rata contribution... they accepted our proposals on this basis and we cannot well therefore ask them to pay for a site for a memorial to their Missing in France.<sup>86</sup>

He also underscored the war’s economic impact on the communes whose land was in question: they “are very poor and have been very much devastated... they would not give any land free, even if they had it which is doubtful.”<sup>87</sup> As with Delville Wood and its rabbit-hating farmer neighbours, this quandary emphasises the reality that the Western Front’s land could carry both sacred and practical connotations to different people. Prioritising these

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<sup>83</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “9 November 1923”.

<sup>84</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “27 December 1923”.

<sup>85</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “27 December 1923”.

<sup>86</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle,” 8 November 1923.

<sup>87</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Indian Memorial at Neuve Chapelle,” 8 November 1923.

different layers of meaning when they clashed, at sites such as the proposed Neuve Chapelle memorial, was a conundrum without easy solution.

However, the memorial's architect, Herbert Baker, disagreed with the Commission and thought that India should be asked to pay, in hopes that an even greater sum could tempt the owner of the original site:

an appeal should be made to the government of India, for I feel certain that if it knew that its great War memorial in France was going begging for a site it would itself pay what is necessary to acquire the site for which the design was made. It must after all be a small sum, in comparison to the importance of the object, which would tempt the owner to sell.<sup>88</sup>

He had strong convictions about the importance of obtaining the original site. He was adamant that his design could not be altered to reduce the amount of road frontage it required, thus ruling out all of the proposed alternative locations; and he was concerned about how the viewer's relationship to the memorial would change if "erections of any sort [were] built up against it on three sides."<sup>89</sup> A site that was not protected against this, he claimed, was "wholly unworthy of such a memorial."<sup>90</sup> This concern over the spatial relationship between a memorial and other points in the landscape, and the potential implications for the conferring of meaning that the interaction between these points would have on the ground itself, is reminiscent of similar concerns regarding Australia's memorial, discussed above. He also notes another aspect of the proposed memorial's spatial relationship with its surroundings: in this memorial's case only, the other specifications for the memorial overrode his normal preference for memorials to the missing to be attached to cemeteries.<sup>91</sup>

When the new year brought no resolution with either the original site owner or an alternate location, on 1 January 1924 the tone became more frantic. The IWGC became increasingly concerned that its inability to obtain a sufficient alternate site would give India

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<sup>88</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, "28 December 1923".

<sup>89</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, "28 December 1923".

<sup>90</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, "28 December 1923".

<sup>91</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, "28 December 1923".

cause to agitate for greater autonomy in the process and slip out from underneath the IWGC umbrella: “It is exceedingly desirable that we should make every effort to obtain a site, otherwise the India Office may take the matter out of our hands and go to the French government through the Foreign Office themselves.”<sup>92</sup> Another option discussed was asking French members of the Anglo-French Mixed Committee to use their influence, but this was discarded out of fear for the monument’s future sanctity: “if influence were brought to bear by a State Official to make an unwilling owner sell, I fear it would create a bad impression and a bad feeling in the district, which might lead to unpleasant incidents in connection with the Monument at a later date.”<sup>93</sup>

It is unclear what then transpired after these January 1924 letters to result in the purchase of the originally selected location in February, but Baker did get his crossroads site. The effort that went into acquiring it demonstrated the importance its creators afforded the landscape in affecting the meaning of the memorial. Indeed, the considerations all four case study memorials faced regarding location demonstrate the multitude of ways that place was understood to impact memorial meanings: whether treating the landscape *as* memorial, proposing to fragment commemoration across multiple points in the landscape, sharing the earth with unburied bodies, or persisting in a site’s acquisition because nowhere else had the same meaning or suitable characteristics, landscape and memorial interacted with each other and the dead in complex ways, which cannot be disentangled when attempting to understand their meanings.

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<sup>92</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “1 January 1924”.

<sup>93</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “5 January 1924”.

## The Role and Significance of Landscape

The landscape of the material culture of remembrance and identity, comprising memorials, cemeteries, and preserved elements of the battlefield landscape itself, was uniquely affected in meaning by the instability of these three components. The process of finding new bodies in the earth, which continues to this day, meant that the boundary between ‘buried’ and ‘missing’ was a blurry one, not the static dichotomy one might assume. In this way cemeteries, memorials, and the landscape were linked conceptually as well as spatially by the dead.

Applying a spatial lens to death and commemoration is crucial in order to give proper dimension to the relationship between material culture (including landscape), the dead, and their memory. As Maddrell and Sidaway argue,

Within contemporary western discourse, death itself is often described in spatial terms: a ‘final journey’, ‘crossing to the other side’, ‘going to a better place’; but the experiences of grief and mourning are typically represented in temporal terms: ‘time heals’, ‘give it time’. Nonetheless, grief and mourning are experienced and marked in space, as well as time.<sup>94</sup>

Viewing space as the purview of death and time as the purview of grief, separately, without examining how memorials, cemeteries, and their landscapes serve as nexuses for their intersection, would be doing these places a disservice, which is why this thesis aligns with Maddrell and Sidaway’s approach.

Landscapes, both real and imagined, are integral contextual elements shaping and defining these sites. Extensive scholarship has engaged with the relationship between landscapes and memory— both generally and in conflict remembrance— and it is necessary to survey their crucial arguments here, as these pose significant concepts and lenses that are applied throughout this thesis. ‘Landscape’ and ‘place’ are not synonymous terms or

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<sup>94</sup> Avril Maddrell and James D. Sidaway, “Introduction: Bringing a Spatial Lens to Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance,” in *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance*, ed. Avril Maddrell and James D. Sidaway (Abingdon: Ashgate/Routledge, 2010), 1.

concepts, but employ a significant mutual methodological vocabulary. The approach taken here is to consider landscape as a place under Yi-Fu Tuan's definition, of place as "a center of meaning, constructed by experience."<sup>95</sup>

One of the most significant works on specifically *First World War* landscapes and memory is Ross Wilson's *Landscapes of the Western Front: Materiality during the Great War*.<sup>96</sup> While it astutely explores the anthropology, archaeology, geology, and ethnography of the Western Front battlefield landscape, a key word in its title – "during" – reveals the perhaps surprising limitations to the book's relevance for this thesis. Particularly in-depth is the book's examination of the role of the individual in relation to weapons, trenches, and landscape more broadly, but the commemorative aspects and potential of the landscape, and individuals' relationships to that, do not feature.

Thus, it is particularly necessary to venture outside First World War scholarship in this chapter's consideration of the role and significance of landscape. Edward Casey writes about the role of landscape as a "topology of the remembered", arguing that "place serves to *situate* one's memorial life."<sup>97</sup> Simon Schama innovatively wrote about landscape through the lens of its three key elements, water, wood, and rock; this thesis emulates this approach by considering the dead another such key element, and therefore analysing landscape through them.<sup>98</sup> In her chapter "Landscape as Memory" Susanne Kuchler argues that landscapes are the dominant depositaries of symbolic space and time: they are the most generally accessible and widely shared aide de memoire of a culture's knowledge and understanding of its past

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<sup>95</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, "Place: An experiential perspective," *Geographical Review* 65:2 (1975), 152.

<sup>96</sup> Ross Wilson, *Landscapes of the Western Front: Materiality during the Great War* (New York City: Routledge, 2011). For detailed discussions of what exactly constitutes a 'landscape' of the First World War (real, imagined, aural, literary, and more), see Angela K. Smith and Krista Cowman (eds), *Landscapes and Voices of the Great War* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

<sup>97</sup> Edward Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 184.

<sup>98</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: HarperCollins, 1995).

and future.<sup>99</sup> A significant complementary claim by Vito Acconci argues that “time is fast and space is slow”,<sup>100</sup> and this is particularly applicable both to the intended perennial nature of these sites and to the role they have taken on in response to the loss of living memory of the conflict. Tim Godden complicates our understanding of their ‘perennial’ nature, however, by emphasising the temporal specificity rather than timelessness that these sites evoke. He posits the relationship between place and time for IWGC cemeteries as follows:

It was the temporal connection, in fact, that made [the cemetery] a place. The graves, of course, anchor the space to a distinct timeframe, but the spatial connection created by the headstones is personal. It is not one of time, but one of humanity, just as it would be standing before a grave in a churchyard. The nature of the architecture, the enclosure of the space, seemed to create a boundary not just between the distinct places in the landscape, but also in time. Far from being a timelessness contained within, it was a distinct connection with a specific time.<sup>101</sup>

Memory is one of the most significant aspects of time for this thesis. Two of the most salient terms used to overlay landscapes and frame their significance to memory are ‘memoryscape’ and ‘memorylands’. Mark Nuttall coined the term ‘memoryscape’ in 1992, to refer to “the emotive power of imagined place in marshalling peoples’ sense of belonging.”<sup>102</sup> In one sense, these IWGC sites are very much real places rather than imagined, but concomitantly they are imagined places both by those who will never see them (grief at a distance) and those who will (for whom they are sites at which identity is imagined, prompted by the combination of the site’s significance and the stone monuments it offers up). In contrast, Sharon McDonald uses the term ‘memorylands’ to conceptualise the relationship of memory to not only the past, but also the future.<sup>103</sup> She defines it as “the co-presence of

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<sup>99</sup> Susanne Kuchler, “Landscape as Memory: The Mapping of Process and its Representation in a Melanesian Society,” in *Landscape, Politics and Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Bender (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 85.

<sup>100</sup> Vito Acconci, “Public Space in a Private Time,” *Critical Inquiry* 16:4 (1990), 910.

<sup>101</sup> Tim Godden, “Stopping Time: Architecture as Landscape Memory,” on his doctoral research blog *The Geometry of Sleep: Thoughts on Memory, Memorialisation, and the Great War*, 1 June 2017 <https://geometryofsleep.wordpress.com/2017/06/01/stopping-time-architecture-as-landscape-memory/>.

<sup>102</sup> Mark Nuttall, *Arctic Homeland: Kinship, Community, and Development in Northwest Greenland* (Cambridge: Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, 1992). Quoted phrase interpreting the author’s definition of ‘memoryscape’ is from Osborne, “Putting identity in its place,” 8.

<sup>103</sup> Sharon MacDonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (London: Routledge, 2013).

different temporalities and the switching between them”, predicated on the fact that there are spaces and things that matter deeply and that have enduring significance for identity, and as such remain ingrained in memory.<sup>104</sup>

While lacking the unique and coinable gravitas of the above two terms, Hutton’s concept of “shared landscapes” is also intrinsic to the study of landscapes’ roles in First World War memory.<sup>105</sup> He interrogates landscapes as imagined products of nationalism; yet this thesis aims to demonstrate that there were many other ways in which the landscapes of the Western Front were shared. The imaginary dimension of landscape is also articulated by Zerubavel, who discusses in *Time Maps* how a landscape is a “sociomental topography of the past.”<sup>106</sup>

This thesis can be considered a response to Schein’s concept that “material places and their representations are discourse materialised.”<sup>107</sup> The argument outlined herein revolves around the questions of *who* is participating in this discourse and *how* those relationships were materialised. The materialising properties of place are also noted by Chambers, who argues that “encountering place fosters corporeal rather than abstract ideas, forming a type of memory that is powerful and emotional.”<sup>108</sup>

In every discourse and every relationship there is potential for imbalance, and landscapes are no exception. Geoff Archer in *The Glorious Dead* defines both potential states of this imbalance for landscapes of First World War remembrance: building on Pierre Nora’s work, he states that sites are either dominant (“grand and spectacular and imposed from

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<sup>104</sup> MacDonald, *Memorylands*, 221, 223.

<sup>105</sup> Patrick Hutton, “Pioneering scholarship on the uses of mythology in the remembrance of modern wars,” preface to *Between Memory and Mythology*, ed. Natalia Starostina (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), xiii.

<sup>106</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1.

<sup>107</sup> Richard H. Schein, “The Place of Landscape: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting An American Scene,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87:4 (1997), 663.

<sup>108</sup> Thomas A. Chambers, *Memories of War: Visiting Battlefields and Bonefields in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 14.

above”) or dominated (“simply places of spontaneous devotion and silent pilgrimage”).<sup>109</sup> However, as stated in Chapter I, this thesis aims to foreground the IWGC sites in question rather than treating them as backdrops:<sup>110</sup> thus, Archer’s concept should also be applied to the consideration of IWGC landscapes with its subject and object reversed. Arguably, *dominant* landscapes are those that inspire emotion and identity through an evocative sense of place, while *dominated* landscapes are those that have had meaning accreted to them by the imposition of material culture.

Jeremy Foster argues that this connection between the dead and their landscapes is a triangulation, positing “a significant part of a memorial’s imaginative charge stems from the triangulation it sets up between the living, the dead and geographical place.”<sup>111</sup> These are secular sacred spaces.<sup>112</sup> They are outdoor shrines for a secular cult of the war dead: a form of collective mourning that shared parallels with religious practices, which did not replace traditional religion but was a social phenomenon uniting the living in reverence of those who fell.<sup>113</sup> These sites were and are instinctively treated as sacred places, and the war dead were non-contentious symbols, guaranteed respect and admiration by virtually all segments of society.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Geoff Archer, *The Glorious Dead: Figurative Sculpture of British First World War Memorials* (Norwich: Frontier, 2009), 202.

<sup>110</sup> The condition of being a backdrop is not inherently tied to either of Archer’s categories; following his definitions, both dominant and dominated sites can still be considered to be treated as backdrops rather than foreground, depending on the context.

<sup>111</sup> Foster, “Creating A Temenos,” 260.

<sup>112</sup> See for example Ahenk Yilmaz, “Memorialization on War-Broken Ground: Gallipoli War Cemeteries and Memorials Designed by Sir John James Burnet,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 73:3 (2014), 328-346, and Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*.

<sup>113</sup> Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 6; Luckins, *The Gates of Memory*, 91; Winter, *Remembering War*, 26; Ziino, *A Distant Grief*, 2, 21. For greater detail, see “Chapter 2: Christ in Flanders,” in Vance, *Death So Noble*, 35-71. Arguably the most famous outdoor shrine serving as a focal point for commemorating the dead was and is the Cenotaph in London, which though ostensibly secular is overlaid with Christian ritual; for further discussion of this, see Norman Bonney, “The Cenotaph: A consensual and contested monument of remembrance,” working paper by Edinburgh Napier University professor, 25-26, <https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/cenotaph-a-consensual-and-contested-monument-of-remembrance.pdf>.

<sup>114</sup> Foster, “Creating a Temenos,” 268; Hucker, “Battle and Burial,” 100; Janet L. Lermite, “Returning to Vimy Ridge: Canada’s Narrative of Battle and Remembrance,” MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 2010, 13; Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 5; Nasson, “Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration,” 67; Sheftall, *Altered Memories*, 147, 171-172; Vance, *Death So Noble*, 60, 67; Ziino, *Distant Grief*, 131.

Foote argues that places of natural and social trauma become the “shadowed ground of negative remembrance”,<sup>115</sup> and this concept is fruitful to consider in the Western Front context. The connotations of ‘negative’ have multiple applications to IWGC memorials and cemeteries.<sup>116</sup> First, one aspect of ‘negative’ is the presence of absence: the visible lack of presence. Cemeteries and memorials make visible the lack of presence of the dead. Despite the fundamental role played by absence at these sites, as constructed sites they are starkly and notably outside of Anita Bakshi’s definition of “places of absence”, which is that places “are more than just holes in the city; they can hold an evocative power much greater than designated commemorative sites.”<sup>117</sup> However, IWGC sites are of course also evocative in their own ways, including due to the events that occurred there during the conflict: rather than perceiving the presence of visual remnants of carnage, it is the visitor’s *knowledge* of this now-absent chaos that bestows upon the sites the weight that visitors attach. Second, ‘negative’ is part of the lexicon for photography, meaning ‘to show light and shade reversed from those of the original’: this can be conceptualised as the dual binaries of IWGC sites. Cemeteries materialise a reversal between the binary of life and death, with those originally alive now dead under the ground en masse; while memorials materialise a reversal between the binary of presence and absence of the dead, occupying monumental amounts of area upon the ground to claim space in the world for the missing dead lost beneath it. (As Scates poetically frames this, “[in memorials] architecture had achieved the purest of ironic inversions: swallowed up by the earth the missing now mastered the landscape.”)<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Foote, *Shadowed Ground*.

<sup>116</sup> ‘Negative space’ is also an increasingly popular concept in contemporary discussions surrounding removal of problematic or controversial monuments. See for example Lisa Blas, “Negative Space(s),” in *Monumental Troubles: Rethinking what monuments mean today*, ed. Erika Doss and Cheryl K. Snay (Notre Dame: Midwest Art History Society and Snite Museum of Art, 2018), 75-85.

<sup>117</sup> Anita Bakshi, *Topographies of Memories: A New Poetics of Commemoration* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 65-66.

<sup>118</sup> Scates, *Return To Gallipoli*, 55.

A related photographic concept is the ‘afterimage’: “an impression of a vivid image retained by the eye after the stimulus has ceased.”<sup>119</sup> Photographs are a type of afterimage, and so too are these sites: they are the afterimages of the conflict. Roland Barthes reflects extensively upon the relationship between photographs, death, and memory in his work *Camera Lucida*, where he argues that to see a photograph well, you must close your eyes:<sup>120</sup> by definition, what remains is the afterimage. So too do IWGC sites hold meanings and images beyond what can visually be seen. The relationship between what is there to be seen and what is actually seen may be another type of reversal, or ‘negative’: Kafka argues that “we photograph things in order to drive them out of our minds. My stories are a way of shutting my eyes”,<sup>121</sup> and one must consider whether this dichotomy between seeing and not seeing applies to landscapes of remembrance as well.<sup>122</sup> This theme of the ‘gaze’ will continue to permeate the arguments of this thesis.

A core argument of John Berger’s foundational *Ways of Seeing* can also be interpreted to have meaning for the relationship between seeing and landscapes. While his work as a whole dissects the ways in which what we believe and what we know affect what we see, his opening lines actually introduce the immediacy of place as another crucial element in how we see:

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, “Afterimage,” <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/after-image>.

<sup>120</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York City: Noonday Press, 1981), 53.

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 53.

<sup>122</sup> Unfortunately, a major recent edited collection on sight, perception, and visual imagery of First World War memory does not engage with battlefield landscape, memorials, or cemeteries (war art of various forms is instead the focus), but is still worth considering for those who work on the transmission of cultural memory through two-dimensional art (as opposed to memorials, which could be considered three-dimensional art) and literature. Ann Murray (ed), *Constructing the Memory of War in Visual Culture Since 1914* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>123</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC, 1977), 7.

Massey argues that it is the narrative of experience that creates a bond between people and the identity of places,<sup>124</sup> and this concept is fundamental to understanding the role this thesis's case study sites held (and continue to hold) as emotional lodestones and magnets of pilgrimage. Their location is at the core of their identity, and it is the fighting and the burials that took place here which then drew the living to them in remembrance: the "genius loci", the spirit of place.<sup>125</sup> (The role of visitation in adding layers of meaning to the sites this thesis addresses is discussed further in Chapter IV: Keeping Touch.) The role of events that took place on landscapes in constructing their meaning is articulated by Paul Readman as "associational value, the value placed on those connections and interactions between the environment and human experience that both create landscape qua landscape, and supply the basis for the ascription of meaning to it",<sup>126</sup> and by Shanti Sumartojo as "spatially-specific affective experience can work to connect individuals to the nation."<sup>127</sup>

Significant locations in landscapes serve to "anchor collective remembering... in highly condensed, fixed, and tangible sites."<sup>128</sup> However, this thesis argues that these sites are 'fixed' in only the most tangible of ways; their meanings were not – and *are* not – fixed at all. (It is also worth noting that even tangibly, these sites are not as fixed as one might think: damage from the Second World War, decades of weathering, and the continuing discovery of bodies continue to affect the appearances and representations of these sites.) This thesis's contention that its case-study sites were not static, and were instead sites of multiple, shifting, and hybrid identities, is also supported by Bender, who claims "[t]he landscape is never inert,

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<sup>124</sup> Doreen Massey, "Places and their Pasts," *History Workshop Journal* 39 (Spring 1995), 182-192.

<sup>125</sup> Osborne, "Landscapes, memory, monuments, and commemoration: putting identity in its place."

<sup>126</sup> Paul Readman, *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 2-3. Readman's entire introductory chapter provides a much more thorough delve into the historiography and theory of landscape studies than can be attempted here.

<sup>127</sup> Shanti Sumartojo, "Commemorative atmospheres: memorial sites, collective events and the experience of national identity," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41 (2016), 541.

<sup>128</sup> Kirk Savage, "The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 130-131.

people engage with it, re-work it, appropriate and contest it. It is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group, or nation-state.”<sup>129</sup>

This thesis very consciously follows Osborne’s argument that “rather than geography being merely the stage for the acting out of history, the two are closely imbricated throughout.”<sup>130</sup> More specifically, it argues that these sites were not just the backdrop against which identities were performed and reinforced through ritual; the sites themselves can be taken as primary sources and agents of identity formulation. This follows the argument laid out in, most notably, *Writing Material Culture History*, *The Social Life of Things*, and *Art and Agency* about the agency of objects,<sup>131</sup> and also aligns with Howard Williams’ argument that graveyards “are spaces in which remembering and forgetting are ‘performed’ *through the use of* material culture and the bodies of the dead” [emphasis added].<sup>132</sup> The concept of identities not being passively received but rather actively inscribed is also supported by G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham, though their arguments allot the totality of the agency to people rather than to landscape: “senses of places are therefore the products of the creative imagination of the individual and of society, while identities are not passively received but are ascribed to places by people.”<sup>133</sup> This thesis’ argument for memorials and cemeteries not merely being backdrops and playing backseat to ritual differs from the view espoused by social anthropologist Paul Connerton, who argues that social memory is most predominantly found in and carried by commemorative ceremonies and bodily actions.<sup>134</sup> However, these positions are not dichotomies; this thesis can be understood as suggesting that memorials and

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<sup>129</sup> Barbara Bender, “Introduction: Landscape – Meaning and Action,” in *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Bender (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 3.

<sup>130</sup> Osborne, “Putting identity in its place,” 8.

<sup>131</sup> Gerritsen and Riello, *Writing Material Culture History*; Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*; Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>132</sup> Howard Williams, “Remembering and Forgetting the Medieval Dead: Exploring death, memory and material culture in monastic archaeology,” in *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies*, ed. Howard Williams (New York City: Springer Science, 2003), 233.

<sup>133</sup> G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham, “Senses of Place, Senses of Time and Heritage,” in *Senses of Place: Senses of Time*, ed. G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham (Abingdon: Ashgate/Routledge, 2005), 3.

<sup>134</sup> Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3-4.

cemeteries are stages which shape ritual action. While not denying the importance of either of the modes that Connerton champions, nor their interrelation with material culture, the almost total absence of material culture in his analysis presents a lacuna which this thesis serves as a test case to begin to fill. Meanwhile, we must keep in mind that the concepts of memory, place, and identity are each such loaded, contested, and methodologically complex terms that together and in the context of war remembrance they are deemed a “nexus of meta-concepts” allowing for a wide spectrum of interpretations.<sup>135</sup>

Bakhtin’s innovative concept of ‘chronotype’ landscapes is also significant to this work. A chronotype is a

point in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse... time takes on flesh and becomes visible for human contemplation; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time and history and the enduring character of a people.<sup>136</sup>

This thesis demonstrates that IWGC monuments and cemeteries are chronotypes, but notably chronotypes are not always literal monuments: they “stand as monuments to the community itself, as symbols of it, as forces operating to shape its members’ images of themselves.”<sup>137</sup>

Landscapes can be conceptualised in an abundance of ways; from Bakhtin’s geographical approach, we now move to Mitchell’s linguistic approach. He argues for a grammatical understanding of landscape as a verb, not a noun: that landscape is not an object to be seen or a text to be read, but a process by which social and subjective identities are formed.<sup>138</sup> It is this process which this thesis interrogates, while engaging with the former

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<sup>135</sup> Danielle Drozdewski, Sarah de Nardi, and Emma Waterton, “Geographies of memory, place and identity: intersections in remembering war and conflict,” *Geography Compass* 10/11 (2016), 448.

<sup>136</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. Mikhail Bakhtin and M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 7.

<sup>137</sup> Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination*, 7.

<sup>138</sup> W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-2. Further, see Scates’ discussion of “the grammar of gesture” in First World War cemeteries (*Return to Gallipoli*, 182), Gill Abousnoug and David Machin’s discussion of “the grammar of war monuments”, using verbs, subjects, and objects as a framework to conceptualise what war memorials do and to whom (*The Language of War Monuments* [London: Bloomsburg, 2014], 13-14), and Christina Theodosiou’s argument that adding a third dimension – time – to landscape, focusing explicitly on Armistice Day rituals in France, produces “articulation between the future, the past, and the present, rather than [the] reconstruction of the presence of the past in the

two concepts as well. Landscapes – the preservation of battlefield ones, to what extent, and the sites of remembrance they host – are not frequently enough treated as primary sources themselves (“texts to be read”), so this work will not overlook that aspect of their role. This author fully agrees that landscapes are not just objects to be seen, and is instead asking who is seeing them, who was intended to see them, and why. Again, we return to the ‘gaze’: a concept borrowed most heavily from gender scholarship,<sup>139</sup> though its interpretations in this thesis have been specifically influenced by Tara Mayer’s work in the context of gaze and Orientalism.<sup>140</sup>

Halbwachs argues that landscapes are often called upon to serve as emotional prompts for actions in the present –<sup>141</sup> he wrote this decades ago, but the 2014-2018 First World War centenary period has demonstrated the staggering validity of that concept when applied to this context. The Western Front landscape, dotted with thousands of cemeteries and many significant memorials, has been the scene of a massive, international, state-level programme of commemorative activity and ritual during the centenary period, in tandem with extensive private and smaller-scale public remembrance initiatives.

To understand the state-level relationship with these sites and their landscapes both in the present and in the interwar period, we must turn to Pierre Nora’s defining work on monuments and national memory: *Les lieux de memoire*, which addresses the national memory of France.<sup>142</sup> Despite the title, which loosely translates to ‘places of memory’, (though some of the ‘lieux’ he discusses are not *places*), Nora’s argument is that monuments

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present” (“Symbolic narratives and the legacy of the Great War: the celebration of Armistice Day in France in the 1920s,” *First World War Studies* 1:2 (2010), 187).

<sup>139</sup> The concept of gaze, particularly male gaze, in gender theory is too prolific to summarise here, but the concept was originated by Laura Mulvey in her “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16:3 (1975), 6-18.

<sup>140</sup> Tara Mayer, “Clothing the Imperial Image: European Dress, Identity, and Authority in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century North India,” PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2010.

<sup>141</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 175.

<sup>142</sup> Its key points were also published in English as an article: Nora, “Between Memory and History.”

“owe their meaning to their intrinsic existence and could easily be relocated without altering their signification”,<sup>143</sup> which is much contested today and which this thesis adamantly refutes. He distinguishes between ‘dominant’ and ‘dominated’ sites, but no sites of First World War battlefield commemoration, particularly the case studies in this thesis, are straightforward enough to be slotted cleanly into this binary. The interplay between Nora’s two types – between public and personal, collective and individual – is at the heart of this thesis’ case studies. Thus, the complexity and variety of this interplay is at the crux of this thesis’ justification, and of the continuing significance of these sites today.

### **Creating and disturbing hallowed ground: sanctification and exhumations**

The delineation of battlefields as secular sacred spaces did not originate with the First World War.<sup>144</sup> A significant precedent for the treatment of battlefields as sacred sites is the American Civil War (1861-1865). Chambers argues that the demarcation of battlefields as sacred spaces is accretional rather than inherent, demonstrating that in the American Civil War context, “visits slowly made these battlefields into ‘sacred spaces’.”<sup>145</sup> The influence of this and other pre-First World War precedents may have had a trans-temporally accretional effect as well, accreting meaning not just to specific battlefields but to the overall concept of battlefields as sacred spaces: so that by the time of the First World War, its battlefields were already underlaid with sanctity by virtue of the accumulated meanings that had been afforded to battlefields of previous major conflicts in the public consciousness.

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<sup>143</sup> Quoted in Sabine Marschall, *Landscape of Memory: Commemorative Monuments, Memorials and Public Statuary in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 6.

<sup>144</sup> For further readings on pre-First World War battlefields as secular sacred spaces, see Chambers, *Memories of War*; Keir Reeves et al. (eds), *Battlefield events: landscape, commemoration and heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2016); and Jonathan Spielvogel, *Interpreting Sacred Ground: the rhetoric of national Civil War parks and battlefields* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013).

<sup>145</sup> Chambers, *Memories of War*, 4.

However, First World War battlefield sanctity is only minimally owed to precedent compared to the variety of influential factors in question during the war itself and its aftermath. What makes battlefield ground and its commemorative sites sacred? Is it the intangible knowledge of what occurred there, the presence of bodies, the delineation of a *temenos* – a “demarcated sanctuary, slightly removed from everyday life” –<sup>146</sup> through subsequent architecture and landscaping, or as Chambers suggests, the act of visitation?



Image 2.9. The architecture of the Vimy memorial, with its clearly defined platform, is a stark example of the delineation of memorial space. 2016.

These vary in what they imply about the properties of sacredness: some suggest that sacredness is inherent to a site, whereas others lean further towards a model in which sacredness is applied to a site through objects or actions. As discussed above, Foote posits a five-point formula for sanctity that incorporates several of these criteria, but the archival

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<sup>146</sup> Foster discussing Baker’s justifications for Delville Wood’s site selection, in “Creating a Temenos,” 268.

sources examined for this thesis usually address only one at a time. In the IWGC cemetery context of the 1920s-30s, it was not *visits* that were considered to make these battlefield commemorative locations into sacred sites, but rather the act of burial itself. Fabian Ware explained in 1920 that the IWGC did not consecrate their cemetery grounds because “the ground is consecrated by the act of burial”,<sup>147</sup> and was quite exasperated that “considerable pressure is being brought to bear on us to consecrate cemeteries, but we are resisting this very firmly.”<sup>148</sup>

Formal consecration would have proved problematic due to the variety of faiths represented among the fallen of any cemetery. To consecrate it by one faith would disrespect those of other religions buried there.<sup>149</sup> Next-of-kin even from different sects within Christianity would presumably have objected to the cemetery being consecrated according to a different faith (e.g. Roman Catholic versus Church of England), and consecration according to either of those would also disrespect the dead and their families who were Jewish. The issue becomes further complicated when Hindu and Muslim soldiers of the Indian Army are considered. A letter from the IWGC Registrar to the Director of Records raises this: the specific example given is an IWGC North African cemetery, but given the fact that this letter demonstrates it was being discussed by senior IWGC officials in London, presumably these considerations also applied to Indian burials on the Western Front. The issue raised in this letter forces us to reconsider yet again how ‘hallowed ground’ was created at these sites. It discusses how the Cross of Sacrifice has already been erected and “dominates the whole Cemetery... [we are] doubtful if the Indians could with safety be put amongst the British

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<sup>147</sup> CWGC WG 1294/3 Pt 2, “18 June 1920”. For *battlefield* cemeteries there is also the added component of the *death* itself onsite being a consecrating factor, not just the *burial* onsite.

<sup>148</sup> CWGC WG 1294/3 Pt 2, “18 June 1920”.

<sup>149</sup> Formal consecration is a significant way in which battlefield versus domestic IWGC graves differ; most domestic IWGC graves are not in IWGC-only cemeteries, but rather are plots or single graves within civilian cemeteries; most of which would have been consecrated.

close to the Cross if there was any question of Hindus being concerned.”<sup>150</sup> This implies that the presence of this specific type of remembrance material culture – the Cross – imbues the space around it with a religiously-specific sanctity, of indefinite parameters.

How close is “close to the Cross”? It is worth considering whether suitable distance from the Cross would have been determined by the radius of its shadow; to ensure that no Hindu graves were touched, albeit immaterially, by this symbol or presence of a different faith.



Image 2.10. Cross of Sacrifice shadow touching graves, Guillemont Road Cemetery, France, 2016.

Both this concept and that raised above regarding Australia’s site selection (that sacredness could be conferred over the space between memorial locations) imply a similar definition of the properties of ‘hallowed’. Both concepts can be visualised in terms of ‘hallowedness’ as a

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<sup>150</sup> CWGC WG 898/2 Pt 2, “9 August 1927”. Burial *itself*, regardless of Cross proximity, was already considered problematic for Hindus, but was not always avoided.

blanket or layer settling over the earth, with material culture of remembrance – memorials, or the Cross – as the hands that have cast it outwards from themselves to settle onto the ground. On the spectrum of sacredness creation between ‘inherent’ and ‘applied’, both fall furthest towards application. In contrast, the 1921 minutes of the third meeting of the IWGC Committee on Memorials to the Missing posit that it is death that makes these sites inherently sacred, and this property diminishes concomitantly with the receding of proximity. One member proposed choosing five cemeteries to each commemorate 10,000 of the estimated 50,000 dead, but the Director of Records, the Vice-Chairman, and Rudyard Kipling all vetoed this idea.<sup>151</sup> The former explained that the proposed cemeteries were all concentration cemeteries, meaning “bodies had been concentrated into them from other places”, and thus “they would not be commemorating the missing in any intelligible relation to the fighting.”<sup>152</sup> The Vice-Chairman explained that this proposal would not satisfy the relatives, and Kipling was of the belief that this proposal of “five name boards” would not be adequately fulfilling the “original policy” of the IWGC.<sup>153</sup>

‘Consecration’ has specific religious connotations, so the term ‘sanctification’ is preferred here for its broader and more secular implications. Although entire battlefield landscapes as entities were afforded a measure of sanctity due to what they had witnessed, as the interwar rebuilding process began and much of the land returned to agricultural use, low walls, railings, and ditches were frequently employed to delineate memorial and cemetery sites as a different kind of space. For example, in his design proposal for the Neuve Chapelle memorial Herbert Baker suggests, “the present ditch on the site should be enlarged forming a small moat outside the railing both as a protection and to express the nature of that war

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<sup>151</sup> CWGC WG 219/1, “Draft proceedings of the third meeting of the committee on memorials to the missing, 6 July 1921”.

<sup>152</sup> CWGC WG 219/1, “Draft proceedings of the third meeting of the committee on memorials to the missing, 6 July 1921”.

<sup>153</sup> CWGC WG 219/1, “Draft proceedings of the third meeting of the committee on memorials to the missing, 6 July 1921”.

area.”<sup>154</sup> He believed that a war memorial should be a *temenos*, and architectural and landscape elements such as Neuve Chapelle’s ditch and circular walls were employed to delineate this clearly.

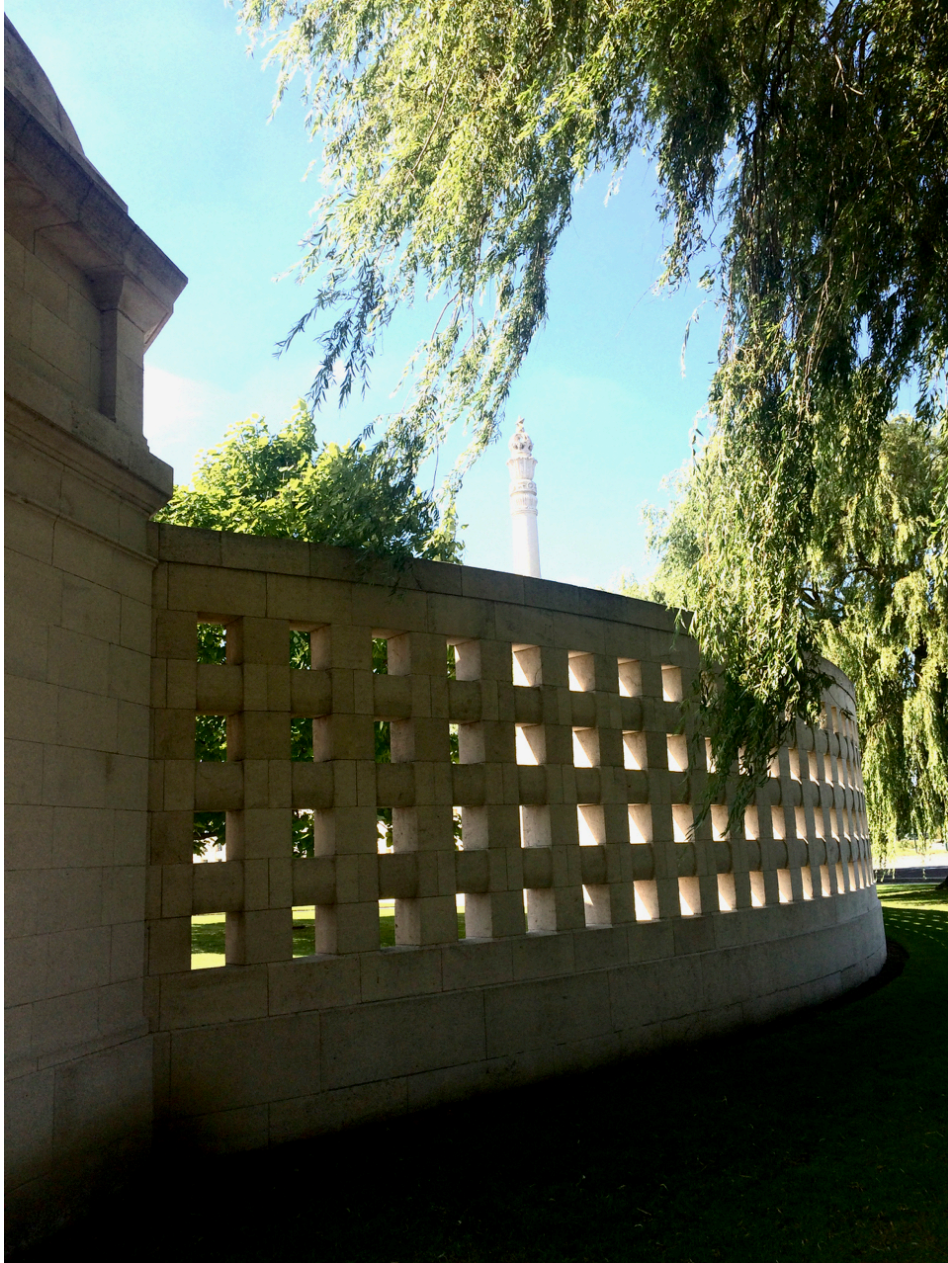


Image 2.11. Boundary walls encircling, and comprising part of, the Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.

The imposition of material culture by the IWGC did not only occur in the form of memorials and cemeteries, and the maintained landscape and fauna of IWGC sites is a

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<sup>154</sup> CWGC SDC 43, “29 June 1923”.

fundamental element serving to create a temenos of the site by demarcating it from the space it is surrounded by. IWGC cemeteries and memorials are impeccably landscaped, and this both represents IWGC principles and continues to shape perceptions and memories today.<sup>155</sup> The cemeteries are designed to evoke the sense of an English garden,<sup>156</sup> but some exceptions were made: specific recommendations were sent from Kew Gardens outlining which trees, plants, and flowers representing various Dominions of the British Empire could viably grow in France.<sup>157</sup>



Image 2.12. Typical 'English garden'-style grave horticulture, Passchendaele New British Cemetery, Belgium, 2017.

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<sup>155</sup> For much greater detail on the IWGC's horticultural policies, including the uncredited likely influence of Gertrude Jekyll, see Sarah Joiner, "The Evolution of the Planting Influences of the Imperial War Graves Commission from its Inception to the Modern Day," *Garden History* 42 supplement 1 (2014), 96-106.

<sup>156</sup> Skelton, *Lutyens*, 123.

<sup>157</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 322 folder W18/26 (4), "[Letter from] Royal Gardens, Kew, 25 October 1916 [to Fabian Ware]". See also LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (6), "Statement by the Director of Kew Gardens, 30 December 1918", for specifics about Canadian maple species chosen.

Most IWGC sites do not explicitly state a behavioural code to conform with the reverence these locations provoke, but a notable exception is the Thiepval memorial, which until recently bore a sign to visitors as they pass through a low stone wall that delineates its boundaries: “Please help to maintain the beauty and tranquility of this sacred place by befitting conduct.”



Image 2.13. Behavioural conduct sign at Thiepval, 2016.

Liminality is an important feature of IWGC locations, but it remains open to interpretation whether it is their *boundaries* that are liminal (the sense of a transition or demarcation between ordinary and sacred ground, e.g. the stone wall and sign at Thiepval), or whether the entire sites are places of liminality, between the living and the dead.

The sanctity of these sites, specifically of cemeteries, was not immutable. Once created, these spaces could be subsequently disturbed by exhumations, both licit and illicit.

Thus, IWGC cemeteries could form a fascinating intersection of liminal place and liminal process.

Exhumations were opposed by the IWGC for three reasons. Firstly, for practical concerns: “emptying some 400,000 identified graves would be a colossal work”,<sup>158</sup> and the effects both of years of weathering and cemetery disturbances from repeated fighting meant that bodies were often not in good condition. Secondly, exhumation violated the IWGC’s equality principle: it cost money to locate, exhume, repatriate, and rebury a body, and thus would not be an option open to every family. Thirdly, the presence of actual bodies in foreign soil was seen as a corporeal seal of the bond that the dead created between countries: exhuming them would be “opposed to the spirit in which the Empire had gratefully accepted the offers made by the governments of France, Belgium, Italy, and Greece to provide in perpetuity for our cemeteries and to ‘adopt’ our dead.”<sup>159</sup>

However, despite these oppositions, exhumations did occur at IWGC sites in substantial numbers. Most of these were for a legitimate reason: moving graves into collection cemeteries. These were larger consolidation cemeteries created after the war had ended, partly to reduce the risk of isolated graves being lost or proving too difficult to maintain at adequate standards. Unfortunately, some exhumations did also occur which were extraneous of IWGC policy and in fact directly contravened it. Many distraught families, refusing to accept the non-repatriation edict, were willing to either pay a third party to dig up their loved one’s body, or in some cases went to the Western Front to do it themselves. In 1920 this was happening often enough for the IWGC to decide to try to “put the fear of god” into those making these illegal attempts.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> CWGC WG 1294/3 Pt 1, “[undated unsigned memo with seal, likely 1918]”.

<sup>159</sup> CWGC WG 1294/3 Pt 1, “[undated unsigned memo with seal, likely 1918]”.

<sup>160</sup> CWGC WG 1294/3 Pt 2, “22 January 1920”.

Exhumations are only one iteration of the relationship between the dead and their landscapes. They are also only one type of ‘absent dead’.<sup>161</sup> The First World War dead of the British Empire were ‘absent’ in various ways, and the nature of these absences positioned the dead as nexuses of identities. Six types of absent dead feature throughout this thesis, to varying degrees; in addition to the exhumed dead, there is, second, the missing dead (the thousands of soldiers whose bodies were never found). Third, the unidentified dead (some of the bodies of the missing actually were found, but were never matched with their names). It is worth noting for the latter that an absence of identification is notably different from an ‘absence of *identity*’. When soldiers could not be identified, their very absence of a name, in effect, gave them a new identity, raising the question of whether not only graves but identities can be considered ‘empty’. The unidentified dead were all ‘a soldier of the Great War, known unto God’, and this identity, both collective and individual, was imposed on them in perpetuity because it was engraved on their headstones. Fourth, imagined absence; paradoxically, the ‘found’ dead who received their own graves were in some cases envisioned as not being present, as in a 1919 Australian poem by Charles Pettinger, who wrote “Do not go to see my lonely grave, for I shall not be there; but rather part of every wind, of every silver wave.”<sup>162</sup> This idea of the dead not being in their graves, even though they physically were, is also reflected in epitaphs. For example, Captain Leslie Finlay Dun’s epitaph, at Brandhoek Military Cemetery in France, quotes Luke 24 from the Bible: “why

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<sup>161</sup> The word ‘absent’ is chosen very specifically here. Not only does it encompass and tie together the spectrum of circumstances described in the subsequent list of types, it also provides differentiation from the archaeological concept of ‘missing vs invisible dead’, which is not applicable in this context. (‘Missing’ dead are those not found in the archaeological record due to lack of excavation, whereas ‘invisible’ dead are those whose burial practices make them unrecognisable as burials to archaeologists. For further on this concept, see the section “Missing vs invisible dead” in Jennie Bradbury and Chris Scarre, “Introduction: Engaging with the Dead,” in *Engaging with the Dead: Exploring changing human beliefs about death, mortality and the human body*, ed. Jennie Bradbury and Chris Scarre (Oxford: Oxbow, 2017), 9-10.

<sup>162</sup> Charles F. Pettinger, “Reincarnation,” *Bulletin*, 16 January 1919, reprinted in *Hermes: The Magazine of the University of Sydney* 26:3 (November 1920), 248.  
<https://sydney.edu.au/arms/archives/hermes%201920%20November%20Vol%20XXVI%20No%203.pdf>.

seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here.”<sup>163</sup> These two examples focus on replacing presence with absence; yet in the reverse situation, in the case of the missing, it was imagined presence that was considered the most important thing. Memorials to the missing were erected to create a sense of presence, and to give the dead a fixed point of remembrance in the landscape. At the unveiling of the IWGC’s Menin Gate memorial in 1927, General Plumer, speaking of each missing soldier it commemorated, famously stated “He is not missing. He is here,”<sup>164</sup> and Paul Gough’s work has examined the role that art, film, and photography played in imbuing the Western Front commemorative landscape with the imagined presence of the dead.<sup>165</sup> This theme has also been prevalent during the First World War centenary, particularly in artistic responses; for example, sculptor Jackie Lantelli’s ghostlike soldiers standing over their own graves. Fifth, absence created by cremation, is discussed later in this chapter. Sixth, absence caused by distance, is addressed extensively in Chapter IV: Keeping Touch.

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<sup>163</sup> CWGC Find War Dead database, “Leslie Finlay Dun,” <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/429695/dun,-leslie-finlay/>. This quote was used in other epitaphs as well, e.g. that of chaplain William David Abbott buried in Janval Cemetery, died 3 December 1918.

<sup>164</sup> Widely reported. e.g. Paul Chapman, *Menin Gate North: In Memory and In Mourning* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2016), 3.

<sup>165</sup> Paul Gough, “The Living, The Dead and the Imagery of Emptiness and Re-appearance on the Battlefields of the Western Front,” in *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance*, ed. Avril Maddrell and James D. Sidaway (Abingdon: Ashgate/Routledge, 2010), particularly section “The Dead Rising” (275-278), discussing how “images of the dead rising from the earth gained a wide currency” (275).



Image 2.14. Two of Jackie Lantelli's 'ghost soldiers' (fore and left background) stand in front of their own IWGC graves in Slimbridge churchyard cemetery. Photo by Robert Eveleigh, used with permission.

Building upon the theme of presence, absence and the relationship between these that different types of 'absent dead' call into question, the next section will shift focus from the buried dead to the *missing* dead, exploring how alternative proposals for commemorating the missing also blurred the lines and complicated the interactions between present and absent, memorial and landscape, and cemetery and memorial.

### **“His six feet of ground”: presence, absence, and alternative proposals for the missing**

Alternative proposals (i.e. other than memorials) for commemoration of the missing brilliantly encapsulate the interconnection between landscape, cemetery, memorial, and the dead. Convention dictated that a cemetery contains bodies which are buried underground, and a memorial manifests the absence of bodies through its presence *aboveground*; yet two suggestions made during the 1920s decision-making processes complicated the simplicity of this dichotomy. Both inverted the expectation that the absence of the missing should be

rectified through a substitutive presence aboveground, by proposing that something other than bodies should be buried: either the names of the missing, or empty space.<sup>166</sup>

For the British forces generally, it was the proposal to put names underground that complicated this narrative. In 1926, the IWGC Director of Works wrote a “Strictly Confidential” memo to the IWGC Vice-Chairman about various proposed memorials in France. One was intended to be in Bethune, and the Director addresses existing “objections to erecting large Memorials in French towns” with the solution of “having a comparatively small monument above ground, and commemorating a large number of names in a crypt underground.”<sup>167</sup> This adds another layer to the relationship between name and body, a relationship that was already unprecedentedly prominent in the First World War’s aftermath as evidenced by the IWGC’s commitment to individual commemoration. By burying names, the names’ tangibility and visibility levels would have altered in different directions. Their tangibility would have increased from the already highly tangible nature of their tactility as stone inscriptions on memorials, since their presence would now be representative of the body itself in the burial space of the crypt. This would have made their role as a replacement for the body more complete. Simultaneously, this proposal would have decreased the visibility level of the names, by sequestering them under the earth rather than listing them on a monument: the purpose of a monument is for it to be seen, which is not the case with a crypt.

For the Dominions specifically, an unprecedented proposal for the commemoration of Australian soldiers on the Western Front is a key example of this interconnection. By 1920, the Australian Government and the IWGC had by July agreed upon a plan to commemorate

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<sup>166</sup> An example of name burial in *domestic* First World War commemoration is the Royal Artillery Memorial at Hyde Park Corner, designed by Charles Sargeant Jagger (1925), which contains a Roll of Honour of the regiment’s dead buried underneath the sculpture of a dead soldier on the monument. (The monument itself carries an inscription declaring this.)

<sup>167</sup> CWGC ACON 56, “[Director of Works to Vice Chairman], 10 August 1926”.

missing Australians with “temporary memorial crosses” in the cemeteries nearest to which they had gone missing.<sup>168</sup> Particularly if phase two of the plan had gone ahead, to replace the crosses “in due course with permanent headstones in the same way as those over graves where actual remains are deposited”,<sup>169</sup> this would have created a visual implication of the presence of extra bodies in the landscape that did not exist.

The Australian Government first formally brought this proposal forward in 1919, at an IWGC meeting held on 15 April. Their argument was that “every man, whether his body was found or not, should be entitled to his six feet by two of ground in the cemetery and to his cross.”<sup>170</sup> A crucial component of this unusual form of memorialisation was that the crosses were not to state that the body had not been found; only the date of death and that he had been killed in action. This would have made the presence or absence of a body underneath the marker completely indistinguishable. The proposal was intended to cover the commemoration of Australia’s estimated 8,000 ‘missing dead’ in France, by allotting each cemetery an additional amount of space equal to 25% of the anticipated space needed for actual graves.<sup>171</sup> This however was met with warnings from the IWGC regarding French reception to this plan, considering that France was already being quite generous in its land donations for IWGC cemeteries.<sup>172</sup>

Prior correspondence between the Australian Government and the IWGC gives further insight into the development of this commemorative approach. Australia’s Prime Minister was the architect of his country’s decision on this matter, “decid[ing] that Australia desires that each man shall have his place in a cemetery whether his burial has been

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<sup>168</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “16 July 1920”.

<sup>169</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “16 July 1920”.

<sup>170</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “Extract from minutes of the Imperial War Graves Commission held on 15 April, 1919”.

<sup>171</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “Extract from minutes of the Imperial War Graves Commission held on 15 April, 1919”.

<sup>172</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “Extract from minutes of the Imperial War Graves Commission held on 15 April, 1919”.

ascertained or not, together with a temporary cross, at once, and a permanent headstone at a later date.”<sup>173</sup> This solution was optimistically presented to the IWGC framed as a “happy solution of any difficulties” that upheld the “time honoured [idea] of every soldier being entitled to his six feet of ground.”<sup>174</sup>

Reactions to this proposal, documented in the meeting’s minutes, elucidate the nature of the relationship between the IWGC and bereaved families, one which was exacerbated by ‘grief at a distance’ and the high level of institutional rather than familial responsibility for burial and commemoration. The IWGC’s Vice Chairman made it clear that anything ‘fake’ must be avoided, because “whatever confidence they had received from the relatives was based on the knowledge that they had been told the truth – that the body could not be found, or else that the body was buried in a particular place.”<sup>175</sup> Kipling too thought that “the idea of having graves with no bodies in them was distasteful”, adding that “by all means let there be the memorial [‘grave’ marker cross] and the name, but need there be a grave space six feet by two?”<sup>176</sup>

Before it even reached the IWGC Committee, Fabian Ware and the IWGC Director had expressed serious concerns. Prefiguring the Vice Chairman’s reservations expressed in May, Ware responding to the draft proposal in March stated “we have always opposed anything that might lead relatives to imagine that a body is buried when it is not there.”<sup>177</sup> The Director too aired “very serious objection” to the proposal, laying out the specific IWGC policy which it contravened:

It has always been our policy not to mark any place as a grave unless there was every possible reason for believing that the body was interred there.... In the rules laid

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<sup>173</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “4 March 1919”.

<sup>174</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “4 March 1919”.

<sup>175</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “Extract from minutes of the Imperial War Graves Commission held on 15 April, 1919”.

<sup>176</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “Extract from minutes of the Imperial War Graves Commission held on 15 April, 1919”. Remember too that, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, Kipling himself had a son among the missing dead; this was thus a very personal topic for him.

<sup>177</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “12 March 1919”.

down in the Instructions of the Directorate page 14, which deals with ‘Memorials’ to those bodies have not been found, para. 1 reads as follows: ‘any memorial erected must carry on the face of it evidence that it is a memorial and does not mark an actual grave.’<sup>178</sup>

The relationship to mourning families was also given centre stage again: the quoted rule was in place so that “relatives could have every confidence that a place marked as a grave was so in actual fact.”<sup>179</sup> Perhaps his most important point was his final one, which places the concern over maintaining families’ trust into the context of the future:

it is feared that, if not at present, relatives will eventually be lead [sic] to imagine that the sites marked with crosses are actual graves and should at any future time exhumation be ordered and no remains then found, a serious misunderstanding may arise which may cause relatives considerable anxiety as to whether or not other graves are genuine.<sup>180</sup>

This plan was first approved by the IWGC in May 1919,<sup>181</sup> but in 1920 the Government of Australia had to ask for an update on whether it would indeed go ahead.<sup>182</sup> Although it had originally been proposed by Australia to address the commemoration of their own dead, the text of the IWGC’s resolution on the matter widens its scope to encompass all of the Dominions. It includes the proviso that “the crosses will be so placed that it shall be evident that they do not stand over actual graves.”<sup>183</sup> Although some of the temporary crosses were erected, the proposed scheme did not manifest on the scale envisioned in the proposal, and no headstones were knowingly erected over these empty plots once the replacement of wooden crosses became widespread.

Australia was not the only Dominion to engage with the empty graves idea. By 1921, an IWGC memorandum states that the South Africans did not appear to have “any idea in their minds of making dummy graves”,<sup>184</sup> but in 1920 it was being seriously considered,

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<sup>178</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “12 March 1919”.

<sup>179</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “12 March 1919”.

<sup>180</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “12 March 1919”.

<sup>181</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “May ,0 [sic] 1919”.

<sup>182</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, “19 May 1920”.

<sup>183</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 1, “May ,0 [sic] 1919”.

<sup>184</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “1 July 1921”.

though in a more moderate iteration.<sup>185</sup> Unlike Australia, South Africa was not considering the empty graves idea as a blanket policy to commemorate all of their missing, but rather just specifically at the site of Delville Wood itself, which was known to have a high number of lost graves.<sup>186</sup>

In early 1920, an exchange between the South African Minister of Defence in Pretoria to the South African High Commissioner in London laid out the logic behind this request. The Commissioner explained in January that “Graves Commission at present averse to putting up headstones where no remains are interred”, but added “suggest Graves Commission should be approached and strongly urged to put up headstones in Cemetery close to field of action where it is certain men were killed. Delville Wood fought over twice after July 1916, and ground much churned up hence impossibility finding remains. Cable whether you approve my suggestion.”<sup>187</sup> In his February reply, the Minister instructed “you should press very strongly for headstone(s) as a special exception in cases where undoubted proof exists that South Africans were buried Delville Wood, but Union of South Africa cannot sustain objection to general principle that headstones will not be erected where no remains are interred.”<sup>188</sup>

In the minutes of an IWGC meeting held in spring 1920, the Commissioner attempted to make this press as instructed, but was “tersely” deterred by Rudyard Kipling, who summed up the results of when “a similar question [Australia’s proposal] was discussed by the commission before” and stated that he “objected to what he called ‘dud graves.’”<sup>189</sup> Frederick Kenyon of the British Museum, who had been tasked with looking into the matter and

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<sup>185</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “[report on IWGC decisions by R.A. Blankenburg, undated, likely 1920]”.

<sup>186</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “Decode of cablegram from the minister of defence to the high commissioner. Dispatched Pretoria 12 February 1920”.

<sup>187</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “Copy cablegram to the minister of defence: Pretoria. From the High Commissioner: London. Dispatched 30 January 1920”.

<sup>188</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “Decode of cablegram from the minister of defence to the high commissioner. Dispatched Pretoria 12 February 1920”.

<sup>189</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “[report on IWGC decisions by R.A. Blankenburg, undated, likely 1920]”.

making recommendations for commemoration of the missing generally, then explained the flaw with South Africa's request, clearly drawing upon the previous concerns of fraudulence that had scuppered the Australian case. He stated, "If the Union of South Africa contemplated putting up headstones [he] did not quite see how it was to be done. If they had a grave space in front of the stone, it suggested a grave, which might be regarded as fraudulent. If, on the other hand, headstones were put up so as to show that there was no body there, it merely meant a group of headstones jammed up together, and [the] effect would be bad, and people would not be able to approach them."<sup>190</sup>

The difference between South Africa and Australia's empty graves proposals was significant. As discussed above, Australia originally wanted to erect names of its missing in locations assigned according to geographical proximity, with no pretension of actual correlation between site of death and site of empty grave. South Africa, in contrast, was treating the Delville Wood site as a burial place for missing South African soldiers who were known to have fought there; without further information, the site was assumed to contain their bodies, whether or not it actually did. This is yet another manifestation of the multifaceted relationship between presence and absence which this thesis explores in relation to dead bodies; at Delville Wood, the bodies of the missing were considered, however inexplicably, to be *both*, giving us fresh cause to question how the presence of bodies affected the material culture of their commemoration. Further complicating the already complex present/absent situation at Delville Wood was the fact that it and many other IWGC cemetery sites were disturbed by repeated fighting during the war, and the locations of some of its *identified* graves were lost; modern visitors to the Delville Wood cemetery can see its 'special memorial' headstones, which were eventually agreed upon as an acceptable compromise treading the line between bodies being present and absent. These headstones are

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<sup>190</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, "[report on IWGC decisions by R.A. Blankenburg, undated, likely 1920]".

nearly identical to the regular IWGC pattern, the only exception being the words ‘Known To Be Buried In This Cemetery’ inscribed at the top above the regimental or national symbol.

The concept of empty graves for the missing foregrounds the materiality of the body and its role in bereavement. This refracts in both directions: the graves were an attempt to give an *individual* tangibility (rather than the collectivity of a memorial) to losses, anchoring them in the landscape with a fixed point of distinct and separate remembrance. However, the criticism it faced reveals a reluctance to accept that present and absent bodies could be identically commemorated, since that implicitly reduced or negated the validity of the body as the central component of a mourning site.

The proposal also emphasises that the increased role of the state in managing and materialising loss from this conflict came with specific parameters imposed by the circumstances of distant grief. This distance exacerbated the degree of responsibility and trust owed by the IWGC and the government(s) to families, since with few exceptions the results of these decisions could not be seen, verified, or challenged in person by the mourners in question.

Lastly, the empty graves proposal fundamentally reflects how the landscape of the material culture of remembrance was fluid, with interconnecting elements. Its ramifications included that the missing were not confined to memorials; graves were not the sole preserve of bodies; and cross grave markers were considered ‘memorials’. The earth itself was considered a fundamental right of the dead, even when the dead could not physically inhabit it.

## **Religious differences regarding burial and the ground**

There was another fundamental right accorded to the dead: disposing of and commemorating the body according to religious belief was also considered of paramount importance in the operations of the Imperial War Graves Commission. For Canada, South Africa, and Australia (as with the other Dominions, and Britain proper), the main religious variations were Judaism and denominations of Christianity, for all of which an appropriate headstone symbol could be applied and burial was considered acceptable. However, undivided India was an entirely different matter: both because demographically it presented a vastly more substantial variety of major faiths, and because the bodily disposal practices of these faiths not only deviated from ‘standard’ burial but also in some cases directly contradicted each other, posing massive logistical and ethical problems. Thus, when examining the manifestations and ramifications of this IWGC priority, it is the Indian dead we must turn to as the most pertinent bodies upon which these decisions were enacted.

The two largest religious groups of First World War Indian soldiers were Hindus and Muslims. Despite their differing religious beliefs regarding treatment of the dead, common ground (sometimes literally) could be found between these two faiths, including their commemoration in material culture. Sikh and Buddhist soldiers were unfortunately usually grouped with Hindu soldiers by the IWGC in all theatres of the war – likely due to concordance of funerary practice beliefs – despite the obvious fact that these are three distinct faiths. For example, in one letter it is casually added that “I might here mention that Sikhs and Gurkas have been included in the general term ‘Hindoo.’”<sup>191</sup>

The religious diversity of India meant that it was not the policy of the Indian Army to handle any soldier burials in prior conflicts, due to the “religious susceptibilities” of Indians and the potential outrage that army interference would cause. The non-repatriation policy

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<sup>191</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “17 September 1920”.

following the First World War therefore thrust the IWGC into an unprecedented situation, on which the Indian Army gave them strongly worded warnings. Notes from an IWGC meeting on Indian burials, with Indian officers present, describe the existing policy:

it was not the custom of the Indian Army to interfere in any way with the disposal of bodies of dead Indian soldiers. They were handed over to their comrades or relatives for cremation, in the case of Hindus, and for burial, in the case of Muhammadans. This had always been the practice and it was felt strongly that to have acted otherwise would be an unwarranted interference with the religious susceptibilities of Indian troops.<sup>192</sup>

The IWGC was embarking upon a rather perilous task by taking on responsibility for satisfying religious burial practices for a set of religions that were to them foreign, complex, and mutually contradictory.

Of course, the IWGC first had to figure out which of the Indian dead in their care were Muslim and which were Hindu. Unfortunately, the India Office and Indian government seem to have been unable to obtain or provide correct information for headstones in a large majority of cases. The state of Indian records concerning which soldiers were missing or dead (and even approximately where) seems to have been completely inadequate, prompting the IWGC to circumvent official channels and make individual enquiries with every Indian army unit in an attempt to retrieve accurate information on the Indians whose burials they were dealing with.<sup>193</sup> However, this was still not enough; in a random quality-check of Indian records against these individual enquiries, it was found that “in a case checked by us with the unit concerned some 30% of the casualties had not been included”,<sup>194</sup> making the veracity of all the information provided by the units, including religious affiliations, also subject to further doubt. This was exacerbated by the fact that “it is perfectly true that the great majority of the graves of Indian fighting men in France and Flanders are not known. They died at a time when burial and registration arrangements were imperfect, and for the most part in

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<sup>192</sup> CWGC WG 127 Pt 1, “22 April 1931”.

<sup>193</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “16 June 1931”.

<sup>194</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “3 March 1924”.

retirements or unsuccessful attacks.”<sup>195</sup> Thus, a second prong of information acquisition was developed: detailed instructions to identify and differentiate Indian bodies on sight. In 1921 the CWGC internally circulated a report by a Major Blacker on “Suggestions for the identification of the remains of Punjabi and Gurkha soldiers in France and Belgium”, which recommended that IWGC personnel tasked with finding and identifying Indian remains should be equipped with dated maps of Indian battalion locations, “photographs of shoulder titles, button badges etc worn by the regiments serving in France, and of the fine distinguishing marks worn by Sikhs”, lists of “Musalman and non-Musalman names”, guides to religiously differential soldier uniforms, and Indian abbreviations used for identity disks.<sup>196</sup> The report also suggested that “rough skull measurements” and the size of thigh bones could help differentiate between Indian races, with the “races” in question being a confusing mix of nationalities, ethnicities, and religions.<sup>197</sup>

The Commission’s dedication to religious accuracy for Indian commemoration had an additional motive, one less rooted in an idealism for equality than in defense of the sanctity of the British imperial image. A memo from the Commission’s Principal Assistant Secretary to the Director of Works articulated this:

In dealing with Indian graves or memorials it is in my opinion the duty of the Commission to exercise great care in the matter of religion. There is much religious fanaticism in India and although it is unlikely these memorials will ever be seen by relatives, there are many Indians on the lookout for any excuse to make trouble, and I am particularly anxious to avoid any mistakes which could be used as a weapon to attack the British or Indian Governments. I again recommend as strongly as I can that the Muhammadan headstones on Hindu graves.... be scrapped as soon as possible and Hindu headstones substituted.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> CWGC WG 9097, “20 September 1921”.

<sup>196</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “Suggestions for the identification of the remains of Punjabi and Gurkha soldiers in France and Belgium”.

<sup>197</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “Suggestions for the identification of the remains of Punjabi and Gurkha soldiers in France and Belgium”.

<sup>198</sup> CWGC WG 219/16/1, “13 November 1925”.

At the heart of the difference between Muslim and Hindu burial practices was the fact that Hindus should be cremated, while “there is no grosser insult to a Mohammanadan than to suggest that his body has been burnt.”<sup>199</sup> This made it imperative to avoid mistakes. Further complicating the matter was the fact that cremation was, at the time, illegal in France outside of authorised crematoriums.<sup>200</sup> The IWGC did not officially condone any cremation as a solution while they were sorting out Western Front burials,<sup>201</sup> but was still left with the challenge of retroactively dealing with prior cremations that had taken place (usually conducted by the regiments) at their cemetery sites.

The most important aspect of the Hindu cremation process was to have the ashes returned to water.<sup>202</sup> This was significant to the IWGC in two ways. First, it meant that in several cases, arrangements were made to give cremated Hindu ashes to Indian regiments returning to India, with the understanding that the remains would be put to rest in the waters of the river Ganges.<sup>203</sup> Second, it meant that water provided a compromise in instances when the religion of an Indian soldier could not be determined:

when the two creeds are brought into the same statement it should be remembered that the main point in the Hindu ritual is not cremation but the ultimate committal to the river or the sea.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> CWGC WG 219/16/1, “13 November 1925”. See also Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Haddad, *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 132.

<sup>200</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “10 March 1922”, “22 April 1922”.

<sup>201</sup> However, some Indian war dead who died in hospital in England were cremated. Hindus and Sikhs who died at the Royal Pavilion Hospital in Brighton were cremated on the nearby Downs, and the Chattri Memorial on the cremation site was built in 1921. For more on the memorial, see Brighton and Hove City Council, “The Chattri Memorial,” <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/parks-and-green-spaces/chattri-memorial>. For more on the hospital treatment of First World War Indian soldiers, and the function of segregated Western Front hospitals as “imperial sites” (349) extending the British Raj, see Andrew Tait Jarboe, “Healing the Empire: Indian Hospitals in Britain and France During the First World War,” *Twentieth Century British History* 26:3 (2015), 347-369.

<sup>202</sup> See Gian Giuseppe Filippi, *Mrtayu: Concept of Death in Indian Traditions. Transformation of the Body and Funeral Rites*, trans. Antonio Rigopoulos (New Delhi: D.K., 1996), 142; that book’s section “Last Sacrifice: the offering of the body,” 129-145, provides a detailed description of cremation rites and the role of water, both as the ashes’ final destination and as purification throughout.

<sup>203</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “2 August 1921”.

<sup>204</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “17 December 1931”.

In multiple instances, a delegation of Indian soldiers buried their Hindu comrades at sea;<sup>205</sup> in at least one case, this practice was also followed by a mixed-faith delegation, to provide unknown Indian soldiers of indeterminate faith with a burial appropriate for either religion.<sup>206</sup> Burial at sea honoured the Hindu need for a return to the water, while avoiding the desecration of the body in Muslim eyes that allowing a cremation would have caused.

This ‘common ground’ of water also provided a shared language of mutually acceptable metaphors with which to honour the dead. One speech by a (presumably Christian) Lieutenant General of the Indian Army, given at the Neuve Chapelle unveiling in 1927, carefully toed the line of religious diversity: by saying to the dead only “may you fare well and ever on the further shore”,<sup>207</sup> a phrase vague enough to satisfy multiple conceptions of the afterlife.

Burial at sea also satisfied the Muslim practice of prohibiting exhumation,<sup>208</sup> by making it an impossibility. The IWGC “Policy Regards Graves of Moslem Soldiers” stated, “Mussulman graves should not be touched or Mussulman soldiers [sic] bodies removed.”<sup>209</sup> In the confusion of postwar France, when the IWGC was consolidating burials from smaller into larger cemeteries, exhumation was a real threat.<sup>210</sup> However, in those cases exhumation was often the lesser of two evils:

it is necessary in some cases to exhume the remains of Indian soldiers existing in isolated places in France where, under French law, the graves will [otherwise] be opened in course of time and the remains thrown into ossuaries.<sup>211</sup>

To prevent this loss of permanency and of IWGC control over the remains, “proposed regulations regarding the exhumation of Indian soldiers, in France, [which] seem to provide

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<sup>205</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “2 August 1921”, “27 August 1921”, “31 August 1921”, “11 April 19(21?)” (Hindu).

<sup>206</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “7 September 1920”.

<sup>207</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/3/11 Pt 1, “Unveiling booklet”.

<sup>208</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “11 April 19(21?)” (Moslem).

<sup>209</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, “11 April 19(21?)” (Moslem).

<sup>210</sup> Longworth, *Unending Vigil*, 47.

<sup>211</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “9 December 1921”.

every possible safeguard against offending any religious prejudices”, were drawn up in 1921.<sup>212</sup>

When the Hindu religion of Indian soldiers was certain and cremations took place, this posed a serious problem for the IWGC in multiple cases. The IWGC operated on a dual-option framework of conceptualising the dead: they either had a soldier’s body, or he was missing. Therefore the prior cremation of Hindu soldiers posed a significant quandary. In some cases, this was resolved by erecting dedicated memorial plaques near the cremation spots (which were predominantly within existing IWGC cemeteries). However, in at least two instances they made an alternate decision with disturbing repercussions: despite knowing the ultimate fates of these Hindu bodies (cremation), the IWGC designated these men as missing. At first glance, the documentary evidence for this seems damning: “I agree that the 197 Indians cremated at Rouen must be recorded as ‘Missing’”,<sup>213</sup> “a few men who died [in France] in 1919 are ‘Missing’, which are presumably cremation cases”;<sup>214</sup> and, in a non-Western Front example, “It has been agreed by the Commission that the Indians... at Ahwaz should go ‘Missing.’”<sup>215</sup> Despite the wording of these statements, which are rather chilling, in reality the ‘missing’ designation of cremated Hindus does not seem to have had malicious intent. Rather, it was usually due to confusion about location: where they had died, where the cremation had taken place, and/or the location of the cremated remains.<sup>216</sup>

Special instructions were given by the IWGC that “no Indian headstones should have the words “Believed to be buried in this Cemetery”, “Known to be buried in this Cemetery”, [or] “Believed to be”, engraved on them.”<sup>217</sup> Although no explanation was given, this was likely due to the Hindu reprehension for burial in favour of cremation, which will be further

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<sup>212</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “December 1921”.

<sup>213</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “9 May 1925”.

<sup>214</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “8 January 1925”.

<sup>215</sup> CWGC WG 219/16/1, “29 October 1925”.

<sup>216</sup> CWGC WG 219/16/1, “9 November 1925”; CWGC WG 909/7, “8 May 1925”.

<sup>217</sup> CWGC WG 1031, “10 January 1924”.

discussed below. However, an internal IWGC query concerning a non-Indian grave reveals a different possibility: the Director of Works' office asked for a decision concerning the "omission or retention of 'believed to be'", explaining that

the usual procedure here is to ask the next-of-kin whether they wish the words 'Believed to be' engraved or whether they accept the grave absolutely. In this case the n/k cannot be found should the words be engraved or not.<sup>218</sup>

The extraordinarily incomplete and unreliable records for Indian soldiers meant that next-of-kin were identified in proportionally far fewer cases: the implication for this may have been a blanket policy to not make individual enquiries with Indian families about whether they "accept the grave absolutely." The reason why any graves were even in question was due to the fact that "in certain cemeteries in France and Belgium the graves have been destroyed in subsequent fighting", leaving final resting places uncertain.<sup>219</sup>

In most instances in Western Front cemeteries, Hindu and Muslim headstones were separated both from each other and from the main Christian plot.<sup>220</sup> This policy clearly met with reasonable acceptance, as its perpetuation was recommended for Second World War Indian burials in France and Belgium:

The policy followed in the treatment of plots of Indian Army War Graves in the 1914/1918 Cemeteries of separating them from the main Cemetery by a well clipped hedge has received general approval, particularly from distinguished Indian visitors; any changes would provoke unfavourable comparison and indeed would probably incur objection on religious grounds... [however] access to Indian Army Plots should always be direct from the main Cemetery and not from a subsidiary entrance.<sup>221</sup>

One IWGC memo, albeit from a different theatre, indicates that it may have invoked threats of desecration to bury Hindu and Muslim soldiers together: "of course, you cannot put a Moslem emblem up to a Hindoo or a Hindoo emblem up in a Moslem cemetery, for it would immediately be knocked down."<sup>222</sup> Despite the religiously variant headstone designs

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<sup>218</sup> CWGC WG 1031, "19 October 1922".

<sup>219</sup> CWGC WG 1031, "20 June 1923".

<sup>220</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "Horticulture: Treatment of Indian Graves" 17 August 1949, "June 1931".

<sup>221</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "12 March 1952".

<sup>222</sup> CWGC WG 909/5, "24 February 1921".

for Indian soldiers, in all other respects concerning them the IWGC strove to adhere to its policy of equality:

there is no objection to treating Indian graves on the same lines as British graves as regards their horticultural treatment, namely, there is no necessity to have grave mounds... No difference need be made between the graves of different religions. Caste does not enter into the question.<sup>223</sup>

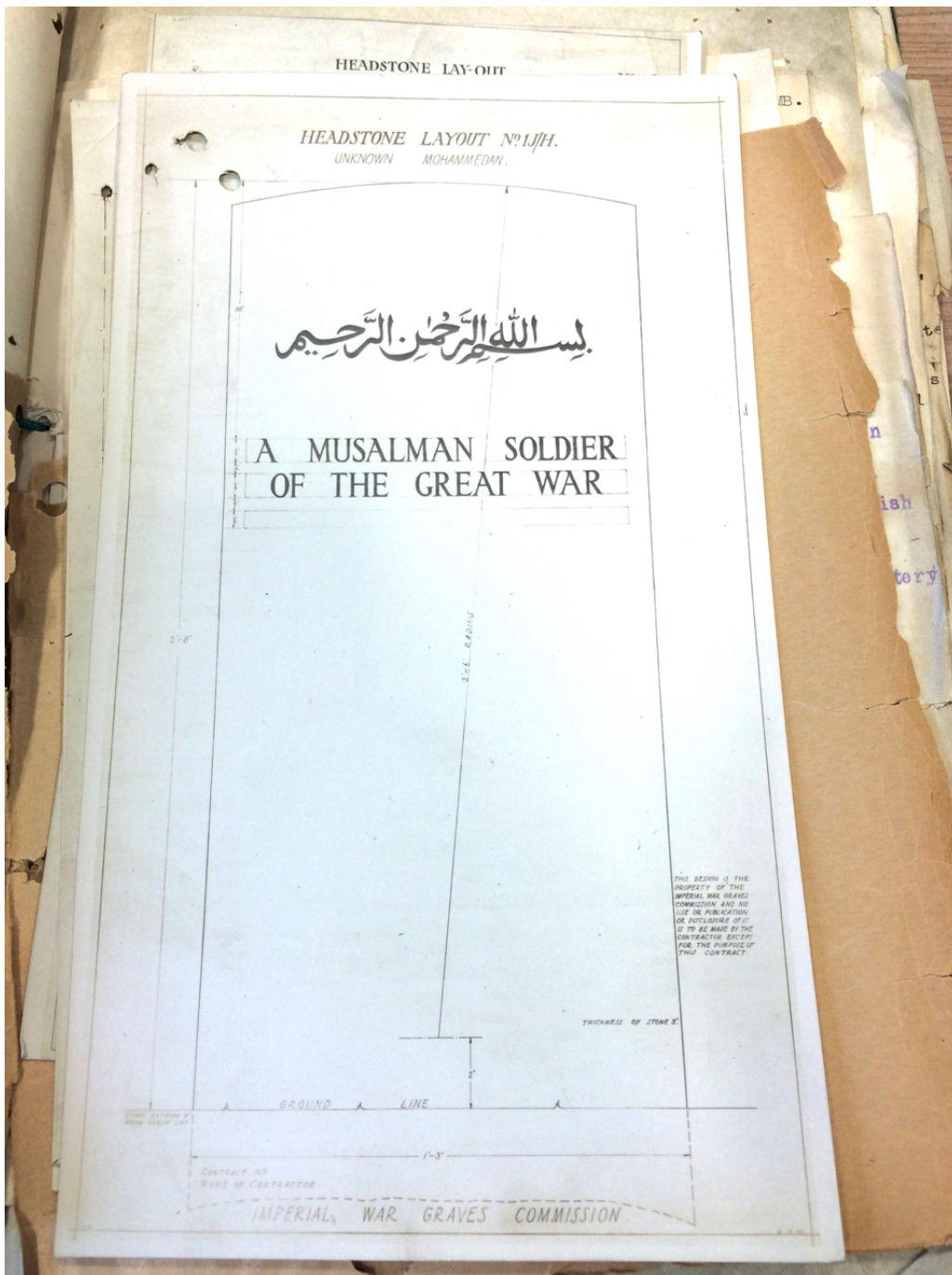


Image 2.15a. Headstone design for unknown Muslim soldiers. CWGC WG 1031, "Headstone layout – unknown Mohammedan".

<sup>223</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "19 October 1921".

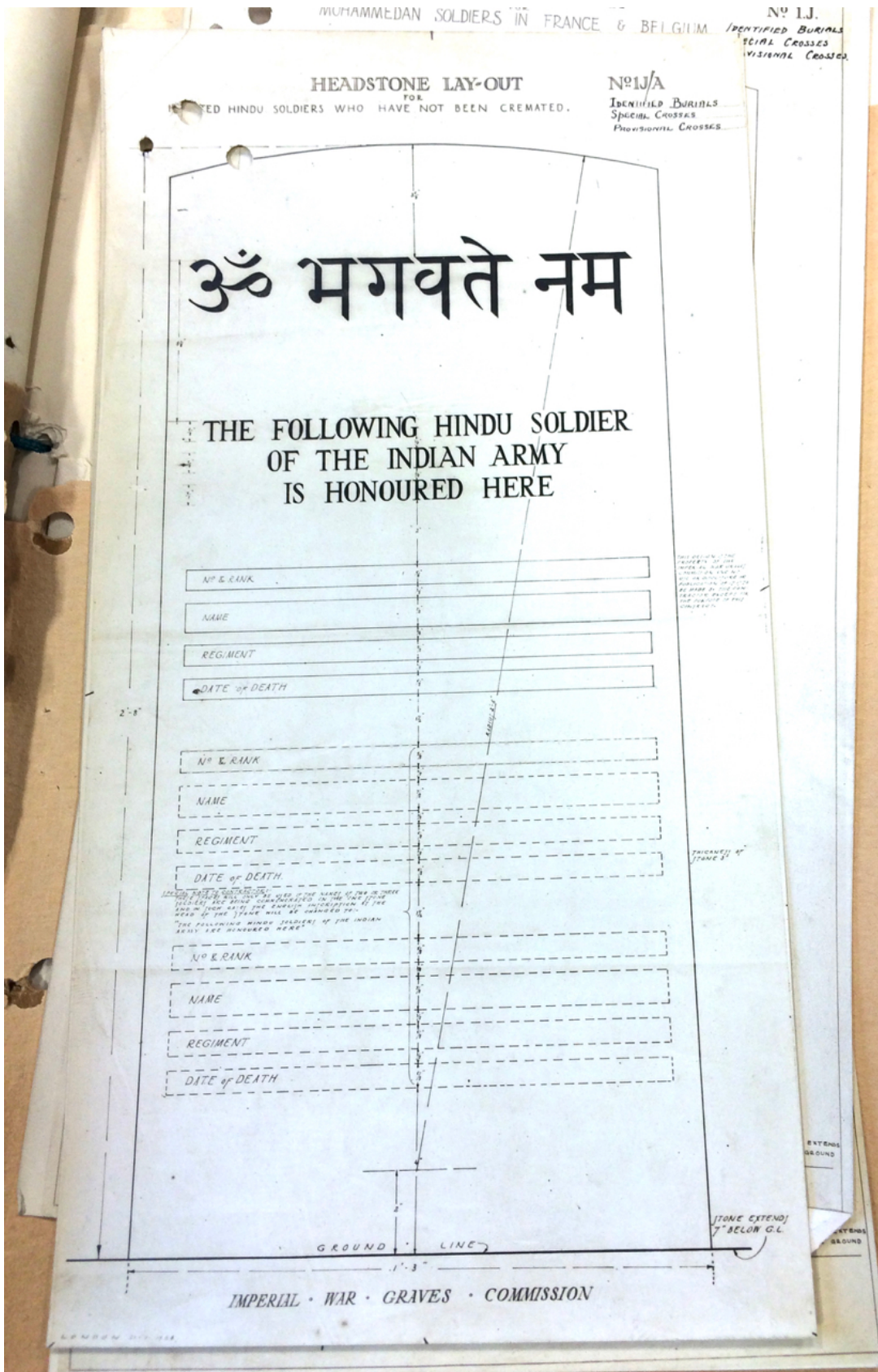


Image 2.15b. Headstone design for Hindu soldiers.  
 CWGC WG 1031, "Headstone layout for isolated Hindu soldiers".

The treatment and commemoration of India's dead in France serves as a test case of the IWGC's commitment to its principles of equality and uniformity, particularly because the multiple and starkly contrasting religious beliefs of India's dead sometimes put those two principles at cross purposes. In order to ensure equality, uniformity of both practice and material culture was sometimes sacrificed. This examination of IWGC decisions and practices concerning cremation, burial, exhumation, and identification of Indian soldiers demonstrates how the relationship between the ground and the dead was particularly significant in relation to Indian soldiers, and was also rife with extra complications caused by the heterogeneity of religions compromising the Indian forces who served on the Western Front. This heterogeneity, and the resulting contrasting treatment of Indian dead, also underscores the theme of presence and absence explored throughout this thesis; due to differing burial practices, in some cases the dead of one religion were more present in the landscape than those of another.

## **Conclusions**

The ground of IWGC memorial and cemetery sites was an integral part of a reciprocal relationship of influence and meaning binding landscape, cemetery, memorial, and the dead. While this ground is almost universally agreed in both primary and secondary sources to be hallowed in some way, the impetus for that designation, the mode by which it was conferred or imbued, and the ramifications for the meanings of its earth, its contents, and its material culture of remembrance varied tremendously. Each of the four case study memorial sites, at Vimy Ridge (Canada), Villers-Bretonneux (Australia), Delville Wood (South Africa), and Neuve Chapelle (India), can be read as deriving and creating meaning from a different combination of these factors, though all four are situated on former battlefields holding

special significance to the countries in question due to particular losses and/or victories that occurred there.

Chapter I introduced the argument that “relationships are at the heart of this thesis. Between stone and flesh, living and dead, nation and empire, individual and collective, site and object, absence and presence”; this chapter has built upon that framework by articulating and analysing the spatial aspect – both physical and imagined – of many of those relationships. Existing theory on the functions, components, and agencies of landscape, drawn not only from history scholarship but also from archaeology, anthropology, geography, and more, can be fruitfully applied to the specific context of IWGC sites by deepening and complicating our understanding of their roles. Next, we must turn to a close reading of the memorials and cemeteries themselves: having established both the spatial and methodological context of these sites through an examination of their landscapes, the next chapter, *Pouring Forth*, examines the tactile material culture and language of remembrance at these places, questioning *why*, *how*, and *which* aspects of identity are represented in stone.

### Chapter III Pouring Forth

*“Here Canada has poured forth her soul in sculptured pillar and monumental stone”*  
– William Lyon Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada  
Vimy, 26 July 1936<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter situated the Western Front memorials and cemeteries representing the imperial dead within their wider geographic and commemorative landscapes, emphasising the importance of understanding the interconnections between these elements. However, we now move to a closer inspection of the material culture itself: what did these memorials and headstones look like, and why? What aspects of identity did elements of their design materialise or reinforce?

The memorials and cemeteries representing India and the Dominions were not merely backdrops against which identities were performed; they also performed identities themselves. The material culture of these sites is itself a primary source, and is fruitful when combined with archival research into the decision-making processes behind their creation. These objects have agency, from their ability to convey and reinforce identities through their forms and functions. The national Western Front memorials of South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia are the most potent and concentrated examples of this, and in order to provide a measure of cohesion to this wide-ranging topic these four memorials will form this chapter’s main case studies. They form useful windows through which to examine how identity and memory were expressed, distinguished, and elided along multiple axes. These national memorials were tangible manifestations of each country’s navigation between national and imperial identity; additionally, each had to arrive at a decision regarding the relationship between individual and collective commemoration, mainly through decisions regarding inscribing the names of their missing. These memorials, at Villers-Bretonneux (Australian),

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in William Waldie Murray, *The Epic of Vimy* (Ottawa: The Legionary, 1936), 94.

Vimy (Canadian), Delville Wood (South African), and Neuve Chapelle (Indian), allow a comparative study of where these four countries located themselves along these continuums.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first, ‘Stone’, examines memorial and headstone design. The four memorials listed above form its backbone, though the additional monuments of Beaumont-Hamel, Menin Gate, St-Julien, and Thiepval are also briefly addressed as comparative foils in order to elicit specific themes about the four in question. A defining hallmark of the approach this thesis takes is that these memorials are bastions of collective commemoration yet are considered here as unique and individual objects, whereas headstones – which do literally conduct unique and individual commemoration – are mainly considered here as a collective, rather than focusing on discrete examples. The second part, ‘Words’, examines the *language* of this material culture: inscriptions and epitaphs. It discusses the inscriptions on the four case study memorials, inscriptions found in cemeteries, and the inscription of names of the missing; it then discusses the ramifications of the practical, aesthetic, and political logistical decisions made regarding where and how the names of the missing were inscribed on these memorials.

The language of this chapter’s epigraph, and by extension its title, is also worth noting and expanding upon here. Its suitability is fourfold. First, ‘pouring forth’ carries significant connotations (although of course these are subjective): of torrential volume, inexorability, and a potential for inexactitude or loss of control. Second, the tense change between the epigraph and the chapter title is intentional. The verb ‘to pour’ carries a connotation of dynamism which underscores a key theme of this chapter and this thesis: that the IWGC sites in question were (and are) dynamic, rather than static or metaphorically ‘set in stone’. However, the tense has been changed from ‘has poured’ to ‘pouring’ to situate this chapter in its temporal context: the interwar period, when the ‘pouring’ was still taking place. This is particularly critical considering that this chapter weights quite heavily the examination of the

decision-making processes that went into the designs and inscriptions of these places. Third, “Here Canada has poured forth her soul in sculptured pillar and monumental stone” exemplifies and encapsulates the complex relationship between presence and absence in war death and material culture commemoration which this thesis seeks to explore. Something *present* – the soul – (allegedly... but this is not a theology thesis, so its existence and presence will not be debated here) yet *absent* (as the soul is immaterial and invisible) is being given a *presence* by being materialised in stone, in order to commemorate the *absence* of the dead. Fourth, the use of the singular ‘soul’ (and its implication of homogeneity) calls into question this thesis’ definition and conceptualisation of identity. Can a country have multiple identities and yet a single soul? This thesis contests the concept that during 1918-1938 there was a singular homogenous ‘Canadian’ (or ‘South African’ etcetera) identity for IWGC sites to represent or reinforce in stone;<sup>2</sup> however, the epigraph adds a boundary to this argument, as it forces (or at the very least elicits) a distinction between identity and soul. This thesis confines itself to identity, leaving it to philosophers and theologians – and individual interpretation and definition – to determine parameters and scope, if any, for the concepts of a collective soul and a multiplicity of national souls.

The foregrounding of the physical form of memorials and cemeteries in this chapter entails a close reading of these objects. However, reading them is not as straightforward as one would imagine. Despite being literally carved in stone, their meanings most certainly are not. As Gerritsen and Riello argue in their work *Writing Material Culture History*, “if objects represent a kind of text, then it is one that is exceptionally unstable, elusive, and ambiguous, easy to manipulate and almost impossible to read consistently.”<sup>3</sup> Their instability of meaning is partly because, as Francis Kellaher argues,<sup>4</sup> “the cemetery, like the home, is a place where

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<sup>2</sup> As supported by, for example, Nasson, “Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration,” 63.

<sup>3</sup> Gerritsen and Riello, *Writing Material Culture History*, 166.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Kellaher, *The Secret Cemetery* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), 105.

the social existence of the deceased can be maintained beyond the grave”; this can be extrapolated to hold true for memorials as well.

Michael Walzer’s argument “the state is invisible: it must be personified before it can be seen”<sup>5</sup> delineates one of the crucial functions that IWGC memorials and cemeteries played both during the interwar period and today. Although representing individual identities through headstones and names carved into memorials, these sites also embody specific messages of how Britain, the Dominions, and India wanted themselves to be collectively personified, and therefore perceived, on the world stage. The double meaning of ‘personified’ is crucial to this reading of how IWGC sites serve this function: they personify both by representing or embodying in a physical form (in other words, they materialise) and by attributing a personal nature to something non-human (in other words, they individualise).

All of this means it is necessary to acknowledge that the meanings overlaid onto these IWGC sites have changed over time. Their contemporary meanings will be briefly addressed in Chapter V, but analysing here their forms carved in stone gives us a starting point from which to view the relationships between the various types of identity that these places combined during the interwar period.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Walzer, “On the role of symbolism in political thought,” *Political Science Quarterly* 82:2 (1967), 194.

## Stone

Table 3.A. Memorials referred to in this chapter<sup>6</sup>

<i>Unveiled in</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Principal Architect / Sculptor</i>	<i>Countries' dead commemorated</i>	<i>Includes individual names of the dead?</i>	<i>Form</i>
1923	St-Julien	Belgium	Frederick Chapman Clemesha	Canada	no	Sculpted pillar
1925	Beaumont-Hamel	France	Basil Gotto (sculpture) and R.H.K. Cochius (landscape)	Newfoundland	yes	Mounted caribou
1926	Delville Wood	France	Herbert Baker	South Africa	no* (see below)	Arch with flanking walls
1927	Neuve Chapelle	France	Herbert Baker	undivided India	yes	Circular enclosure featuring column
1927	Menin Gate	Belgium	Reginald Blomfield	Britain, Canada, Australia, India, South Africa	yes	Arch
1932	Thiepval	France	Edwin Lutyens	Britain, South Africa	yes	16 massive pillars connected by arches
1936	Vimy	France	Walter Allward	Canada	yes	Two pylons mounted on base
1938	Villers-Bretonneux	France	Edwin Lutyens* (see below)	Australia	yes	Tower with flanking walls

<sup>6</sup> Not all of these memorials are key case studies of this chapter; even those that are discussed more briefly are included in this table.

*Beaumont-Hamel – Newfoundland*

The first major ‘national’ Dominion memorial to be erected in France was Newfoundland’s memorial at Beaumont-Hamel in the Somme, which was completed in 1925.<sup>7</sup> Since, as previously discussed, Newfoundland does not feature in this thesis, this memorial is not a central case study considered through this work. However, several of its characteristics serve to position it as a useful foil against the main memorials in question, and to introduce important recurring themes of the chapter.



Image 3.1. Beaumont-Hamel memorial, 2016.

The Beaumont-Hamel memorial consists of an iconic bronze caribou raised on a mound; a massive sculpture of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment’s emblematic animal, it dominates the preserved battlefield landscape in which it stands. As mentioned previously,

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<sup>7</sup> Robert J. Harding, “Glorious Tragedy: Newfoundland’s Cultural Memory of the Attack at Beaumont Hamel, 1916-1925,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 21:1 (2006), no pagination <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/nflds/article/view/5884/6891>.

Newfoundland was a separate Dominion within the British Empire until 1949 when it became the tenth province of Canada, which is why it has been largely excluded from this study. (Accordingly, in tandem with Canada's national memorial at Vimy, Beaumont-Hamel is today managed by the Canadian government as a national historic site).

This site is a particularly explicit example of the ways in which the presence of a national memorial shapes and inflates a particular, and nationally-oriented, version of memory for its location, often at the expense of others. Newfoundland suffered catastrophic losses here on the first day of the Battle of the Somme, on 1 July 1916; of the more than 800 Newfoundland Regiment men who fought, only 68 managed to make it to roll call the next day. However, this Newfoundland narrative of loss at Beaumont-Hamel, embodied and concretised in popular memory by the monument, overshadows the fact that other units fought there during the war as well.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, the large scale of the site – Beaumont-Hamel consists of the national memorial, a 30-hectare preserved landscape, and three IWGC cemeteries – allows for more flexibility in diluting the cohesive 'national' narrative, by having three other memorials onsite. These secondary memorials commemorate the 51<sup>st</sup> (Highland) Division and 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the British army.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Gough, "Sites in the imagination: the Beaumont Hamel Newfoundland Memorial on the Somme," *Cultural Geographies* 11 (2004), 251.

<sup>9</sup> The Newfoundland Regiment formed one part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division.



Image 3.2. Both memorials to the 51<sup>st</sup> (Highland) Division on the Beaumont-Hamel site, demonstrating the spatial relationship between them. 2016.

This question of which narrative to privilege in the spatial interpretation and ‘preservation’ of the landscape for visitors highlights the complex layers of experience and memory which have to be navigated, during the somewhat inevitable creation of the semblance of a more cohesive narrative. Paul Gough aptly synthesises this by arguing,

[Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park] has three primary modes of discourse: one that projects it as a sacred and reverential domain dedicated to recording a very particular act of war; another that identifies the site with distant, regional memory; thirdly, the site has become a dramaturgical space where terrain has been rearranged to create a sequence of spatial and timed narratives. In common with the many romantic and pastoral mythologies associated with the trench war on the Western Front, the Park has also been presented as an ‘enchanted place’ where hundreds of soldiers became ‘lost’ in the void of no man’s land.<sup>10</sup>

Beaumont-Hamel’s memorial is also the most explicitly national in form, since it

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<sup>10</sup> Gough, “Sites,” 248.

consists entirely of the Newfoundland caribou. The caribou was recognised as Newfoundland's national symbol to the extent that it served as the national crest on all Newfoundlander IWGC headstones, much like the maple leaf served for Canadian graves and the springbok for South Africans. (Consider, then, that the equivalent degree of national symbolism for the other two countries would have been if Canada's memorial had been not the towering pylons and various associated sculptural elements of Vimy, but instead a large sculpture of a maple leaf, or if South Africa's Delville Wood monument had consisted largely of a springbok statue). Thus, Beaumont-Hamel is an outlier not only chronologically but also in terms of its form, and prefigures the larger and more multi-component memorials of the four countries in question. This contrast emphasises that the aesthetic complexity of those later monuments was not necessarily the default or only viable choice, while also setting the stage for the concept of sites that intertwine memorial, cemetery, and landscape to a substantial degree.

### *Delville Wood – South Africa*

The first memorial to be erected of the four countries in question, Delville Wood, is the South African national memorial. It is dedicated to all South African soldiers who fought in all theatres of the war. The Delville Wood memorial consists of an arch flanked by a semi-circular stone wall, capped by identical buildings imitating a famous house, Groote Schuur, of the Cape Colony's first governor.<sup>11</sup> It was paid for by public subscription, and designed by Herbert Baker, one of the principal British IWGC architects introduced in Chapter I.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, "30 May 1922"; South African Commemorative Museum Trust, "Delville Wood: The Memorial," <http://www.delvillewood.com/Memorial2.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> South African Commemorative Museum Trust, "Delville Wood: The Memorial"; G. Kingsley Ward and Edwin Gibson, *Courage Remembered: The Story Behind the Construction and Maintenance of the Commonwealth's Military Cemeteries and Memorials of the Wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945* (London: H.M.S.O, 1995), 159.



Image 3.3. Delville Wood memorial, 2017.

The original design for the monument was created with an explicit awareness of its theoretical future visitors. Baker described how,

I have carried the comparison with the old Dutch building at Groote Schuur still further by suggesting staircases to the top of those buildings, attempting to satisfy the natural desire of people to climb something, without sacrificing the archway, the central object of the Memorial,<sup>13</sup>

and his acknowledgement of the future spatial and tactile interaction between memorial and visitor demonstrates the extent to which the architect recognised and privileged this function of the memorial. The curved walls connecting the buildings were originally intended to host the inscribed names of South Africa's missing, though these were later omitted.<sup>14</sup> (This will be discussed further in 'Words' below.)

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<sup>13</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, "30 May 1922".

<sup>14</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, "30 May 1922".

The central arch of the memorial is crowned by a sculpture of two men and a horse; these were created by British artist Alfred Turner, though their inclusion originated in Baker's design.<sup>15</sup> The sculpture symbolises Castor and Pollux "clasping hands in friendship" and is a "symbol of all the peoples of South Africa who are united in their determination to defend their common ideals."<sup>16</sup> Castor and Pollux were Greek mythological twins, and their twinship here represents equality between the two 'white races' of the South African Union, British and Afrikaner. Baker explained that the mythological reference was spatially specific:

I have made what may seem a rather fanciful suggestion consisting of an Englishman and a Dutchman leading a horse. It is inspired by the Castor and Pollux on either side of the steps to the Capitol at Rome. "The great Twin Brethren, Who fought so well for Rome" seemed a miracle to the Romans and it may be thought hardly less miraculous that the Dutch and English from South Africa should have fought together so well in France.<sup>17</sup>



Image 3.4. Detail of Castor and Pollux element from the Delville Wood memorial, 2017.  
(This image is of its exact replica in Pretoria, due to better image angle available).

<sup>15</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, "30 May 1922".

<sup>16</sup> South African Commemorative Museum Trust, "Delville Wood: The Memorial".

<sup>17</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, "30 May 1922".

Aside from the blatant omission of Black South Africans from this symbolism, also conveniently omitted is that in Greek mythology, Castor and Pollux had different fathers, meaning that Pollux was half-divine whereas Castor was only mortal. Approached with this knowledge in mind, the sculpture seems to privilege one of the South African ‘races’ over the other, and based on the circumstances it may be read as an assertion of British superiority. The demarcation between Dominion and British identity is less distinct here, since Britishness is being portrayed as an integral part of South African identity, instead of a foil against which the emergent South Africa should position itself. This contrasts with Baker’s alternative suggestion for the topping sculpture, a springbok; which was such a strong symbol of South African national identity that it was the emblem used on South African headstones.

The concept of a united yet multifaceted identity is also evident in a fundraising pamphlet published by the Delville Wood Memorial Committee in the memorial’s early planning stages, which articulated the different demographics who should all feel a sense of ownership and representation in the memorial:

...this memorial should be the voluntary expression of our people. Not the work of inspiration of a few, but the spontaneous act of all, in which each may share alike. The old Comrade, who wishes to offer his salute, must feel that he is in it. The Widow, the orphan, the bereaved, who have the right to share, must feel that they do share. The aged, who cannot do as they would, the struggling, on whom the calls for the living are more than can be met, must know that in this it is the spirit that means most and that, whether they can give much or little or nothing towards the material purpose of this appeal, their partnership will not depend on that.<sup>18</sup>

The question of who could feel a sense of ownership and representation in the memorial extended beyond South Africans, and echoes the challenges faced at Beaumont-Hamel described above: how to accommodate the overwhelming national narrative placed onto a site – especially when reinforced in stone – without completely erasing site-specific

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<sup>18</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, “Delville Wood: To the memory of all South Africans who gave their lives in every theatre of the war 1914-1918”.

commemoration of other actors who have a tie to the site. In 1922, various senior IWGC staff members were vocal in the apparent debate over whether (and how) to acknowledge the missing of other nationalities who also fell at Delville Wood. One wrote to the South African High Commissioner that “the memorial should contain the names of all who died on the ground, not only South Africans”;<sup>19</sup> another agreed, and argued that since Herbert Baker was not only the Delville Wood memorial designer but also the designated IWGC architect for the whole area within which Delville Wood falls, he could design a broader “memorial to the missing” that would “harmonise” with the planned Delville Wood memorial.<sup>20</sup> He clearly did not view this as a threat to South African identity onsite, as he opened his remarks with an assertion of his own South African identity before advocating for a wider memorialising remit for the site: “My heart at any rate is, and will always remain, South African... without prejudice, I personally do not see why the “Missing”, other than South African, who fell in the neighbourhood of Delville Wood should not be commemorated at Delville Wood.”<sup>21</sup> However, this proposed second memorial never came to pass, and the site remains explicitly and solely South African in its material culture of remembrance.

Attempts to fragment the memorial narrative of Delville Wood came from petitioners representing both collective and individual interests. The above proposal was aiming to fragment the narrative outwards, by expanding the scope of those commemorated to include a wider spectrum of the dead; another proposal, received in 1923, was for an additional memorial with a much narrower focus. Bereaved father J.M. Davidson wrote to the IWGC,

I am desirous of erecting a memorial to my son who was reported missing in Delville Wood on or about the 18 July 1916. Kindly inform me what steps are necessary to get permission... my son was a private in the 4<sup>th</sup> South African Infantry.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “4 February 1922”.

<sup>20</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “6 February 1922”.

<sup>21</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, “6 February 1922”.

<sup>22</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, “23 October 1923”.

This request was refused, in concordance with the IWGC's equality policy. The IWGC's Principal Assistant Secretary wrote to the South African High Commissioner allowing him to make the call, but strongly advising "that this application for a separate memorial be refused or it may form a precedent for many other similar applications."<sup>23</sup>

The number of memorials permitted at Delville Wood also had spatial ramifications for the site; the Delville Wood memorial was designed as a monument that stood situated within, but as major sole focal point of, its landscape. A 1922 sketch by Baker highlights the very controlled and intentional manner in which the memorial was designed to be approached: head-on via a central pathway that connected to the site's IWGC cemetery directly opposite.<sup>24</sup> (A road now bisects the connection between the two, but the visual relationship remains.)

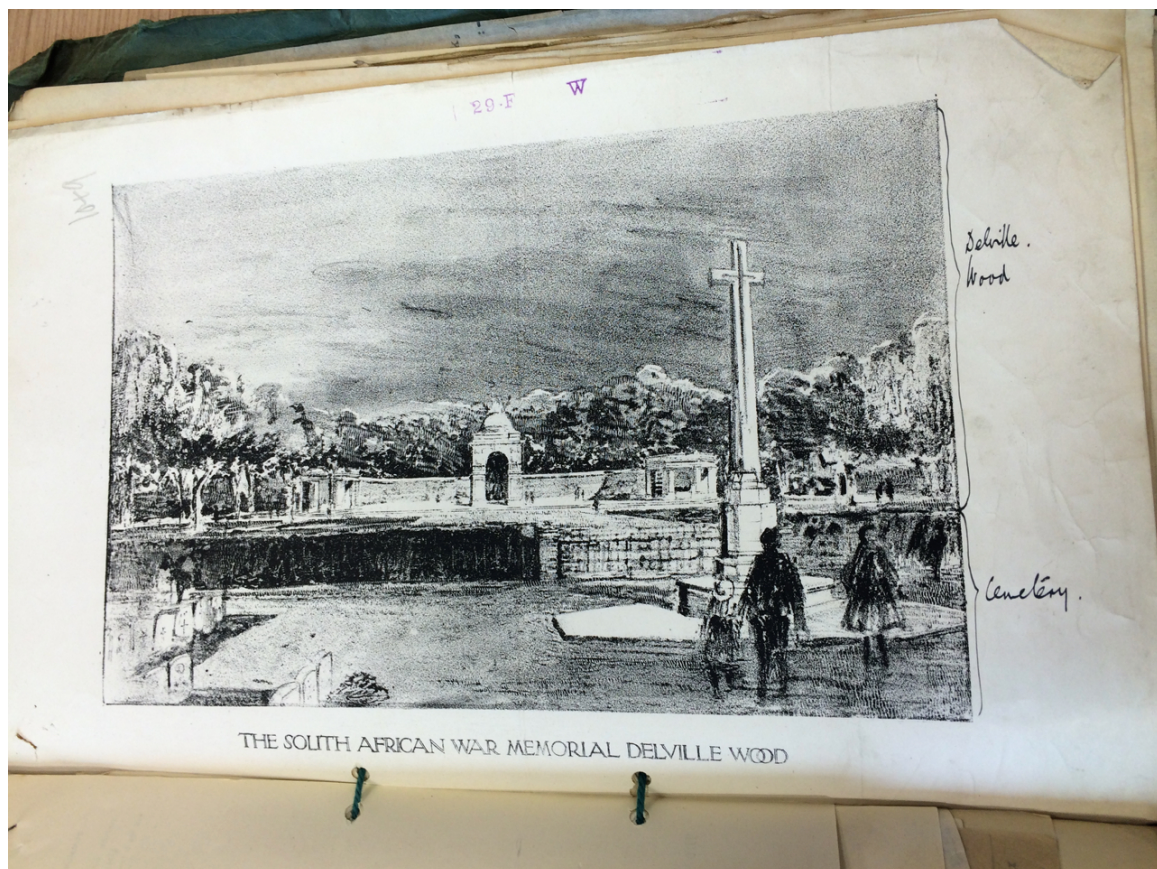


Image 3.5. Sketch by Herbert Baker of the Delville Wood memorial and cemetery. CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, "The South African War Memorial Delville Wood".

<sup>23</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, "8 November 1923".

<sup>24</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 1, "The South African War Memorial Delville Wood".

The vantage point of this image emphasises how the form of the memorial was designed in consideration of the cemetery: the image places the viewer within the cemetery looking towards the memorial, and foregrounds a family grouping who are doing the same thing. (This spatial connection was echoed by the memorial's unveiling ceremony in 1926, when the guests of honour paraded around the cemetery's Cross of Sacrifice before proceeding to the memorial across the road).<sup>25</sup> This consideration of the vista was also discussed by the architect Baker, who complained during the memorial's construction process that "there is a considerable variation in the level of this vista...that is the ground does not go with one straight sweep from the Memorial."<sup>26</sup>

Unusually, this memorial has undergone two significant and much later additions: a wall of names in 2016, which lists strictly alphabetically the names of both Black and white men who served in the conflict, and in 1952 the addition of an 'altar stone', a large block similar to the Stone of Remembrance found in IWGC cemeteries but inscribed instead with a dedication to the dead of the Second World War.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> British Pathé, "South Africa's Superb Memorial & Cuts," silent film footage of 1926 unveiling ceremony, <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/south-africas-superb-memorial-cuts/query/somme>.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 3, "Report – South African Memorial – To the Director of Works, c/o Deputy Director of Works, Cairo, Egypt".

<sup>27</sup> See Nasson, "Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration," 83 for a discussion of the political significance of this Stone and the accompanying rededication of the memorial to the South African apartheid order and the ruling Nationalist leadership.



Image 3.6. View of the altar stone through the arch of the Delville Wood memorial, 2017.

### *Neuve Chapelle – undivided India*

Almost exactly a year after Delville Wood’s unveiling, India’s national memorial at Neuve Chapelle was completed in October 1927. Commemoration of undivided India on the Western Front eventually became concentrated in one memorial, but this had not always been the planned course of action. The decision for a single memorial was reached despite the protests of the Indian government, who stated that “Indian opinion, except among Mahommedans, appeared to favour separate rather than collective memorials.”<sup>28</sup> That statement serves as an apt reminder and example of the extent to which there was no single unified ‘Indian’ opinion, or experience, during the interwar period – a time when India was

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<sup>28</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “16 July 1920”.

evolving both in its conceptions of nationhood (self-defined and applied by others) and its relationship with Britain.<sup>29</sup>

Initial plans for monumental structures at cemeteries in France with large numbers of Indian soldiers included the construction of a Hindu temple and a Muslim mosque at each;<sup>30</sup> this is an unusual decision considering that, despite the overwhelmingly Christian burials that comprised the majority of IWGC sites on the Western Front, it was not common practice to consider building a Christian church on their grounds. The Sikh Deputation in England raised a voice of dissent to the plan. If Hindus and Muslims were each given a religious building at Indian-centric sites, why would Sikhs not receive a gurdwara in the same space?<sup>31</sup> The Government of India also echoed this criticism, and added that further complications were incurred by the Gurkhas, who “though Hindus, desired to have a memorial which would disassociate them from their Indian co-religionists.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See for example Mary A. Procida, “The Greater Part of My Life Has Been Spent in India”: Autobiography and the Crisis of Empire in the Twentieth Century,” *Biography* 25:1 (2002), 130-150, on the power transitions and struggles between British imperialists and Indian nationalists which led to “political and constitutional reforms intended gradually to shift a modicum of authority to Indians, while still retaining its essential powers, thus attempting to placate the Indian agitators without relinquishing the jewel in Britain’s imperial crown” (130); Alasdair Pinkerton, “Radio and the Raj: Broadcasting in British India (1920-1940),” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* Third Series 18:2 (2008), 167-191, on the political opportunities radio afforded to both the imperialist and nationalist causes in interwar India; Matthew Stubbings, “Free Trade Empire to Commonwealth of Nations: India, Britain and Imperial Preference, 1903–1932,” *International History Review* (2017), 1-22, on the interwar economic policies between Britain and India (and their political ramifications) which led to the trade agreement of imperial preference signed between them at the 1932 Imperial Economic Conference; Paula Hastings, “Fellow British subjects or colonial ‘others’? Race, empire, and ambivalence in Canadian representations of India in the early twentieth century,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 38:1 (2008), 3-26, on how racial othering affected not only the British-Indian relationship but also reverberated throughout the empire in constructions of Dominion identities; Pramod K. Nayar, “Civil Modernity: The Management of Manners and Polite Imperial Relations in India, 1880-1930,” *Journal of South Asian Studies* 39:4 (2016), 740-757, on how rigidly standardised guidelines of social interaction were used to control the threat of increasingly cosmopolitan Indian subjects and retain structures of imperial dominance; Kama Maclean, *A Revolutionary History of Interwar India: Violence, Image, Voice and Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), on the role of violence in Indian nationalist and anti-imperialist movements, including the landmark significance of the 1931 Karachi Conference on economic policy and fundamental rights; Michele Louro, *Comrades Against Imperialism: Nehru, India, and Interwar Internationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), on the League Against Imperialism formed in 1927 and the relationship between nationalism and internationalism in interwar India.

<sup>30</sup> CWGC WG 861, “31 January 1920”; WG 909/7, “Undated memo signed by A.H. Bingley”.

<sup>31</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “13 August 1920”.

<sup>32</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “Undated memo signed by A.H. Bingley”.

This debate was nullified by a letter from the India Office to the IWGC in 1920, which resulted in the IWGC issuing several resolutions, including “that the mosque and temple originally proposed should be dropped on the score of expense.”<sup>33</sup> Another resolution was “that instead there should be separate stones of remembrance with certain inscriptions.” This did not materialise, in favour instead of a singular stone identical to those featured in other IWGC cemeteries, whose inscription is discussed below. The construction of religious buildings would have been a provocative sacralisation of a secularly sacred space. Despite differences of religion, it is clear that all actors involved in this debate shared a common sentiment: these sites were hallowed ground.

The designer of the memorial, British IWGC architect Herbert Baker, had the very challenging remit of creating a structure that commemorated Hindu, Muslim, and other Indian soldiers in a way that allowed for differentiation of names by religion yet united them on a single memorial, with symbolism that would satisfy all religions without privileging any one of them. The final design consisted of a sanctuary with a “pierced stone railing” reminiscent of Buddhist shrines at Bodh Gaya and Sanchi, backed by a solid wall inscribed with names of the missing.<sup>34</sup> At the centre of the railing was a 30-foot-high stone column flanked by tigers and capped by a lotus and crown.<sup>35</sup> This crown was contentious because of its cross: in 1925 the IWGC Deputy Director of Works flagged, “I do not know if this crown is necessary”,<sup>36</sup> and the India Office shortly afterwards was writing to the IWGC that “if the Imperial Crown designed to top the Memorial must have a Maltese Cross on the top of it... it had better be left out of the design altogether.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “20 May 1921”, “29 July 1920”.

<sup>34</sup> CWGC Add 1/1/99, “7 October 1927”.

<sup>35</sup> CWGC Add 1/1/99, “7 October 1927”.

<sup>36</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “8 December 1925”.

<sup>37</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “30 December 1925”.



Image 3.7a. Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.



Image 3.7b. Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.

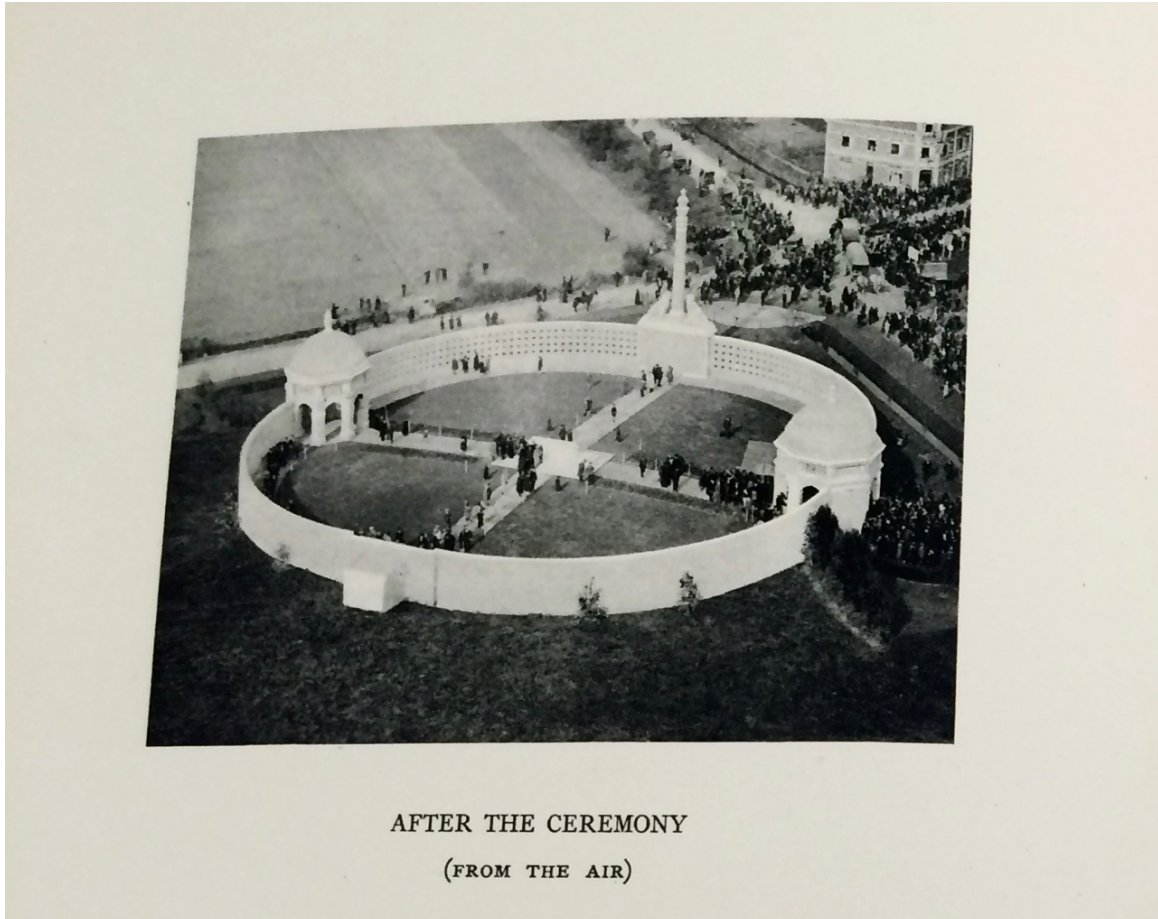


Image 3.7c. Neuve Chapelle memorial from the air, 1927.  
BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France, 1927* (no pagination).  
© British Library Board

Baker explained that although parts of the design had been adapted from his earlier 1918 proposal for a Hindu-only memorial, he

ha[d] thought a good deal about the best symbol to represent all-Indian sentiment and have selected a column, such as those by which the Emperor Asoka marked his royal progresses through India and on which he inscribed his edicts.<sup>38</sup>

Ironically, an incongruity of the design was that Asoka's reign predated the founding of both Sikhism and Islam by centuries.<sup>39</sup> However, there is an apparent archival silence regarding anyone from India or Britain viewing this as problematic. Also known as 'Ashoka', the emperor is well known for having promoted the spread of Buddhism; this further complicates the choice of his column for the memorial, both because it is a nod to a specific religion and

<sup>38</sup> CWGC SDC 43, "29 June 1923".

<sup>39</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, "19 February 1926".

because at the time of the memorial's development and construction, Buddhism was a nearly extinct religious tradition in India (it underwent a Dalit-led revival in the 1930s).

The column was originally going to be topped by more than just the lotus and crown. An element of Baker's proposal which was not incorporated into the final design would have been an unusual incorporation of landscape into memorial, serving to emphasise both their interconnection (Chapter II) and how tangible connections were created between these sites and the disparate places that the dead they commemorated were from (Chapter IV):

[for on top of the column] I have suggested the lotus, the floral badge of India and a glass bowl filled with Ganges water. This is a bold suggestion, I admit, and will require most careful consideration, but Ganges water is perhaps the most sacred symbolical element in India and is one which is revered by all races and creeds.<sup>40</sup>

This also reinforces the concept introduced in Chapter II, that water was considered an acceptable form of 'common ground' considered in the multi-faith commemorative decisions made for India's dead. The inclusion of Ganges water in the Neuve Chapelle memorial would have posed numerous logistical challenges, seemingly none of which are addressed in extant archival material, and presumably some of which must have proved infeasible enough to result in the water-less Neuve Chapelle memorial that was unveiled in 1927. A key problem would have been supply: how would replacement Ganges water be installed every time the water in the bowl evaporated?<sup>41</sup> Other considerations include complications of purity and drainage. Would the meaning of the water be changed when it was inevitably diluted with French rainwater? (Or was the bowl to have a lid of some sort to prevent this eventuality?). Would the bowl have any drainage system, or simply overflow into runoff during a downpour? (And were there religious ramifications for the non-reverential disposal of water

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<sup>40</sup> CWGC SDC 43, "29 June 1923".

<sup>41</sup> In India there still exists today a tradition of transporting and refilling Ganges water, e.g. the Hindu Kanwariyas' yearly pilgrimage to bring Ganges water to scattered temples dedicated to Shiva. This is done by hand, and would not be feasible for overseas rather than intra-country transportation of any regularity. BBC News, "The millions of Hindu devotees walking across India," 9 August 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-45125632>.

in this way?). Considering the challenging reality of representing fairly in stone any unified conception of a multi-faith and national 'India', it is perhaps ironic and fitting that the "most sacred symbolical element in India" could not be set in stone at all, but instead – being water – was rather its ephemeral and ungraspable opposite.

The Neuve Chapelle memorial commemorates Hindu and Muslim missing soldiers by name, differing from other theatres of the war, where, in another break from the equality principle, the decision was often taken to commemorate rank-and-file missing by number.<sup>42</sup> The men are grouped according to religion, with Hindu and Muslim names mirroring each other on the flanking wings of the memorial. Religious beliefs also played a role in determining whether the memorial would feature a roofed enclosure; it was decided that "a closed building is not considered a suitable form for a Memorial to commemorate the Missing of three different faiths", and that an open plan would be more widely acceptable.<sup>43</sup> Baker's original Hindu memorial design had featured a small domed building, based on "the early Indian stupas", and had been approved by the Hindu advisors he had consulted: Prabhaskar Pattani, Gangadhar Chitranis, and Bhupendra Nath Basu.<sup>44</sup> However, the subsequent change to a multi-faith memorial rather than Hindu-only necessitated a recalibration. In a 1923 letter to the commission explaining the impetus behind the domed 1918 proposal, Baker also mentioned that a roofed enclosure would have practical pitfalls: not only cost, but also he "doubted whether a roofed building was very suitable for the climate of France, and also for the conditions of supervision and maintenance which are likely to prevail for these war memorials."<sup>45</sup> However, the eventual Neuve Chapelle

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<sup>42</sup> CWGC WG 437/4/1, "17 March 1926"; WG 219/16 Pt 1, "31 October 1925". For an extensive discussion of how the IWGC's policies on Indian commemoration of the missing differed between the European and Mesopotamian theatres of the conflict, and the complications that the Indian Army's heterogeneity created for this, see Roger Jordan Sims, "To the memory of brave men: The Imperial War Graves Commission and India's Missing Soldiers of the First World War," MA thesis, University of Central Florida, 2018.

<sup>43</sup> CWGC WG 219/19 Pt 1, "April 1923".

<sup>44</sup> CWGC SDC 43, "29 June 1923".

<sup>45</sup> CWGC SDC 43, "29 June 1923".

memorial does include two small chattris, following the solution proposed by Baker in 1923: “the enclosure will be entered by a small domed chattri such as is characteristic of the Indian sepulchral monument, with a similar one opposite the entrance to be used as a shelter.”<sup>46</sup>



Image 3.8. Chattris of the Neuve Chapelle memorial, 2016.

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<sup>46</sup> CWGC SDC 43, “29 June 1923”. For a discussion of the use of the chattri as an architectural feature for another First World War memorial to Indians – the chattri flanking the Commonwealth Memorial Gates in London – see Santanu Das, “Writing Empire, Fighting War: India, Great Britain and the First World War,” in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858-1950*, ed. Susheila Nasta (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 28-29.

Multi-faith Indian commemoration as demonstrated in this memorial also provides a specific example of one of the broader arguments of this thesis: that there was no single ‘Indian’ identity *to* represent during the interwar period, at Neuve Chapelle or anywhere else in France and Belgium. Undivided India was extremely diverse;<sup>47</sup> faiths are just one example, which affected representations of identity at both the individual and collective levels.

The memorial’s overall architectural style is Indo-Saracenic, a revival style used by British architects particularly for public buildings of the British Raj which drew upon combinations of Indo-Islamic and Hindu temple architecture. A key feature of the Neuve Chapelle memorial is that its form is such that you can be *within* it, encircled by it. This is aptly demonstrated by the plan and elevation of the memorial published in the *Times* when construction was underway.<sup>48</sup> Its caption’s use of the word “sanctuary” has not only a theoretical but also a spatial connotation here: the sanctuary is the area within the walls. Though Delville Wood also has walls, they merely flank the arch rather than curving to join; so too are the Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux memorials ones that you can only stand next to (or, for the latter two, *on* as well). However, a nearly contemporaneous memorial to Neuve Chapelle shares the characteristic of enclosure, albeit in a different way: the Menin Gate memorial encloses by curving its walls *upwards*, to join each other in a roof.

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<sup>47</sup> For discussion on the multiplicity of other non-religious dividing lines of Indian identity in the Indian Army during this time period, see Rob Johnson, “Making a virtue out of necessity: The Indian Army, 1746-1947,” in *The British Indian Army: Virtue and Necessity*, ed. Rob Johnson (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 1-14.

<sup>48</sup> CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, “Memorial to Indian Troops in France,” *The Times* 15 October 1926.

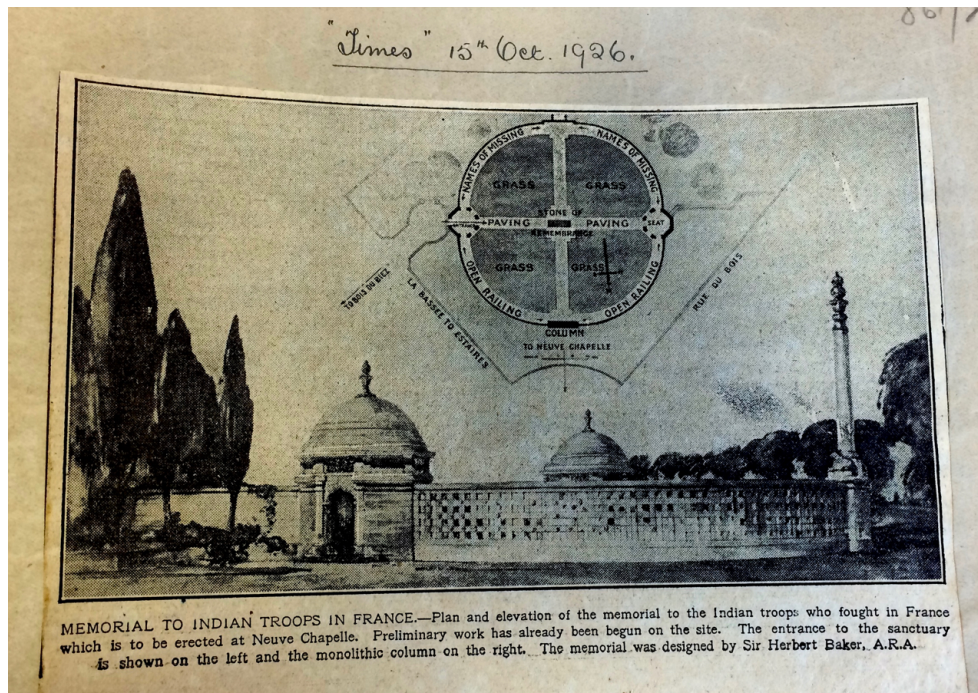


Image 3.9. Plan and elevation of the proposed Neuve Chapelle memorial design, 1926. CWGC WG 861/2 Pt 1, "Memorial to Indian Troops in France," *The Times* 15 October 1926.

### *Menin Gate – Empire Memorial*

South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia had something in common: their national memorials were located in France. Their monuments that listed names did so only for their missing in France. Their missing in Belgium were instead collected on an 'empire memorial': the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres, listing 54,000+ names of the British imperial missing dead in Belgium. The contrasting impulses of imperial unity in the British empire's Belgian commemoration and national articulation in its French commemoration challenge us to look closer at what happened to make both of these starkly different yet contemporaneous commemorative solutions occur.

The Menin Gate memorial is a massive arched vault straddling the main road into the city centre of Ypres, Belgium. Twenty metres high and 40 metres long and wide, it was designed by Reginald Blomfield, one of the IWGC's principal architects and who also designed the IWGC 'Cross of Sacrifice' cemetery feature.



Image 3.10a. Menin Gate memorial, undated (likely 1940s). AWM 93 12/8/14.



Image 3.10b. Menin Gate memorial, 2017.

Participation in the memorial (in terms of assenting to the names of their dead being included, and payment accordingly) was optional. All of the Dominions received a memo from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in autumn 1920, informing them that a committee had met at the War Office that summer and resolved to “erect an imperial memorial at Ypres in the form of a gateway at the Menin Gate”, and that “the Dominions should be given an opportunity of associating themselves with the scheme, should they so wish.”<sup>49</sup> Not all of the Dominions accepted this offer, but South Africa, Canada, India, and Australia did; this fact also buttresses the selection of these four countries as the focal points of this thesis. However, they accepted rather hesitantly at first. For example, the South African government’s first reply to the invitation was to ask for,

somewhat fuller information regarding the scheme such as, for example, the amount of the contributions which it is anticipated each of the Dominions would be required to provide; some indication of the date on which the payment would be made and a brief description of the distinctive features of the gateway which it is proposed to erect.<sup>50</sup>

This desire for more information before committing was especially understandable considering it would mean another financial commitment for another memorial on the Western Front, when the Dominions and India each already had their own in progress or in planning. However, nearly all of these forthcoming memorials were in France, while Menin Gate was in Belgium, thus providing a suitable commemorative stage upon which to commemorate these countries’ dead that were not geographically tied to their national monuments. This was considered particularly so for India; at an IWGC meeting in autumn 1921, it was remarked “Ypres was the only suitable spot for the commemoration of the Indian missing in the Ypres Salient as they had fought in many parts of it, so that the

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<sup>49</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/397, “26 August 1920”.

<sup>50</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/397, “Minute #148: 22 February 1921”.

memorial at Ypres could not in any case be confined to a memorial to the United Kingdom missing alone.”<sup>51</sup>

The ‘empire’ nature of the monument was considered crucial. In 1925 a commemorative pamphlet about the reconstruction of Ypres, which heavily featured the in-development Menin Gate memorial, was reported to the head office of the IWGC for its incorrect statement that it would commemorate only English and Canadian soldiers. The man who reported it was none other than the memorial’s architect, Blomfield, who said that this omission “would offend others, Australians, S. Africans, New Zealanders, Indians.”<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, he failed to mention others erased by the phrase “English and Canadian”: most notably the Welsh, Scottish, Irish, Newfoundlanders, and colonial soldiers. The IWGC duly made arrangements for future editions to be corrected to “*British* [emphasis added], Canadian, Australian, South African and Indian” soldiers;<sup>53</sup> as they rightly noted, Blomfield was incorrect about the omission of New Zealanders, as New Zealand had made the decision not to participate in the monument and thus had no names on it.<sup>54</sup>

The Menin Gate memorial has a conceptual and chronological (but not aesthetic) other half, which is often overlooked. During the development process of the Menin Gate memorial, it was realised that not all the names of those British Empire missing who died on the Ypres salient would physically fit onto the monument. Thus, a cut-off death date was chosen, based upon mathematical estimations of how many pre-date deaths would fit on the memorial: 15 August 1917. All those who died before that date had their names put on the Gate; all those who fell after had their names listed on the Tyne Cot memorial instead. The

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<sup>51</sup> NAA A457 M404/7, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 September 1921”.

<sup>52</sup> CWGC WG 360/3, “14 September 1925”.

<sup>53</sup> CWGC WG 360/3, “24 September 1925”.

<sup>54</sup> This is particularly interesting to note considering New Zealand’s significant death toll in Belgium at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres.

Tyne Cot memorial is a stone wall of names forming one of the boundary walls of Tyne Cot cemetery, the largest IWGC cemetery in the world.



Image 3.11. Tyne Cot memorial (boundary wall of cemetery), 2016.

### *Thiepval – British and South African*

While Tyne Cot is the largest IWGC cemetery in the world, Thiepval is its largest *memorial*. (Further complicating matters is that as discussed above, Tyne Cot comprises a cemetery and a memorial; and so does Thiepval, which has a joint Anglo-French cemetery immediately behind it.) Thiepval starkly proclaims its status as the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, towering 45 metres above the Somme landscape. The battle which arguably created the most indelible impact upon British memory of the war also created an absence of 72,000 men that this memorial attempts to fill with stone.<sup>55</sup> The memorial consists of 16 four-sided pillars inscribed with the names of British and South African soldiers who went

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<sup>55</sup> The historiography on the battle of the Somme, its memory, and its lessons is much too extensive to address here. For a sense of the scale and depth of its continuing presence in British popular memory, look at news articles from 1 July 2016, when 10,000 people, including royals and heads of state, gathered at Thiepval to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of the battle.

missing in the Somme region before 20 March 1918, most of whom died during the Somme offensive in 1916. Presiding over a joint Anglo-French cemetery with 300 graves of each nationality, and flying both flags from its pinnacle, the memorial acts as a bastion both for shared loss and for the ideal of cooperation.



Image 3.12. Thiepval memorial, 2016.

This memorial is not a key case study of this thesis, but is included in this chapter – and mentioned occasionally throughout – for three reasons. Firstly, it is a significant contextualising element of the chronological timeline of major memorials overviewed here; falling nearly in the middle with a 1932 unveiling date, it was in development alongside several of the earlier memorials in this chapter and subsequently was a monolithic presence on the commemorative landscape against which Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux became automatically positioned. Second, it complicates our understanding of the term ‘imperial memorial’. Thus far, two different definitions of ‘imperial memorial’ have been addressed and explored: a memorial that is national in character, but imperial due to its falling within

the remit of the IWGC and the Dominion/colonial status of the commemorating country in question (e.g. Delville Wood, Neuve Chapelle, Vimy, Villers-Bretonneux) or a memorial that is ‘imperial’ by dint of combining commemoration of the dead from Britain with its empire (e.g. Menin Gate). However, Thiepval proffers a third iteration: a ‘British’ memorial, but which rather quietly and unobtrusively also has the names of a single Dominion’s dead incorporated within it. Third, due to the nature of this South African inclusion, Thiepval is a provoking example of another way in which presence and absence create complex relationships between different types of identity at these sites. The names of the absent missing are present, but are almost hidden; or, more, they blend in amongst the British dead. An important question to ask when considering First World War memorials is “*who is missing?*” – but it is important to not let that create a blind spot in which we forget its inverse, “*who is here that we’re not seeing?*”

Insight into the perceived relationship between Thiepval and its successors Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux, and also between the IWGC and the various governments in question, can be gleaned from a 1931 report on Thiepval by the IWGC Secretary General. He wrote, “this monument is the last, and most important of the monuments intended by the Commission to be erected in France.”<sup>56</sup> The Canadian and Australian memorials were in development at this point, so this statement clearly emphasises the extent to which Thiepval was a ‘British’ – while the latter two were ‘national’ – memorials. However, this did not stop Thiepval’s unveiling from eliciting overt comments on Australia’s pending memorial. The original architect for Australia’s memorial, William Lucas (who was later replaced – more on that below), wrote an incensed indictment of Australia’s failure to erect a memorial in a timely manner, prompted by the nearly contemporaneous occurrences of Thiepval’s

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<sup>56</sup> CWGC WG 546/9, “Fourth report concerning the Franco-British Monument to be erected at Thiepval, 25 April 1931”.

completion and his removal from the Australian project. Commenting on the Prince of Wales' speech at Thiepval's unveiling, which had made direct reference to Thiepval's proximity to the Australian site at Villers-Bretonneux (a "short run by car", as quoted by Lucas in the same document), Lucas remarked,

Very strikingly, the French Presidential decrees approving of the erection of these two great monuments at Thiepval and Villers-Bretonneux, thus completing the series on the Western Front, were signed at one and the same time; but so far there is not the Australian monument to run to, by car or otherwise... Lord Methuen, Field Marshal, expressed in a letter to me: 'it is indeed a misfortune that your government cannot afford to pay for the memorial for those who died for the Empire in the late war; I believe the one exception.'"<sup>57</sup>

This emphasises the performative aspect of Western Front IWGC commemoration. The introduction of Thiepval onto the landscape, and thus its implied spatial relationship with the as-yet-theoretical Australian monument, had repercussions for Australia's standing both within imperial commemoration and more broadly on the world stage created by interwar commemoration. (For example, Lucas makes a point of noting that the French president attended Thiepval's unveiling and heard the Prince's remarks about Villers-Bretonneux).<sup>58</sup> Inherent in Lucas' message, and clearly of significance to him, was the idea that other countries were *watching*.

#### *Vimy and St-Julien – Canada*

However, there was a Canadian interlude between the completion of the Thiepval and Villers-Bretonneux monuments. After the spate of memorial unveilings in the mid- to late-1920s, except for the interruption of Thiepval it took almost ten years for more major monuments to arise: Canada and Australia added their presence to the landscape via national memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux in 1936 and 1938 respectively. Expectations for

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<sup>57</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 2, "Letter to the editor: Australian National War Memorial, Villers Bretonneux," 10 May 1932.

<sup>58</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 2, "Letter to the editor: Australian National War Memorial, Villers Bretonneux," 10 May 1932.

Canada were high: for example, ten years earlier in the beginning phases of construction at Canada's national memorial at Vimy, an aide of the Canadian High Commissioner wrote to the Chairman of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission with these glowing words: "I will have a great deal to tell about the Vimy monument. Canada is going to have something beyond her highest expectations."<sup>59</sup>

The Vimy memorial is the concept of Walter Allward, a Canadian sculptor, who won the design competition of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission. Positioned at the height of Vimy Ridge, the twin stone pylons tower over the surrounding battlefield plain, surmounted on a massive base inscribed with the names of the missing.



Image 3.13. Vimy memorial pylons and base, 2016.

The largest individual sculpture on the monument highlights specifically Canada's sorrow: the 30-ton Mother Canada mourning her fallen sons stands in perpetual grief overlooking the

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<sup>59</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), "17 February 1926".

empty tomb at the base of the monument, a “young nation mourning her dead.”<sup>60</sup> This display of a unified conception of Canada of course did not wholly or accurately reflect the actual state of affairs in interwar Canada; in the 1920s and 1930s when Vimy was being conceptualised and constructed, Canada was experiencing various societal and demographic rifts and competing identities whilst navigating its national identity in relation to Britain.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Government of Canada, “Canadian National Vimy Memorial: Self-Guided Tour Map,” 2016; Veterans Affairs Canada, “Design and Construction of the Vimy Monument,” 11 October 2016, <http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/overseas/first-world-war/france/vimy/design>.

<sup>61</sup> See for example Nelson Wiseman, “Ethnicity, Religion, and Socialism in Canada: The Twenties Through the War,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 47:2 (2015), 1-19, on the political affiliation patterns of different marginalised groups; Stefan Epp-Koop, *We’re Going to Run This City: Winnipeg’s political left after the general strike* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015), on a significant intersection of interwar labour and political history (the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919) and its ramifications for Canada through the 1930s; James Pitsula, *Keeping Canada British: the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), on how the urge to maintain a sense of participation in British imperial identity was a cause for the rise of white supremacism in interwar western Canada; Desmond Morton and Glenn Wright, *Winning the Second Battle: Canadian veterans and the return to civilian life, 1915-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), on the challenges of veteran reintegration and the pressures this enacted upon Canadian society; James W. St. G. Walker, *“Race”, Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1997), particularly 15-20, for a historical overview of the deep and longstanding racism in Canada which was persistent throughout the interwar period; Katie Pickles, *Female imperialism and national identity: The Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), particularly Chapter 3 “Women, race and assimilation: the canadianizing 1920s” (54-74), on how Canada’s involvement in the First World War was used to justify continued preference for British immigrants and the preservation of ‘British’ identity in Canada (see especially 55); Constance Blackhouse, *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), chapters 4-6 (103-225), on landmark court cases restricting the rights of people of colour, including First Nations’ sovereignty claims to their own lands.



Image 3.14a. 'Mother Canada' and the empty tomb, Vimy memorial, 2016.



Image 3.14b. 'Mother Canada' and the empty tomb, Vimy memorial, 2016.

In contrast to the unified embodiment of Canadian national identity presented by Mother Canada, there are also a multitude of allegorical sculptures on the monument representing Canada's shared identity with Britain and France based on common values and experiences. This demonstrates the degree to which Canada's newly asserted national identity was still proudly founded on its ties to Britain. The memorial's pylons are topped by anthropomorphised Peace and Justice, and other stone figures built into the monument embody Hope, Sacrifice, Charity, Faith, Honour, Knowledge, Truth, and "Bearing the Torch."<sup>62</sup> The triumphant idealism of these figures provides a counterpoint to a second type of figural sculpture on the memorial. This latter type represents a shared experience of loss and the requisite desire for peace: groups of sculptures depict "Sympathy for the Helpless",

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<sup>62</sup> Laura Brandon, "History As Monument: The Sculptures on the Vimy Memorial," *Canadian War Museum*, <https://www.warmuseum.ca/the-battle-of-vimy-ridge/the-sculptures-on-the-vimy-memorial/>.

“Mourning”, and “The Breaking of the Sword”, and silent cannons are draped in sculpted laurel and olive branches to symbolise victory and peace.



Image 3.15a-b. Allegories on the Vimy memorial, 2016 (L), 2017 (R).



Image 3.15c. Allegories on the Vimy memorial, 2016.

Though Vimy came to be considered Canada's national memorial on the Western Front, it had a smaller-scale predecessor which was also a Canadian-specific monument. St-Julien (Vancouver Corner) was one of the eight sites designated for planned identical Canadian monuments, with Vimy being another; however, eventually the winning design was chosen to appear only at Vimy. Then the second-place proposal in Canada's memorial design competition, by Frederick Chapman Clemesha, was selected for St-Julien instead. Known as the 'Brooding Soldier', this Canadian memorial was unveiled in 1923, therefore placing it amongst the earliest significant Western Front memorials and positioning it as a 'dry-run' of sorts for the logistics and politics of the major interwar British imperial unveiling ceremonies which were to follow (discussed ahead in Chapter IV).



Image 3.16. St-Julien memorial, 2016.

Meetings of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission (CBMC) reveal the quandaries regarding ‘Canadian’ identity, and its relationship to both specific battlefield landscapes and the Western Front commemorative landscape more generally, sparked by the national design competition and its two winning entries. As early as 1923, 13 years before its eventual completion, the decision not to replicate Allward’s Vimy design at the other seven sites had been made, but the decision of whether to replicate *Clemesha’s* design across the other six, or to have St-Julien be a unique monument too, was still being debated. In December 1923 at a CBMC meeting, the High Commissioner noted that while the monument was “wonderfully impressive and indeed better as a work of art and more expressive than anything I have seen in England”, it would “not be wise” to replicate it at other sites in France because “there was a danger that too many such towering monuments would savour of ostentation.”<sup>63</sup>

This emphasises the importance of considering gaze when discussing monuments: who was he worried that these replicas would look ostentatious *to*? Given the context, he seems to be referring to the French. However, the design itself, rather than the size, of the memorial also posed concern to the CBMC in terms of the gaze of the combatant nations more generally: the St-Julien monument emphasises sadness and loss, not victory, and so “there was also the question as to the entire suitability of the design for certain sites where quick victories were obtained.”<sup>64</sup> It is a calculated comment reflecting awareness that Canada would be judged on how it represented its relationship to specific battles. The CBMC was also concerned with maintaining at least a semblance of humility: they decided that the St-Julien monument (despite being significantly smaller than the Vimy memorial), was “too

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<sup>63</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, December 1923”.

<sup>64</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, December 1923”.

imposing for repetition a number of times...Canada might be placed in a false light if too many towering monuments were erected along the battlefield.”<sup>65</sup>

However, a French architect who had served on the original design competition committee disagreed. Paul Cret, head of the School of Architecture at Pennsylvania University and the nominated representative of the Société Centrale des Architectes Français on Canada’s memorial design competition committee, wrote in 1923 to the Canadian High Commissioner with his views on the St-Julien memorial. He discussed how this had affected his overall opinion on the repetition of a Canadian monument design at multiple sites across the Western Front landscape, writing,

[The St-Julien memorial] is by far the best that I have seen erected since 1919... what I admire above all, is the fact that the lines of the memorial are simple enough to withstand the vastness of the battlefields, where so many others look like a piece of furniture dropped in a field by a moving van. The monument by Mr. Clemesha grows out of the ground where the men fell... this type of memorial is eminently suitable for repetition on other battlefields, [and my opinion] is supported and strengthened by looking at the photograph of the completed monument.<sup>66</sup>

This brings a new perspective to the relationship between landscape and memorial, in positioning the memorial as something that has to ‘withstand’ the landscape; and in articulating that its *form* (rather than intent, meaning, etcetera) was the means through which it would do so. The concept of indistinct boundaries and interconnection between landscape and memorial, as discussed in Chapter II, is also highlighted by Cret’s concept that the memorial “grows out of the ground”; and the use of “grows”, rather than the frozen connotations of the past tense ‘grew’, highlights another theme of this thesis – that the sites in question were not nearly as static as their stone composition might imply.

A disgruntled complaint filed against the assessors of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission memorial design competition brings to light a different type of

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<sup>65</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, December 1923”.

<sup>66</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “21 September 1923”.

concern regarding gaze and the repetition of monuments at Canadian sites along the Western Front battlefields:

One must also consider the feelings of pilgrims when they visit the Battlefields. They will not remain in the same place but will in all probability proceed from one place to another to see the different memorials. It is easy to imagine the lively interest which a variety of designs would arouse in such a case. On the other hand a series of replicas would rather produce a lugubrious monotony easy to understand.<sup>67</sup>

This argument directly supports the concept discussed in Chapter II, of the importance of considering the spatial relationship between monuments. The complainants, Messrs. Gagnon, also drew upon the idea of gaze and judgement in their argument that Allward's design won because it ignored the competition rules; saying,

The Commission interpreted the spirit of the conditions in a manner truly too elastic... the idea never occurred to us that the Commission would choose one design to be erected as a series. [Which, as has just been discussed, never actually came to fruition.] It is more than probable that artistic public opinion overseas will not accept this idea without severe criticism.<sup>68</sup>

It was not only contemporary gaze that was raised as a concern by multiple parties, including those examined above; the theoretical gaze of those who would see it in the future was also a significant factor influencing the form of the Vimy memorial during its construction process. This was particularly of concern in debates regarding the stone used for this monument; its architect Allward, and supervising engineer Hughes, were at odds over the relative merits of speed versus durability. A 1925 letter written by an IWGC employee who had been onsite at Vimy outlined this clash of not only opinions but personalities:

I have been a little anxious about the Vimy memorial because I think there is an inclination on the part of General Hughes to become impatient at the delay and disappointments regarding the stone... what I am afraid is that any impatience will make Allward feel like throwing up the job altogether... General Hughes has absolutely no sympathy with Allward as far as I can see and certainly Allward has none for Hughes.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), "10 February 1922".

<sup>68</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), "10 February 1922".

<sup>69</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 folder W 18/26 (46), "30 June 1925".

This disagreement was resulting from their differing opinions over whether to use more durable stone – which would take longer to source and ship – or to proceed more quickly with construction, using stone that would weather faster. As the above letter described, “with some artists [the impatience and time pressure] might induce them to use stone that would melt away as so much stone has in [England] and in France until many of the figures are becoming shapeless, losing all their beauty.”<sup>70</sup> This feared loss of form was also positioned against the lack of formlessness of existing historical monuments in 1925: “if the great monuments of Europe were built of such stone...they would be effaced from the world today.”<sup>71</sup> Allward was refusing other better-paid commissions during this time due to his belief in the importance of both Vimy’s meaning and his purpose: “[Allward] thinks (and I also believe) that he is erecting a monument worthy of the men who died in France and which will make Canadians proud of having a countryman who can produce such a work. Naturally, therefore, he wants to make it as enduring as brass.”<sup>72</sup> This metaphor is particularly ironic given the usual connotations of *stone* as enduring.

The extent to which control over Vimy was held directly by Canada or subsumed by the IWGC was a hotly contested and very delicate subject even ten years before the memorial was built: documents in a “CONFIDENTIAL” file in the IWGC archives reveal rather frantic telegrams and letters exchanged between IWGC members regarding Vimy, in advance of a meeting of the Anglo-French Mixed Committee [for First World War monuments] in June 1926. Two sensitive issues were at play. First, Canada was agitating strongly for autonomy in its dealings with the French regarding Vimy: in an unsigned letter between IWGC officials, the author writes

it was difficult to put into a telegram what I wanted to say. We are up against the whole political difficulty with Canada who wish to deal with the French as an independent Government not only in this matter [Vimy] but in all others. A strong

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<sup>70</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 folder W 18/26 (46), “30 June 1925”.

<sup>71</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 folder W 18/26 (46), “30 June 1925”.

<sup>72</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 folder W 18/26 (46), “30 June 1925”.

party in Canada strongly objects to being associated with Great Britain in any treaty or agreement with the French.<sup>73</sup>

Yet the IWGC's Canadian representative, Lieutenant-Colonel H.T. Hughes, occupied a starkly different position: he "of course does not represent this point of view but rather the maximum imperial spirit of Canada."<sup>74</sup> Second, the IWGC was desperate to avoid criticism from the French regarding the proposed designs of various memorials, including Vimy, on the basis of

objections of general principle concerning the erection of sumptuous monuments by a foreign government on French territory in the existing state of French finances, which precludes them from honouring their own dead, who exceed ours in numbers, in any appropriate or similar form.<sup>75</sup>

The proposed Vimy memorial seemed to be particularly vulnerable to this criticism, perhaps because at 110 metres above the Douai Plain (mostly due to the height of Vimy Ridge relative to the landscape) it was poised to be one of the highest war memorials in the country. Construction work had begun on Allward's winning twin-pylon design the previous year. Fabian Ware, in a letter to Hughes labelled "Very Confidential", wrote rather desperately

I am in a position of great difficulty which you will appreciate – I have discussed the matter secretly and have no official knowledge that the question of Vimy will be raised at this meeting and certainly shall do all in my power to prevent its coming up. Indeed I am doing my utmost for reasons you will appreciate to prevent any French official criticism of any of the monuments of any part of the Empire.<sup>76</sup>

Another concomitant IWGC letter echoes him, discussing more obliquely "the difficulty as regards Canada" and that "it will be practically impossible to prevent the question of Vimy being raised at the meeting, although you will observe it is not mentioned in my reports."<sup>77</sup>

Although the minutes of that meeting have not so far come to light during the course of

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<sup>73</sup> CWGC ACON 56, "17 June 1926".

<sup>74</sup> CWGC ACON 56, "17 June 1926".

<sup>75</sup> CWGC ACON 56, "19 June 1926".

<sup>76</sup> CWGC ACON 56, "17 June 1926, by Fabian Ware".

<sup>77</sup> CWGC ACON 56, "19 June 1926".

research for this thesis, the soaring height of the Vimy memorial visible today gives some indication of its result.

### *Villers-Bretonneux – Australia*

The verticality that characterises the Vimy memorial, with its twin pylons, is also a distinctive feature of the Australian national memorial at Villers-Bretonneux.<sup>78</sup> Flanked by stone walls listing the missing, the monument's most striking feature is its 30-metre tower. Height was an important feature of the memorial before it even existed: in promotional material for the open design competition for the memorial, it was mentioned that "those responsible for the acquisition of the site were of the opinion that the monument should provide a means for visitors to view the surroundings from as high an elevation as cost and other conditions permit", and that "on the surveyed plan the site is marked as that of an observation tower."<sup>79</sup> This design competition launched in Australia in 1925 to find an architect for the so-called "Great Overseas Memorial" at Villers-Bretonneux,<sup>80</sup> it was only open to Australian architects who had either served "with the sea or land forces of the British Empire" or had children who had done so.<sup>81</sup> The original winner was Australian architect William Lucas, but under very contentious circumstances the commission was later given to British IWGC architect Edwin Lutyens.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Jay Winter discusses at length the ramifications that verticality versus horizontality have on memorials' meanings, arguing that the former represents "uplifting sacrifice", "upright bravery", masculinity and hope, while the latter has an "irresistible force which tends to bring us down to earth with a thud." Winter, *War Beyond Words: Languages of remembrance from the Great War to the present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 144, chapter "The geometry of memory: horizontality and war memorials in the twentieth century and after".

<sup>79</sup> AWM 38 3DRL 6673 Item 404, "The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia's Chief Overseas Memorial: Competition Opens Today [1925]," 3.

<sup>80</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "Great Overseas Memorial".

<sup>81</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "National War Memorial".

<sup>82</sup> For a more detailed treatment of the circumstances surrounding Lucas' failed memorial, see Katti Williams, "Sublime Ruins: William Lucas' Project for the Australian WWI War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, France," *Melbourne Art Journal* 11:12 (2008-2009), 65-85, and her 2017 PhD thesis "Exquisite joy, exquisite privilege: the unrealised Great War memorial designs of Australian architect William Lucas," University of Melbourne.



Image 3.17. Reproduction of Will Longstaff's Villers-Bretonneux memorial painting, in *The Australian Women's Weekly* 5 November 1938. AWM 93 12/8/14.

A press release from Australia's Department of Defense announcing the memorial design competition articulates the intended purpose of the memorial, the significance of the Villers-Bretonneux site, and the logistical constraints for the monument. It gives one of the most explicit examples of a phenomenon that has been argued for and demonstrated throughout this thesis: that the Western Front was a performative space, within which the countries in question felt that the eyes of the world were upon them. The opening paragraph of the release states,

The competition is of great importance, since this monument will be not merely this country's main overseas memorial to her soldiers, but the chief example, not only in France but in Europe, of Australia's architectural and perhaps sculptural art.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 1, "The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia's Main Overseas Monument – Competition Opens Today".

An implied contributing factor to this forthcoming gaze was the monument's specific location, and the release details both the battle-historical and practical virtues of the selected site; including the fact that "this splendid site is in the path of most visitors to the Somme battle area, and is not far from the other – even more crowded – Australian cemeteries at Pozières. It is certain that for all time the monument will be visited by most travellers to Amiens."<sup>84</sup> This anticipated visitation was also, as for Delville Wood as discussed above, incorporated into the design planning for the memorial, in this case by the inclusion of the tower. The handbook for competitors included multiple plans and surveys of the site, including detailed information regarding the IWGC cemetery of predominantly Australian burials which adjoins the Villers-Bretonneux site.<sup>85</sup> This demonstrates the extent to which the memorial was not considered as a standalone, but rather as another element to be integrated into the existing commemorative landscape of the site.

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<sup>84</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 1, "The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia's Main Overseas Monument – Competition Opens Today". For an overview of Australia's fighting and significant death count at Pozières, see Gavin Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo: The Initiation of Australia 1901-1919* (Sydney: Collins, 1976), 231-243, who describes it as "[where] the AIF underwent its worst ordeal of the war" (231).

<sup>85</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, appendices to "National War Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France: Architectural Competition: Conditions Regulating Submission of Designs [Commonwealth of Australia Department of Defense]".

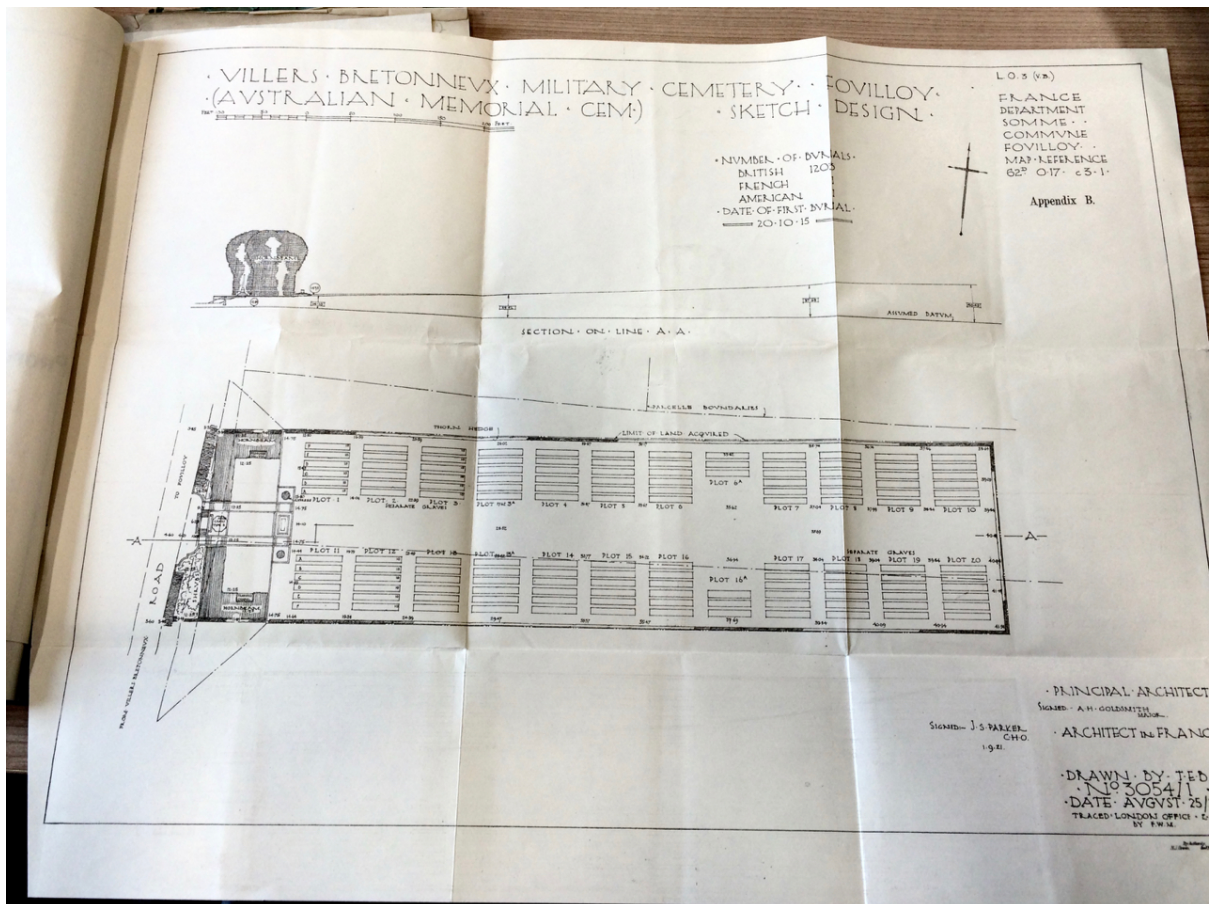


Image 3.18. Site survey of IWGC cemetery adjoining the planned Villers-Bretonneux memorial site, appendix to the architectural brief for the memorial's design competition, 1925. CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery".

This element underwent a complete overhaul during the planning process, in that both its architect and its design were changed. The original Australian winner of the design competition, William Lucas, eventually fell out with the IWGC and Australian Government over costs and timetabling, and was summarily replaced by one of the IWGC's principal architects, Edwin Lutyens, who designed the Thiepval Memorial as well as many other monuments and cemeteries. Lucas complained about this both publicly and privately: for example, in a letter to the editor mere months before the memorial's 1938 unveiling, Lucas wrote to the *Herald*:

why was not only the winner of the competition (strictly limited to Australians directly associated with the Great War), but all Australian architects and designers, ignored in regard to this essentially Australian commemorative work? Further, why

was it entrusted by the Commonwealth [Australian] Government direct without any competition whatever to a non-Australian London architect...<sup>86</sup>

The importance of Villers-Bretonneux as a location and memorial for Australia was recognised both by the IWGC and in the Dominion itself. Fabian Ware commented that the design decisions for the monument were “entirely a decision for Australia herself”,<sup>87</sup> and money from Australia helped to rebuild the village.<sup>88</sup> Romain Fathi has argued that the whole site of Villers-Bretonneux, including the eponymous village, acts as a performative space at which Australian identity is articulated: it is a “valuable microcosm in which to understand the significance of extraterritoriality in Australia’s war memorialisation.”<sup>89</sup> He also affirms the interplay of distance as a factor influencing Australian relationships with war-forged identity:

When [the memorial] was built, its physical manifestation confirmed and embodied a time in history most Australians did not see for themselves, it validated narratives and gave them a reality. The monumental aspect not only paid tribute to the dead, it was also to be seen by others, an injunction to remember for the centuries to come what had happened on that ground. Being seen is one of the means of confirming and affirming one’s existence.<sup>90</sup>

This concept of “being seen” to affirm existence also applies to the discussions concerning which battlefields would be listed on the memorial. To set in stone Australia’s participation in these engagements was to solidify and assert the reciprocity of their importance:

Australia’s to the battle outcome, and the battle’s to Australian identity. Various lists were circulated, but the final decision was allocated to the Australian Prime Minister.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 3, “Australian War Memorial In France – To The Editor of the *Herald*,” William Lucas in *The Sydney Herald*, 21 April 1938.

<sup>87</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, “21 July 1930”.

<sup>88</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, “17 May 1928”; see also Romain Fathi, “‘Do Not Forget Australia’: Australian War Memorialisation at Villers-Bretonneux,” (Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris/University of Queensland PhD thesis, 2015), chapter 3 “A school or nothing: the Education Department of Victoria and post-war aid to Villers-Bretonneux,” 81-106; and AWM 3DRL 6673 Item 404A, “23 December 1937”, which discusses Melbourne adopting the village of Villers-Bretonneux and sending it money.

<sup>89</sup> Fathi, “Do Not Forget Australia,” 3.

<sup>90</sup> Fathi, “Do Not Forget Australia,” 169.

<sup>91</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 3, “16 March 1938”.

As the last major national memorial to be erected on the Western Front, its planning stages were also taking place on a slightly delayed timeline compared to the others discussed here.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the Australian design competition was launched with one eye on its eventual predecessors, most notably Canada; the section of the competition's press release describing the memorial location opens not with any mention of Villers-Bretonneux, but instead positioning it in comparison to Canada, saying "Canada has chosen for her monument Vimy Ridge, the site of the magnificent advance of Canadian troops in 1917."<sup>93</sup> This theme continued after the competition had closed; in the press release announcing the winning design, one of the key points emphasised is that the memorial "will rank notably with that of Canada at Vimy and South Africa at Delville Wood."<sup>94</sup> The site was meant to play host to "an enduring material symbol of those ideals which were the bases of participation by Australia in the Great War", and was also construed as a memorial to all those who served, not solely those who died: it was required to be "a fitting monument to the deeds of every Australian who gave his services for the preservation of these ideals."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> This also meant that Australia had experienced a full two decades of interwar political developments affecting Australian self-conceptions of national identity by the time the memorial was completed. See for example Tim Rooth, "Ottawa and After," in *Between Empire and Nation: Australia's external relations from federation to the Second World War*, ed. Carl Bridge and Bernard Attard (Kew, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2000), 110-129, on how Australia positioned itself at the Imperial Economic Conference held in Ottawa in 1932 and the subsequent national ramifications of this; Neville Kirk, "'Australians for Australia': The Right, the Labor Party and Contested Loyalties to Nation and Empire in Australia, 1917 to the early 1930s," *Labour History* 91 (2006), 95-111, on how the politics of loyalism to both nation and empire significantly aided the political Right's interwar electoral success; Souter, *Lion and Kangaroo*, 283-308, on the effects of the conflict on immediate postwar Australian society. While all the Dominions negotiated and developed national discourses during the interwar period (which were "ideological glue" that assisted with the reintegration of veterans, as argued by Garton, 142), Australia was unique in the extent to which its nationalist discourses "adopt[ed] a heightened sense of the importance of ties to the empire" (124), a phenomenon termed 'empire nationalism'; this is explored in Stephen Garton, "Demobilization and Empire: Empire Nationalism and Soldier Citizenship in Australia After the First World War – in Dominion Context," *Journal of Contemporary History* 50:1 (2015), 124-143.

<sup>93</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 1, "The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia's Main Overseas Monument – Competition Opens Today".

<sup>94</sup> AWM 62 82/1/680, "For press: Commemoration of those who lost their lives in the Great War [26 October 1937]".

<sup>95</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 1, "The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia's Main Overseas Monument – Competition Opens Today".

The lengthy delay in Villers-Bretonneux's development and completion also made it much more vulnerable to criticism, both for the delay itself but also due to the perception that, since the memorial was still in development, it could be changed to better suit the tastes of the complainant. For example, in 1930 the chairman of the Australian design competition committee, J. Talbot Hobbs, wrote a letter of complaint, rationalised by: "there is, however, perhaps one advantage in the delay inasmuch as it gives an opportunity, if I may suggest it, of reconsidering the design."<sup>96</sup> Hobbs' committee had selected the three top designs from the competition and forwarded them to London for final adjudication by the Royal Institute of British Architects, and the eventual winning design (by William Lucas) was the one that the Australians had ranked *third* out of the three. Again this was framed in relation to the progress of the other Dominions, with Hobbs lamenting that "the other Dominions and even Newfoundland are a long way head of us."<sup>97</sup> He extended this comparison still further by drawing upon the success of India's Neuve Chapelle memorial to recommend something similar for Villers-Bretonneux:

I suggest with all due respect to what has already been done, that the design for the Memorial might well be reconsidered and something circular in plan raised on a terrace or platform, and in design more on the lines of the Indian Memorial should be prepared and submitted to [the Australian] government by the Imperial War Graves Commission.<sup>98</sup>

Unveiled on the brink of another world war, the late date of the Villers-Bretonneux memorial's creation epitomises the close and interlinked timeline of these two global conflicts. Although intended to be unchanging in form, the memorials and cemeteries of the First World War were located yet again in a war zone during the Second World War, and of

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<sup>96</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "21 May 1930".

<sup>97</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "21 May 1930".

<sup>98</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "21 May 1930".

the memorials discussed in this thesis it was the one-year-old Villers-Bretonneux memorial that suffered the most extensive structural damage.<sup>99</sup>

### *Cemeteries*

The most relevant feature of IWGC cemeteries for this thesis is the fact that they are not separated by nationality. There is a Canadian memorial, a South African memorial, etcetera, but there are no Canadian-only or South African-only IWGC cemeteries on the Western Front. There are certainly cemeteries with a preponderance of a particular nationality, and this is sometimes reflected in their name or their flora – Canadian Cemetery No.2 and Adanac Cemetery (‘Canada’ spelled backwards) are apt examples, as are the maple trees planted at Cabaret Rouge Cemetery – but they are not exclusive or segregated along national lines. This is significant both because it engenders a message of collective imperial identity compared to the starker nationalism of the memorial sites, and because this blanket of imperial uniformity also heightens the scope for the significance of assertions of national and individual identities within it.

This characteristic of the IWGC cemeteries also complicates this chapter’s discussions of how identity was represented through stone and inscriptions at these sites. Some of the archival material that this chapter engages with is not specific to the commemoration of the dead from South Africa, India, Australia, or Canada; it addresses decisions regarding IWGC-wide policies which thus significantly affected, but were not exclusive to, the commemoration of the dead from the Dominions and India. They are included here in order to highlight that the complex slippages of identity – and relationships

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<sup>99</sup> Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Office of Australian War Graves, “Australian National Memorial: Villers-Bretonneux,” Brochure P1096 (October 2004), 4-5; Ward and Gibson, *Courage Remembered*, 161.

between – metropole and empire do indeed problematise our understanding of these sites, but this is a characteristic not to be shied away from and rather included as part of their story.

A significant and consistent element of stone material culture of remembrance at IWGC cemeteries is the ‘Stone of Remembrance’, a large low block appearing in every IWGC cemetery containing over 1,000 burials. Highlighting the previous chapter’s point regarding the interconnection and fluidity between memorial, cemetery, landscape, and the dead, the Stone is also found in locations connected with three of the four national *memorials* examined above. At Vimy, it appears within Canadian Cemetery No.2, located a short walk from the memorial and within the Vimy battlefield landscape park; at Neuve Chapelle and Delville Wood, the Stone sits prominently in the centre of the memorial space itself. Delville Wood’s was a later addition to the site, added after the Second World War, and thus features different wording than the Stones erected after the First World War.



Image 3.19. Standard IWGC Stone of Remembrance.  
Villers Station Cemetery, France, 2016.

Further highlighting the nebulous existence the Stone held between being defined as a cemetery feature and as a memorial, during the debate about how to memorialise at Canada's eight identified battlefield locations the uses of quasi-Stones as replacement memorials was raised. Instead of erecting memorials at all eight, the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission suggested that

If the sites were converted into miniature parks it might be sufficient to place in each some simple central feature carrying a dedicatory inscription. On this point reference was made to the Stone of Remembrance used by the Imperial War Graves Commission in its cemeteries and to a sketch made by Mr. Allward... a block of stone surmounted by the recumbent figure of a living soldier facing the enemy.<sup>100</sup>

The development of IWGC cemeteries generally has been extensively covered, foundationally by Longworth and Crane and more recently by Tim Godden.<sup>101</sup> The three principal architects, Edwin Lutyens, Reginald Blomfield, and Herbert Baker, each designed at least one of the memorials discussed in this chapter, and held overall responsibility for the cohesive design of the cemeteries.

The key pieces of information that the IWGC used to keep track of the dead became key elements of each headstone. IWGC headstones on the Western Front are generally rectangular in shape (not a cross, as French, American, and many German First World War Western Front headstones were), with a curved top. For identified casualties, the soldier's regimental (or, for the Dominions, national— i.e. a maple leaf for Canada, a silver fern for New Zealand) symbol occupies the top portion of the headstone face, followed by his service number and rank, name, unit, date of death, and age at death. Below this is usually a religious symbol, with the cross as standard, followed by, in most cases, an epitaph chosen by next-of-kin at the bottom of the headstone.

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<sup>100</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), "Minutes of Proceedings of the 9th Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, December 1923".

<sup>101</sup> Longworth, *Unending Vigil*; Crane, *Empires of the Dead*; Godden, "Designing Memory."



Image 3.20. Standard IWC headstone. Hooze Crater Cemetery, Belgium, 2016.

Epitaphs, and inscribed words more generally, are such an important element of IWC sites and their roles in conveying and reinforcing different facets of identity that they warrant their own section in this chapter. ‘Words’, below, delves into the significance and influence of these words, the different categories they fell into, and their reciprocal relationship with the objects they were inscribed upon.

## Words

Having addressed above what memorials ‘say’ through their designs and the decision-making processes behind these, we now turn to what these sites *literally* say. Every IWGC site on the Western Front has some type of inscription(s), and some but not all headstones had epitaph inscriptions. Words, like stone, can be interpreted multiple ways; nevertheless, the material culture of language provides some of the most explicit messages about identity and these sites’ meanings, and thus is worth addressing in tandem with their physical forms.

Three main categories of ‘words’ will be addressed in relation to IWGC sites commemorating the South African, Indian, Canadian, and Australian dead: inscriptions of their national memorials in France; inscriptions and epitaphs in cemeteries that included their dead; and the decision-making process behind how they each grouped the names of their dead on stone.

These words carved in stone are some of the most explicit examples of the living ‘speaking’ on behalf of the dead. However, the IWGC did not see it that way: in their 1937 report for the Imperial Conference in London, the IWGC laid out its philosophy on inscriptions as follows:

...[quoting the bishop of Arras] “in the sight of God the dead of Germany were the equals of the dead of France.” Following no expressed policy, but guided rather by the feeling that the dead should be allowed to speak for themselves, the Commission did little more at first than refrain from placing any obstacles in the way of this spiritual intercourse; nothing was allowed to be said in any inscription which would tend to perpetuate ill will...<sup>102</sup>

Due to obvious limitations imposed by the laws of nature, the dead of course could *not* speak for themselves; their only remaining agency was through the presence or absence of their bodies. Letting their presence “speak for themselves”, solely, could reasonably be argued; but the imposition of inscriptions which the dead most certainly had no hand in choosing (though

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<sup>102</sup> NASA BLO – 263 – PS12/10/19, “Report on the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, 1917-1937. Secret – Official Use Only [Prepared for the 1937 Imperial Conference]”.

in some cases may have had meaning to the dead that their relatives were aware of) arguably diluted the power of the ‘speech’ of their presence. Thus, an examination of these inscriptions is a key facet to understanding the role that the living played in constructing and conveying messages about identity, for themselves and the dead, at the IWGC sites in question.

### *Memorial inscriptions*

Each of the four major national memorials addressed in ‘Stone’ above features a multilingual inscription: intended to convey the purpose of the memorial, the rationale for the country’s sacrifice, and, in some cases, to denote the scope of who exactly fell within its commemorative remit. All four also clearly exhibit the proclivity for “elevated heroic language” that Alan Wilkinson identifies as a hallmark of First World War memorials.<sup>103</sup>

Table 3.B. Main inscriptions on key memorials referred to in this chapter

<i>Memorial / Country</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Languages</i>
Delville Wood / South Africa	<p>“To the Immortal Dead from South Africa, who at the call of Duty made the Great Sacrifice on the battlefields of Africa, Asia and Europe and on the Sea, this memorial is dedicated in proud and graceful recognition by their countrymen”</p> <p>and</p> <p>“Their ideal is our legacy / Their sacrifice our inspiration”</p>	English and Afrikaans
Neuve Chapelle / India	“God is One, His is the Victory”	English, Arabic, Hindi, Gurmukhi
Vimy / Canada	“To the valour of their countrymen in the Great War and in memory of their sixty Thousand [sic]	English and French

<sup>103</sup> Alan Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1978), 297.

	dead this monument is raised by the people of Canada”	
Villers-Bretonneux / Australia	“To the glory of God and in memory of the Australian Imperial Force in France and Flanders 1916-1918 and of eleven thousand who fell in France and have no known grave”	English and French

The inscription on the Delville Wood memorial is on its arch: a bilingual inscription in English and Afrikaans, to the dead who “at the call of duty made the Great Sacrifice”. The dual languages reflect the complicated political situation and history of British and Dutch colonialism in South Africa. The inscription’s first draft in full emphasised the all-encompassing nature of the memorial’s commemorative remit, rather than being designated for just one front of the war:

To the Immortal Dead from South Africa  
Who at the call of Duty made the great sacrifice  
On the battlefields of Africa, Asia, Europe and at sea,  
This memorial is dedicated  
in proud and grateful recognition by their countrymen.<sup>104</sup>

This however was still not considered quite broad enough; in 1924 the South African Department of Defence wrote that “at sea” should be changed to “the sea”, because the latter “indicate one of the fighting areas better” than the former.<sup>105</sup>

Similarly prominent to Delville Wood’s inscription is Neuve Chapelle’s, forming a central component of its column: it states “God is one, His is the Victory” in English, Arabic, Hindi, and Gurmukhi. There was much debate over the selection of these languages and the order that they should be arranged.<sup>106</sup> Great care was taken to ensure that the vernacular

<sup>104</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 3, “28 December 1923”.

<sup>105</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 3, “28 February 1924”.

<sup>106</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “8 December 1926”, “19 November 1926”.

inscriptions were correct: Ali Risa was commissioned to complete the translations, and made over 100 drafts before arriving at a final version.<sup>107</sup> However, as one IWGC official astutely remarked, it would be a very rare visitor to Neuve Chapelle who was fluently literate in all four languages.<sup>108</sup>



Image 3.21. Detail of quatrilingual inscription on Neuve Chapelle memorial column, 2016.

The vernacular inscriptions had originally been planned differently in several respects. A letter from the IWGC to a Colonel with the India Office in 1925 reveals key alterations between initial plans and the final memorial: of inscription languages, location, and content. Originally Urdu was one of the utilised languages, instead of Arabic; and all four inscriptions were to be inscribed on the Stone of Remembrance, rather than on Neuve

<sup>107</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “23 February 1927”.

<sup>108</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “8 July 1925”.

Chapelle's distinctive column.<sup>109</sup> This alternate location also influenced the originally planned content: "God is one. His is the victory" was still included, but was significantly longer. The English inscription was to continue on with an acknowledgement of the "brave Hindus, Sikhs, Muhammadans who sacrificed their lives", while the Hindi inscription was to be "signifying a memorial in memory of the Hindus", as would the Gurmukhi for the Sikhs and the Urdu for the Muslims respectively.<sup>110</sup>

A year later in 1926, there was still confusion and indecision regarding whether the column should be inscribed or left blank, and a great deal of weight was attached to the potential meanings of this. The memorial's architect Herbert Baker, upon hearing that the IWGC had changed his design and left the column blank, responded with a passionate letter that underscores one of this chapter's key points: the reciprocal and deeply interconnected nature of memorials and their words. He wrote,

The inscription at the base of the column is the *essence of the idea*. The column represents an Asoka column, set up by that great Emperor of India in his provinces inscribed in such a way with his edicts, so to omit the inscription would *therefore kill the spirit of the column and of the memorial*. [emphases added]<sup>111</sup>

The point he makes is that in the precedent set by Asoka, it is not the column nor the words that solely makes it powerful, it is their combination: it is specifically that the object is being used to convey the words. Baker's opinion that the memorial's "spirit" would be killed contrasts sharply with the idea discussed above that the dead could "speak for themselves"; the latter idea implies that the mere presence of the dead is the spirit of an IWGC site, rather than the words imposed on it through inscriptions.

Neuve Chapelle's memorial inscription was also reused in at least one IWGC cemetery with Indian burials, emphasising the potential for interconnection between memorials and cemeteries not only spatially but also conceptually; in 1929, the IWGC's

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<sup>109</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, "16 April 1925".

<sup>110</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, "16 April 1925".

<sup>111</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, "25 [corrected to 15] February 1926".

Principal Assistant Secretary wrote to the Director of Works suggesting it be reused at Monastir Road Cemetery (in modern Greece).<sup>112</sup> The cemetery contains Indians that were Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, and Animist; he made specific suggestions about the direction each of the four languages' versions should face within the cemetery, presumably in an attempt at linguistic and spatial accordance by nominally aligning the versions with the various religiously-segregated burial plots onsite.<sup>113</sup>

Like Neuve Chapelle, the Vimy memorial has multiple inscriptions. The empty tomb at the base of Vimy, under the gaze of the Mother Canada figure, had a Latin inscription which became a source of confusion. The issue in question was the use of singular or plural when referring to the dates of the conflict using 'anno domini'. Deputy Canadian Defence Minister had questioned the Secretary of the CBMC on its correctness, who then replied giving the rationale for the choice that had been made; his key argument was the precedent set by not only the IWGC plaque to the 'Million Dead' of the British Empire in Westminster Abbey, but also plaques in various "leading cathedrals" in France and Belgium, and that "one can have no doubt that the Latin inscription [of those] was carefully settled by highly competent scholars."<sup>114</sup> This emphasises that like memorials themselves, memorialising inscriptions were situated in relation to and contextualised by each other.

The inscription on the Vimy memorial proper, as opposed to its empty-tomb-specific inscription, reads in English "To the valour of their countrymen in the Great War and in memory of their sixty Thousand dead this monument is raised by the people of Canada." It is repeated in French, but that was not always a surety, which caused great concern within the Canadian francophone community. For example, a letter to the editor in *Le Devoir*, May 1930, wrote,

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<sup>112</sup> CWGC WG 219/16 Pt 1, "2 October 1929".

<sup>113</sup> CWGC WG 219/16 Pt 1, "2 October 1929".

<sup>114</sup> LAC RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 1, "24 June 1936".

[we want to know] whether we will have to swallow the insult of inscriptions in a single language... the Vimy monument has been erected at the expense of the Canadian government on land given by the government of France. If there is one place in the world where the bilingual character of our population ought to be clearly set forth, it is certainly there.<sup>115</sup>

In the late stages of the Vimy memorial's construction, February 1936, the Canadian Deputy Minister of Defence also passed along to the IWGC an enquiry from a francophone branch of a Canadian veterans' organisation, who wanted to know whether a version of the inscription they had received was indeed going to be on the monument. It was notably religious compared to the actual inscription, hence the concern; including lines calling the monument a "temple" and offering to the Protestant Federation of France a symbol of sympathy and fraternal affection.<sup>116</sup>

Of the four countries examined here, Australia was the only country without linguistic divisions as a significant demographic factor. Canada, particularly its Quebec and New Brunswick provinces, had a significant francophone population; both English and Afrikaans were spoken in South Africa; and in India a multiplicity of languages were widely spoken, including Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi. (This list is enumerating official or quasi-official languages, but of course each country also contained dozens if not hundreds of other languages and dialects, brought by immigrants from other countries or spoken by its aboriginal peoples or original populations). Thus, of the four, Australia would have had the only ostensibly legitimate claim to construct a monolingual memorial. However, it chose to reinforce its identification with France – one which the Australians felt much more deeply than the French –<sup>117</sup> by including a French version of its inscription.<sup>118</sup> In English, it reads

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<sup>115</sup> LAC RG 25 Volume 1778 folder 184 Pt 1, "Editorial Note: Vimy," *Le Devoir* 30 May 1936.

<sup>116</sup> LAC RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 1, "11 February 1936".

<sup>117</sup> Fathi, "Do Not Forget Australia," 28.

<sup>118</sup> This ran into difficulties and had to be altered to redress possible confusion arising from its direct translation, which had had 'tombes' and 'tombés' in the same line. (CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 3, "4 February 1938").

“To the glory of God and in memory of the Australian Imperial Force in France and Flanders 1916-1918 and of eleven thousand who fell in France and have no known grave.”

### *Inscriptions in cemeteries*

Aside from the inscription of the cemetery name on stone near the entryway, IWGC cemeteries in France have two other consistent – though not universal – uses of carved language. The first is the land dedication: an inscribed statement declaring that the land of the cemetery has been given in perpetuity by the people of France or Belgium. As discussed in the previous chapter, ownership and transfer of Western Front land in the immediate postwar period was often complex and contested; the generosity of the French and Belgians, especially considering their own land use needs for economic recovery purposes, was certainly significant. This was formally decided to be a mandatory component of IWGC Western Front cemeteries during a Commission meeting in 1920,<sup>119</sup> with the following text for it put forward and approved:

The land on which this cemetery stands is the free gift of the French people for the perpetual resting-place of those of the Allied Armies who fell in the War of 1914-18, and are honoured here.<sup>120</sup>

Kipling remarked that a benefit of that phrasing was that it covered those commemorated as well as those buried. However, multilingualism was a facet in which the whole necessary spectrum was *not* covered; the land inscription again highlighted the complexities of multilingualism in dealing with these commemorative sites. This inscription “commemorative of the gift of land”<sup>121</sup> would always appear in English, but at French sites it

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<sup>119</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>120</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (11), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 15 June 1920”.

<sup>121</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

would be accompanied by a French version and in Belgium by a Latin version, as per the requests of those respective governments.<sup>122</sup>

The second is the ‘Stone of Remembrance’, mentioned previously. The Stone of Remembrance is inscribed with a short quotation; Rudyard Kipling, the English poet who himself had lost a son in the war, was responsible for choosing the inscription to appear on the Stone. Intended to be a material representative of both a tomb and an altar, the Stone honoured the memory of all those who fell, known and unknown.



Image 3.22. Standard Stone of Remembrance. Serre Road Cemetery No.2, 2016.

Its inscription, “Their name liveth for evermore”, taken from Ecclesiasticus 44:14 of the King James Bible, is well known today; lesser known is that its final form was likely dictated by a deference to Hindu beliefs. Stones of Remembrance all over the world, including cemeteries on the Western Front, therefore carry this hidden reminder that the war was fought by those

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<sup>122</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

of many faiths. Due to the importance of cremation in Hinduism, any suggestion of the presence of a body – “here lies” rather than “here fell”,<sup>123</sup> or references to a “grave” instead of “resting place” –<sup>124</sup> is anathema.<sup>125</sup> John Keegan mentions that Kipling “adapted” the Stone’s inscription to avoid giving offense to Hindus,<sup>126</sup> since the inscription is in fact a direct Biblical quote, it seems certain that the adaptation Keegan refers to is the removal of the verse’s first half, which reads in full “Their bodies are buried in peace; but their name liveth for evermore.” Since the Stone was planned to appear in multiple sites with a Hindu presence, including Neuve Chapelle, the first half’s reference to the physical presence of bodies would have been deemed unacceptable. However, it is also worth noting that Kipling’s son John ‘Jack’ went missing in the war, and therefore was not a “body buried in peace” either; this may have also been an influential factor in the selection.<sup>127</sup>

Kipling in fact appears to have originally agreed with an earlier proposal that would have placed not one but three inscriptions on certain Stones of Remembrance. At a 1920 IWGC meeting, he proposed a resolution to adopt the suggestion by the Secretary of State for India that there be “the erection of single Stones of Remembrance each bearing three separate inscriptions appropriate to Mahommedans, Hindus and Sikhs respectively.”<sup>128</sup> However, this did not come to pass, and instead the mutually acceptable “Their name liveth forevermore” became the universally installed version of the Stone.

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<sup>123</sup> CWGC WG 861, “26 March 1925”.

<sup>124</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/4, “7 April 1925”.

<sup>125</sup> This was also a consideration when selecting inscriptions for the Neuve Chapelle memorial; the IWGC asked Kipling to revise his original proposal because “the India Office are anxious that the word ‘grave’ should not be used” (CWGC WG 861/2/4, “7 April 1925”).

<sup>126</sup> John Keegan, “There’s Rosemary for Remembrance,” *The American Scholar* 66:3 (1997), 342. This is echoed by Longworth, *Unending Vigil*, who mentions the quote “omitted a previous phrase which might have offended Hindus” (37).

<sup>127</sup> See also Charles Chenevix Trench, *The Indian Army and the King’s Enemies 1900-1947* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988), 43.

<sup>128</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

Though the land dedication and Stone of Remembrance inscriptions are the main two collective features involving cemetery inscriptions, the existence of a third – which was discussed but eventually disavowed – is also important to consider. This thesis considers the relationship between presence and absence in a complex variety of permutations; one that should not be overlooked is the relationship between present material culture and absent words. Their absence has its own presence, because that absence was a deliberate choice. The specific example referred to here is a May 1920 proposal raised during an IWGC meeting, to have a Christian religious inscription on the Cross of Sacrifice. The Cross *did* become a feature in nearly all IWGC cemeteries; however, it is uninscribed. The IWGC Vice Chairman had consulted with Lord Hugh Cecil, who represented a faction of people advocating for greater overtly Christian imagery and wording within IWGC sites; he reported back to the IWGC, in what reads as almost a pleading tone, that “it would do a great deal to satisfy them if their proposal were agreed to that a text of a distinctly Christian character were inscribed on the Cross.”<sup>129</sup> Reginald Blomfield, the principal IWGC architect who designed the Cross, was present during this discussion and consented to its addition.<sup>130</sup> The requested text was as follows: “O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>131</sup>

This insistence on “text of a definitely Christian character”<sup>132</sup> emphasises the importance placed on words in representing identity, as opposed to ‘just’ stone. By this point in the IWGC’s work – three years after its founding – it was already incontrovertibly decided

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<sup>129</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18 May 1920”. For more in-depth discussion of public advocacy for overtly Christian commemoration within Imperial War Graves Commission designs and rituals, see John Wolffe, “‘Martyrs as really as St Stephen was a martyr’? Commemorating the British dead of the First World War,” *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15:1 (2015), particularly 27-30.

<sup>130</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18 May 1920”.

<sup>131</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18 May 1920”.

<sup>132</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “3 May 1920”.

that there should be a large Cross in nearly every IWGC cemetery; the fact that not only was this not seen as enough of a Christian presence, but that the presence of *twenty words* would have a powerful enough mitigating effect, is a powerful rationale for why this chapter contains two parts. The IWGC was already technically compromising its commitment to equality even by having a cross as a cemetery feature, since this was not equally appropriate for every burial in every cemetery. This serves to demonstrate that despite their ostensibly secular nature, IWGC cemeteries are weighted with religious meaning; the presence of the Cross inscription would have reduced the latency of this, but its absence did not negate it.

The context of this Cross inscription's proposal is also significant, as it is deeply ironic and reveals the types of ethical challenges faced by the Commission. While the Commissioners and other consulted parties generally failed to see a problem with including an explicitly Christian inscription – for example, in a letter to Fabian Ware one wrote “I see no possible objection to this”<sup>133</sup> the main reason the inscription was under consideration was as a concession to the lobby group led by Cecil, who caused a Parliamentary debate in 1920 to try to bring down the IWGC's uniformity and equality policies in favour of relatives having full control over commemorative decisions.<sup>134</sup> Ware wrote that the IWGC Chairman had informed him that “much would be done to remove the objections of the section which Lord Hugh Cecil represents” if the proposed inscription was approved, leaving Ware of the opinion that he “did not think any of the Commissioners would object to such a concession if it really would have the effect which [the Chairman] hoped.”<sup>135</sup> Thus, the Commission was prepared to sacrifice religious equality for a minority of its dead in order to preserve the overall project of equality (namely, through headstone size and uniformity) that the IWGC represented.

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<sup>133</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “3 May 1920”.

<sup>134</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “War Graves: Statement of Reasons in support of the proposal of the Imperial War Graves Commission”.

<sup>135</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “1 May 1920”.

Aside from its blatantly problematic ramifications for multi-faith IWGC sites – due to not only its Jesus Christ reference, but also its explicit mention of a *grave*, which again would be incompatible with Hindu beliefs – the proposed Cross of Sacrifice inscription also highlighted shades of difference within the Christian faith. The Archbishop of Canterbury was consulted about this inscription text, and approved it on the condition that it was inscribed in its entirety.<sup>136</sup> Another consultee was a Cardinal Bourne on behalf of the Catholic faith, who said that “while it was not a text that Catholics would have chosen themselves, they would offer no objection.”<sup>137</sup> Fabian Ware explained in a letter to the High Commissioner of Canada that Nonconformists would also approve of it, as “the text was used by them as well as the Church of England in the Burial Service over all soldiers.”<sup>138</sup> However, this inscription proposal was later discarded, and when you visit IWGC cemeteries today you see a blank – unworded – Cross of Sacrifice.

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<sup>136</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23rd Meeting of the IWGC, 18 May 1920”.

<sup>137</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23rd Meeting of the IWGC, 18 May 1920”.

<sup>138</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “1 May 1920”.



Image 3.23. Standard Cross of Sacrifice. Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, France, 2016.

The proposed and discarded words for the Cross of Sacrifice are not the only lost words missing from these cemeteries. Other words that have been erased from these cemeteries are original epitaphs written by comrades of the dead; though these are a different type of missing words than the Cross of Sacrifice inscription, because unlike the latter the former were not hypothetical but actually materialised and were later removed. As will be discussed further in the next chapter, the original wooden crosses marking graves in IWGC cemeteries were eventually replaced with headstones throughout the 1920s; the families of the dead were given the opportunity to select individual epitaphs to be inscribed upon them. However, when the wooden markers were taken away, so too were the original epitaphs written by comrades rather than kin.

In 1920, in response to rumour-mongered concerns over the treatment of the war graves, members of various ex-servicemen's associations sent delegations to France to

inspect in person the first three test cemeteries created by the IWGC.<sup>139</sup> The Vice-Chairman of the Commission reported that in addition to their overall satisfaction and positive reports, they had a specific concern about the epitaphs:

...great importance was attached to the inscriptions which had been placed on the wooden crosses by the men's comrades. The inscriptions had been chosen by the men's comrades themselves. They were often pathetic and appropriate, and the suggestion was that they should be repeated on the headstones.<sup>140</sup>

This created a dilemma: who had the greater right to write words to represent the dead, their comrades or their next of kin? The IWGC sided firmly with the next of kin;<sup>141</sup> this choice clearly illustrates that despite the extent to which the military nature of these deaths had ramifications for how their identities were represented in commemoration, it was their familial rather than service identity and experience which was given primacy.

The IWGC had to navigate a plethora of weighty decisions concerning headstone inscriptions; another such example was the complex case of grave markers for the Indian dead. Headstones were designed for both known and missing Hindu and Muslim soldiers;<sup>142</sup> each design included inscriptions in non-English languages, plus English inscriptions making the soldier's faith explicit. Note that Muslim soldiers were variously referred to as 'Musalman', 'Mussalman', 'Mohammedan', 'Mahommedan', and 'Moslem'. Although these headstones did not carry the cross emblem found on other IWGC graves, no other Hindu or Muslim religious symbols were inserted in its place. The Muslim headstone design was developed in 1921; the India Office supplied its Arabic inscription to the IWGC, who were concerned that the Arabic text be "sufficiently large for permanency"; it was also specially

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<sup>139</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), "Minutes of the Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 April 1920".

<sup>140</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), "Minutes of the Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 April 1920".

<sup>141</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), "Minutes of the Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 April 1920".

<sup>142</sup> CWGC WG 1031, "Headstone layout for isolated Hindu soldiers", "Headstone layout- unknown Mohammedan".

noted that “this layout only applies to the graves of Mahommedan soldiers in France and Belgium and not to Hindus.”<sup>143</sup> The inscription for Muslims buried on the Western Front was proposed by Sahibzada Aftab Khan and approved by the Government of India.<sup>144</sup>

The Commission was eager to disassociate themselves from the responsibility of selecting these inscriptions for the Indian dead, in order to avoid receiving the blame if there was “any criticism of them from Mahommedans or Hindus.”<sup>145</sup> At an IWGC meeting, Kipling explicitly mentioned that the Indian inscriptions had been chosen by the India Office and that he was pointing that out “in case there should be any criticism.”<sup>146</sup>

Enormous energy was expended in the attempt to ensure that Indian soldiers were buried under headstones that correctly reflected their identities. Two IWGC employees personally audited 107 cemeteries in France and Belgium commemorating 2094 Indians, returning with a list of urgent corrections needed to rectify spelling errors and erroneous religious attributions.<sup>147</sup> For example, these errors included the need for a Hindu inscription on Bij Hath’s grave at Esquelbecq, the removal of hyphens from the name ‘Nazir-Mohamed-Khan’ at Faubourg d’Amiens, and the need for a “Muhammedan stone” instead of the existing Hindu one for soldier Shahshuddin at St. Sever.<sup>148</sup>

Although the permanence of headstones prompted a fastidiousness for accuracy, the temporary grave markers which predated them were also cause for concern. Before the rounded headstones were installed which became a defining aesthetic characteristic of Commission cemeteries, temporary wooden crosses were used to mark each burial.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “23 June 1921”.

<sup>144</sup> CWGC WG 909/7 “18 June 1921”, “30 September 1920”.

<sup>145</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>146</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>147</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “16 June 1931”, “June 1931”. This followed a smaller audit by the Principal Assistant Secretary of the IWGC in 1928; see CWGC WG 909/7, “11 July 1928”.

<sup>148</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “June 1931”.

<sup>149</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “22 September 1927”.

Although the crosses misrepresented the religious beliefs of many Indian soldiers, some were evidently still in place nearly a decade after the war had ended: a letter from the Commission's Principal Assistant Secretary to the Deputy Controller of the Head Office in France instructed that "if it is the case that there are any wooden crosses on the Indian graves then please have these replaced by the proper stakes."<sup>150</sup> The motive for this belated concern was the impending wider scrutiny of the area due to the Neuve Chapelle memorial unveiling in 1927.<sup>151</sup>

However, this was not the first time the crosses versus stakes issue had been raised in relation to the Indian dead: in 1925, the IWGC's Assistant Director of Records was asking the IWGC Head Office in France,

will you please say if this [an order that Indian graves' crosses be replaced with stakes] applies to heathen and Christian Indians alike. As no distinction is made in records between Christian and heathen Indians, it will be necessary to ask the Principal Assistant Secretary to indicate the religion of each Indian before the cross is to be replaced by a stake. Perhaps you would prefer that in the case of every Indian the temporary memorial should be a stake, and that the Christian symbol should only appear where necessary on the headstones.<sup>152</sup>

This unreliability and paucity of accurate records regarding the Indian dead has already been discussed in Chapter II; the combination of the Indian dead having both the most diversity and the least amount of reliable records pertaining to them created a situation rife with potential for error.

Besides this higher potential for error, an unfortunate characteristic of headstones commemorating those who served with the Indian forces is a distinctly racial dividing line between those who have epitaphs and those who do not. With very rare exception, the white British or Anglo-Indian officers who served with the Indian army have epitaphs chosen by their next of kin, while the Indian rank-and-file and labour corps members have headstones

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<sup>150</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "22 September 1927".

<sup>151</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "22 September 1927".

<sup>152</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "25 June 1925".

without epitaphs. This is likely due to a combination of the payment charged for the epitaphs (there is no record of the Indian government or the IWGC waiving the fee) and, as discussed in Chapter II, the immensely inadequate state of the record-keeping regarding the Indian forces, and therefore presumably an increased difficulty in making contact with Indian next of kin.

So many variables had the potential to affect the selection of epitaphs that to conduct a quantifiable epitaphs analysis is beyond the scope of this study. These factors include but are not limited to: date of death, date of identification, date of burial, and date of epitaph selection, and the relative chronological distances between each of these points; nationality and religious beliefs of the dead and their next-of-kin; cause of death; and burial location. An attempt to examine whether different nationalities used or favoured different imagery, phrases, or symbolism in their epitaphs would have to account for all of those factors and find enough case studies to have a balanced sample across all of these different spectrums. Rather than do this badly, this section does not attempt to do so at all, but instead highlights examples of epitaphs commemorating identified dead from South Africa, Canada, and Australia, in order to highlight specific themes regarding how epitaphs conveyed and materialised different aspects of identity for both the living and the dead.

Significant publications on First World War epitaphs are already extant. However, they nearly all share three characteristics: most emphasise *relaying* the epitaphs and relevant biographical and contextual details, rather than examining them critically; most offer the above in potted form, rather than drawing connections or comparisons between them or extrapolating broader conclusions; and most are not transnational in scope. A significant Canadian epitaphs publication during the centenary was Eric McGeer's *Canada's Dream Shall Be of Them*; however, unlike his critical scholarship on Canada's Second World War epitaphs (*Words of Valediction and Remembrance*), *Dream* is instead a glossy coffee-table

book serving a valid but different purpose than its predecessor.<sup>153</sup> However, some of McGeer's conclusions regarding Second World War epitaphs can be confidently extrapolated to also apply to the First. In contrast to these nationally-focused publications, Sarah Wearne's work is indiscriminately transnational: tweeting the story behind a First World War epitaph for every day of the centenary, three selections of these that correspond to major battles and offensives have been published as *Epitaphs of the Great War: The Somme / Passchendaele / The Last 100 Days* respectively.<sup>154</sup> Wearne's work emphasises that the British imperial people of the First World War and its aftermath had a shared language that is increasingly lost to us today: not the literal shared language of English, but a shared set of references: musical, religious, literary. During 1918-1938 when they were being selected for inclusion in epitaphs, the next-of-kin selecting could trust that these references would be caught and understood, allowing for extensive additional context and meaning to be conveyed within the constraints of the 66-character epitaph limit. However, Wearne argues, by the time of the centenary we no longer share much of this cultural vocabulary with the people of the epitaphs, and thus read them without knowing the layers of cultural context behind them (and worse yet, do not even realise this knowledge is missing).

For more critical analysis of how epitaphs factor into the relationship between the dead and their identities, it is worthwhile to turn further afield. Helen Swift's *Representing the Dead* lays out the fundamental importance of epitaphs as, "the epitaph lies at the fulcrum of this relationship [between death and identity]... death is an acme moment in the definition of identity."<sup>155</sup> She argues for epitaphs as one of the identity-defining opportunities that death can provide; though death "threatens identity, jeopardising posthumous survival", it also

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<sup>153</sup> Eric McGeer, *Canada's Dream Shall Be of Them* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2017), and *Words of Valediction and Remembrance* (St Catharines: Vanwell, 2008).

<sup>154</sup> Sarah Wearne, *Epitaphs of the Great War: The Somme* (2016) / *Passchendaele* (2017) / *The Last 100 Days* (2018), London: Uniform Press.

<sup>155</sup> Helen J. Swift, *Representing the Dead: Epitaph Fictions in Late-Medieval France* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), 4.

“constitutes a condition for its creation as a founding moment of life definition.”<sup>156</sup> As the following paragraphs explore, the fact that that definition was in control of people other than the dead in question meant that epitaphs had potential to communicate a wide range of experiences, messages, and identities, and not just those of the dead.

First World War epitaphs of the British imperial dead fall into several broad categories. They are epitaphs that... are in another language; mention where the dead person is from; are about the people left behind; are about a cause/purpose the dead person believed in (purportedly – note that it is next-of-kin making these choices, allowing for the possible postmortem/retroactive imposition of values); note characteristics of the dead one’s personality; remark on the endurance of remembrance; are written in the first-person voice of the next-of-kin; imagine an enduring relationship between the dead one and their family; or invoke religion or religious figures. These are not mutually exclusive categories, but rather provide a guide to identifying trends and common themes.

Table 3.C. Epitaph examples

Epitaph category	Example epitaph		
	<i>Text</i>	<i>Name and Nationality</i>	<i>Cemetery</i>
in another language	“Lepaa Rauhassa / Rakastettu / Ja Kaivatu” [Finnish; “Rest in peace beloved, deeply missed”]	Andrew Myllymaki / Canadian	Albert Communal Cemetery Extension
	“Lala – gahle unta gwetu / pro aris et focus” [Zulu / Latin; “Goodnight – sleep well / for home and hearth”]	Aylmer Templer Wales / South African	Dive Copse British Cemetery, Sailly-le-Sec
mention where the dead person is from	“Dearly beloved son of Albert & Mary Mason /	Harry Mason / Canadian	Canadian Cemetery No.2, Neuville-St-Vaast

<sup>156</sup> Swift, *Representing the Dead*, 4.

	Ottawa, Canada / He died that we might live”		
	“Greater love hath no man / Roodepoort, Transvaal”	Thomas Muir MacMillan / South Africa	Metz-en-Couture Communal Cemetery British Extension
reference the people left behind	“Never from the memories of one and all / sister Emma”	W. Wesson / Canadian	Canadian Cemetery No.2, Neuville-St- Vaast
are about a cause/purpose the dead person believed in	“And there went out that day to the god of battles / the soul of a man who loved battles”	William Thomas Ramsay / Canadian	Ontario Cemetery, Sains-le-Marquion
	“For England, home and duty and the honour of his race”	Arthur Walter Lake / Canadian	Canadian Cemetery No.2, Neuville-St- Vaast
	“For the honour of South Africa”	Gert Johannes Jacobus Lubbe / South African	Roisel Communal Cemetery Extension
characteristics of the dead one’s personality	“In loving memory of our most dutiful son / RIP”	W. Higgins / Canadian	Etretat Churchyard
endurance of remembrance	“Time changes many things / but memory like the ivy clings”	S.C. Reed / Australian	Hooge Crater Cemetery
first-person voice of the next-of-kin	“My first pride / my first joy / my brave soldier boy”	H.W. Ray / Australian	Hooge Crater Cemetery
imagine an enduring relationship between the dead one and their family	“In a far country he is not dead / who in our hearts doth live”	Robert Allan Mollison / South African	Naves Communal Cemetery Extension
invoke religion or religious figures	“May God have mercy on his soul / Holy Mary pray for him”	T.W.J. Mehegan / Australian	Tyne Cot Cemetery

Epitaphs are a unique example of the expression of individual identity, because they are the result of an individual's personal – rather than professional – identity being refracted through the lens of their loved ones rather than by direct expression. The structure of IWGC sites already binds the individual dead to other members of the war dead in perpetuity, through the location of the grave or inscribed name; epitaphs, however, bind the dead in perpetuity to those who wrote their epitaphs, immortalising the latter too. This is particularly so when the epitaph directly references those left behind; this is an unusual exception to the IWGC's commemorative framework, in being civilian names inscribed on IWGC stone. Sometimes those relatives named were the ones who had paid for the epitaph; each letter in an epitaph cost 3.5 pence to engrave, and while in some cases the fees for this were waived, in many others the families were charged.<sup>157</sup> The spectrum of aspects of individual identity expressed in the epitaphs of those from the Dominions is arguably indistinguishable from those of Britain itself,<sup>158</sup> but there is certainly scope for a future project which takes an exhaustive and quantitative approach in order to determine this.<sup>159</sup> From this survey of

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<sup>157</sup> A notable exception was the epitaphs of Canadian First Nations soldiers, which were paid for by the Canadian government's Department of Indian Affairs. LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12), "21 January 1920".

<sup>158</sup> Not least because the next-of-kin choosing the epitaphs for Dominion dead were often located in Britain (see for example the addresses of the next-of-kin correspondence contained in LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 66). This serves to underscore that the conceptualisation of the British Empire using familial structure and metaphors often arose from the empire-wide dispersal of actual families, and that the pervasive 'family' metaphors of empire were often embodied in war service and bereavement. (For four of many examples of the empire as real and imagined families, see the "Mother Britain and her sons" and "Graves of a Household" poems quoted within this thesis; Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), particularly section "Imperial families divided and reconstituted" (114-121); and Laura Ishiguro's 2011 UCL PhD thesis "Relative Distances: Family and Empire between Britain, British Columbia and India, 1858-1901", which argues that Britons navigated the meanings of empire through the prism of family, using the letters of 19<sup>th</sup>-century families who were spread throughout the empire). During the interwar period, the Empire Settlement Act of 1922 also contributed to the redistribution and separation of British families throughout the empire.

<sup>159</sup> An approach following the model of Caroline Winter's work would be eminently suitable. Winter has conducted quantitative research on whether there are identifiable nationally-specific linguistic trends in words left by IWGC cemetery *visitors*; using the Tyne Cot visitor books for 2009, entries' words were analysed, coded, checked for frequency, and grouped into themes and subthemes. This research revealed, like the epitaphs themselves, a high degree of "linguistic ritual" (21) by the use of standardised phrases; it also demonstrated both national preferences for specific phrases yet also enough homogeneity to serve as evidence for a "globally shared memory" (16) of the conflict. Caroline Winter, "Ritual, remembrance and war: social memory at Tyne Cot," *Annals of Tourism Research* 54 (2015), 16-29.

inscriptions in an individual context – on headstones – we will now move to examining inscriptions in a collective context: the inscription of names on memorials.

### *Inscribing Names*

The inscribing of names has become a well-accepted hallmark of memorials to the dead and missing of war and violence, and this transcends the First World War. (For two more recent and widely-known examples, consider Maya Lin’s Vietnam War Memorial [Washington, DC] and Daniel Liebskind’s 9/11 Memorial [New York City]). In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, individual named commemoration of the dead was an opportunity almost exclusively afforded to the upper class, but an increasing shift towards individual named commemoration as a universal right reached its zenith in First World War commemoration.<sup>160</sup> However, on the First World War’s Western Front the logistics of inscribing names posed conundrums which had ramifications for the commemoration of the imperial dead. Should names be ordered alphabetically, by rank, by regiment, or some combined system thereof? Should names be collected onto one memorial, or dispersed amongst multiple ones according to imposed delineations regarding the geography and/or chronology of death? And what was the best way to deal with the practicalities of ensuring accuracy and good aesthetics when engraving names?

First, the most unusual case: the South African memorial at Delville Wood had *no* names inscribed on it. This circumvented some of the conundrums listed above, but presented additional challenges. The prominence of names in First World War commemoration at

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<sup>160</sup> For an excellent summary of mourning culture in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain and how it was changed by the First World War, see the section “Mourning Culture” in Lucie Whitmore, “‘A Matter of Individual Opinion and Feeling’: The changing culture of mourning dress in the First World War,” *Women’s History Review* 27:4 (2017), 581-582. Thomas Laqueur’s work takes a much longer view, tracing the roots of “necronominalism” – the collecting, preserving, and proclaiming the names of the dead – as far back as the 1500s: Laqueur, *Work of the Dead*, chapter “The Rise of the Names of the Dead in Modern History,” 388-412.

multiple levels and across time – local, national, international, and in both interwar and centenary memorialisation – makes the South African exemption from this particularly stark.

The South African missing are listed alongside British names on various memorials in France, rather than on their separate national monument. The most notable example of this is at Thiepval: the largest First World War memorial on the Western Front, both in terms of size (more than 45 metres high) and number commemorated (72,000+ names of the missing) is famously the memorial to the British missing of the Battle of the Somme, but as previously mentioned, actually has the names of South African dead listed on it as well.

The omission of names from the Delville Wood memorial raised an important question: is a memorial still a ‘memorial to the missing’ if it doesn’t have any names? The decision to have no names on the Delville Wood monument, and instead have them alongside British names on other memorials, was made by South African representatives rather than the IWGC.<sup>161</sup> This raised a consideration that distinguished Delville Wood from the Vimy, Villers-Bretonneux, and Neuve Chapelle memorials: it meant that now, unlike the others, it was not a memorial to the missing. The IWGC warned the Delville Wood Memorial Committee that:

it must be understood that if the names of the missing are not engraved on the Delville Wood Memorial, then that memorial ceases to fulfill, from the Commission’s point of view, the purpose of a Memorial to the Missing, and the Commission’s contribution to the cost of the Delville Wood Memorial can consequently not be made.<sup>162</sup>

Considering that parts of South Africa were fighting against the British less than three decades prior, in the Second Anglo-Boer War, this unusual decision might appear to call particular attention to the question of South African agency vis-à-vis British control over decisions concerning Dominion remembrance. However, the decision to have no names on the Delville Wood memorial, and instead have them alongside British names on other

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<sup>161</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, “16 May 1924”, “17 May 1924”.

<sup>162</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, “29 April 1924”. It is unfortunately unclear what the final definitive cost breakdown was regarding the financial contributions of these institutions to the memorial’s construction.

memorials, was made entirely by South African representatives rather than the IWGC.

Letters dated 16-17 May 1924 relay that “the Delville Wood Committee at Pretoria” handed down this verdict.<sup>163</sup> The memorial took on an explicitly broader scope: it was not a memorial just to the missing, nor just to the fallen, nor just to South Africans on the Western Front. It was designated as a memorial for all South Africans who served in all theatres of the war.<sup>164</sup>

In contrast, Vimy *did* have names: 11,168. Precise calculations were required to accurately space the names onto the memorials’ panels, and this was made infinitely more difficult by the fact that these name lists kept changing. For example, in May 1929 Percy Smith, an engraver for the Vimy memorial names, wrote to the IWGC Director of Records:

I appreciate your anxiety not to complicate what is proving to be a difficult task, but I write this to assure you that I shall be very glad to hear of any names, coming in the “M”s and onwards, which could be deleted from the lists that I have here. The names were originally planned to be as large as possible and to fill a given area. As we approach towards the middle and end of the alphabet I find that the names are, on the average, longer than those at the beginning of the alphabet, and on which the estimate was based. I begin to think it will be a very close fit to get them all in, and for this reason shall be quite glad to omit as many as possible.<sup>165</sup>

These individual names and identities were intended to become components of a very permanent fixture; Allward emphasised the fact that “once a name has been cut into these stones, which are tied into the concrete, it will be impossible to remove the name or the stone.”<sup>166</sup> However, they were remarkably unstable and shifting as the plans for the monument proceeded apace. Questionnaires were sent out to next-of-kin of soldiers to be commemorated on the memorial, and these were sometimes returned with corrections made

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<sup>163</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 2, “16 May 1924”, “17 May 1924”.

<sup>164</sup> Commonwealth War Graves Commission, “Cemetery Details: The South Africa (Delville Wood) National Memorial,” [https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/4007351/the-south-africa-\(delville-wood\)-national-memorial/](https://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/4007351/the-south-africa-(delville-wood)-national-memorial/).

<sup>165</sup> CWGC WG 219/10/1, “16 May 1929”.

<sup>166</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “11 November 1927”.

to name spellings;<sup>167</sup> and long-hidden secrets came to light when soldiers' real names were matched with the assumed names they had fought under.<sup>168</sup> Queries regarding these matters were regularly "despatched to the Canadian authorities in Ottawa" for resolving,<sup>169</sup> but in some cases the great distance between Britain and Canada altered the chain of responsibility for commemoration. This was the case in July 1929, when the IWGC wrote to an unknown contact in France asking for help with confusion over yet another aspect of individual identity:

The contractors [for inscribing the names on Vimy] see that there are certain regimental numbers over a million in the drawings, and feel that there must be a mistake somewhere. They have asked me if I can get this confirmed, that such a large number is correct. I suggest that we take as a test case Private J.A. Bell 1066094 ... are you in a position to confirm it? You will appreciate the sole reason for my writing to you is that you are near and can give me a quicker answer. The proper authorities to whom I should apply are obviously the Canadian office from whom I received the lists and instructions, but that would mean a considerable delay.<sup>170</sup>

This verification process was described in 1927 as "at best proceeding slowly", and by December of that year only the lists of A, B, and C names had been sent to Allward to proceed with arranging their layout;<sup>171</sup> a painstaking task described as "a big work both mechanically and artistically."<sup>172</sup> As with most of the conflict's memorials to the missing, the number of names decreased dramatically during the planning and construction phases, as new bodies were found, identities confirmed, and the names of those missing in Belgium were shifted to being inscribed on the Menin Gate memorial. In December 1922 the Chairman of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission wrote that Vimy would have inscribed on

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<sup>167</sup> CWGC WG 219/10/1, "6 August 1930", "24 May 1930", "30 April 1930", "19 May 1930", "14 February 1930", "9 September 1929".

<sup>168</sup> CWGC WG 219/10/1, "18 August 1930", "22 April 1930".

<sup>169</sup> CWGC WG 219/10/1, "17 March 1930".

<sup>170</sup> CWGC WG 219/10/1, "13 July 1929".

<sup>171</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), "Minutes of Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, 21 December 1927".

<sup>172</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), "Minutes of Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, 21 December 1927".

it “the names of our 20,000 missing”—<sup>173</sup> nearly double the eventual number of names that were actually on the monument by the time it was unveiled 14 years later.

The placement of names on the Vimy memorial was also in question, and the decision-making process behind this highlights the division of power between the IWGC and the Canadian government regarding memorialisation decisions overseas. The Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission reported in 1927 that the IWGC had rejected, on grounds of legibility,<sup>174</sup> the suggestions that the names of the missing be inscribed on the *floor* of the upper platform – it was deemed “imperative that they appear on upright walls or panels.”<sup>175</sup>



Image 3.24. Detail of the inscribed names on the Vimy memorial, 2016.

<sup>173</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1), “1 December 1922”.

<sup>174</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “Memorandum: Canadian Memorial, Vimy Ridge,” 8 November 1927.

<sup>175</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 17th Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, 21 December 1927”.

The elimination of the floor surface affected the inscription calculations: using only the walls (and only some of the walls, as Allward was averse to inscribing names across the ‘Great Wall’ at the front of the monument)<sup>176</sup> meant that there was 2,060 square feet of available space.<sup>177</sup> This size meant that 11,500 names could be inscribed, but not with names of units, due to lack of space.<sup>178</sup> Despite the fact that this obvious practical limitation was seemingly quite decisive, the IWGC nevertheless decided to refer this ‘decision’ about whether or not to include units to the Canadian government. The CBMC forwarded this referral with a set of considerations: “with regard to the desirability or otherwise of including the units in the particulars given, it was felt that this was governed by certain necessities. First, the space on the monument would not be sufficient to include the units.”<sup>179</sup>

However, an additional justification for the omission of units from the Vimy name inscriptions was given by the CBMC, one which foregrounded the opinions of the living relatives of the dead and their relationships to their soldiers’ identities:

...owing to the system of drafting into units in the Field and the organization of the Canadian militia, and the fact that in many cases soldiers are associated in the minds of relatives and friends with the home regiments from which they went overseas, it seems less important to include in a record of this kind the names of the service units than would otherwise be the case.<sup>180</sup>

This argument is also noteworthy for its focus on imagined rather than spatial or tangible relationships: its rationale is not based on an articulated vision of families actually visiting the memorial, but rather on the mental associations that the families had between their loved ones and this specific element of a soldier’s identity.

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<sup>176</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “10 November 1927”.

<sup>177</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “10 November 1927”.

<sup>178</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “Memorandum: Canadian Memorial, Vimy Ridge,” 8 November 1927.

<sup>179</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 17th Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, 21 December 1927”.

<sup>180</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 17th Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, 21 December 1927”.

The spatial relationship of the inscribed names with *each other* was considered to be of great aesthetic import. The horizontal layout of Vimy's names was consciously in reaction to the vertical arrangement used at Menin Gate:

[Allward and Hughes agreed that] it was very desirable to eliminate altogether the system of commemorating in columns as used at the Menin Gate. Mr. Allward produced some rubbings of panels at the Menin Gate... and explained that such a system would not at all carry out the impression which he felt was absolutely essential to maintain an appropriately harmonious feeling with his design. He proposed cutting the names in straight lines from left to right, right across the bays."<sup>181</sup>



Image 3.25. Detail of the vertical nature of the inscribed names on the Menin Gate memorial, 2017.

<sup>181</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), "Memorandum: Canadian Memorial, Vimy Ridge," 8 November 1927.

This conviction of Allward's had been borne out of opinions formed during the construction process, rather than being reflected in his original design. The design competition for Canada's memorial had not in fact stipulated that the memorial would list names; this decision was reached later. Thus, Allward felt compelled to remind the IWGC and CBMC that "when the memorial was first designed, it was not contemplated carving the names on the memorial, and consequently special arrangements for name spaces had not been part of [his] original scheme."<sup>182</sup> This is the opposite of what happened regarding Delville Wood, where the memorial was designed to include space accommodation for names, which were later omitted.

Of the memorials in question, it was Australia's at Villers-Bretonneux that underwent the most extensive fluctuation and uncertainty regarding the inscription of names: as introduced in Chapter II, the presence or absence of names on the monument was a decision in frequent flux for almost a decade. In 1922 it was suggested that if Australia was unprepared to divide its missing between multiple memorials and alongside British names, that Amiens would be the best place to commemorate them if a single 'Australian' site was needed.<sup>183</sup> However, it was acknowledged that "of all the Australian operations on the Western Front", it was Villers-Bretonneux which had "most impressed the public imagination."<sup>184</sup> The debate over dividing Australian names was still raging two years later: controversy arose during the planning for the Menin Gate memorial, when Australia threatened to withdraw permission to have Australian names on the monument.<sup>185</sup> Along with Tyne Cot, the Gate was intended to be an "Empire Memorial", with inclusions of Dominion

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<sup>182</sup> LAC RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2), "Memorandum: Canadian Memorial, Vimy Ridge," 8 November 1927.

<sup>183</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "30 August 1922".

<sup>184</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "30 August 1922".

<sup>185</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "8 May 1924".

and Indian names (divided chronologically between the two memorials).<sup>186</sup> However, Australia was determined to collect all its missing, lost in France and Belgium, by name on one memorial at Villers-Bretonneux, so its proposed solution to the Menin Gate conundrum was to have some names repeated on the two memorials.<sup>187</sup> This was ultimately rejected because it violated the IWGC's policy of having only a single site of individual named commemoration for each fallen soldier.<sup>188</sup> By 1930 it was agreed that Australia's Belgian missing would be listed on Menin Gate and Tyne Cot, leaving only its missing in France to be listed at Villers-Bretonneux; a total which, at the time, was estimated to be 18,557 names.<sup>189</sup> Exemplifying the vagaries of estimations, accuracy, and record-keeping in this postwar context, the total number of names of Australians missing in France was finally discerned to be 10,982, which were inscribed on the memorial.<sup>190</sup>

Australia's is the most explicit example of how the IWGC's policy of single-site named commemoration applied specifically and solely to their own sites, and thus had exceptions in domestic contexts. Domestic commemoration was largely separate from the IWGC. Thus, the specifications for Australia's Villers-Bretonneux memorial design competition included the note that "the names of Australians who died at the front will be twice recorded: once on or near the foreign field in which they lie, and again in their own country in the war memorial at Canberra."<sup>191</sup>

Unlike India and the Dominions examined here, New Zealand did not concentrate the material culture of its Western Front remembrance at a single site. (As mentioned in Chapter I, this fact has been the rationale for its exclusion from this thesis). Instead, New Zealand has

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<sup>186</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "29 July 1927", "17 November 1926".

<sup>187</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "3 May 1924".

<sup>188</sup> CWGC WG 219/2/1 Pt 2, "8 May 1924".

<sup>189</sup> CWGC WG 857/3/2 Pt 1, "December 1930".

<sup>190</sup> Commonwealth War Graves Commission, "Cemetery details: Villers-Bretonneux Memorial."

<sup>191</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 1, "The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia's Main Overseas Monument – Competition Opens Today".

seven memorials throughout France and Belgium, with the names of its missing distributed amongst them based on geographic proximity to the soldiers' last known location. The case for this unusual decision was neatly summarised by a letter from the IWGC Vice-Chairman to the High Commissioner for New Zealand in 1922, although it should be noted that the decision lay ultimately with New Zealand rather than the IWGC:

The Commission realise that the practical conditions which make the commemoration of the Missing in the cemeteries nearest to which they fell impossible do not apply in the case of New Zealand which had a comparatively small and compact force in the field and may consequently be able, as Great Britain and the larger dominions are not, to determine with approximate accuracy the locality where each of the Missing fell, and that New Zealand may, therefore, decide to take advantage of these more favourable circumstances and not join in the policy of centralised memorials to the Missing.<sup>192</sup>

The variations in the above examples regarding the spatial distribution of inscribed names of the missing underscores an important aspect of their significance: it is not just *what* they say, but where and in relation to what, that has the ability to affect their meaning.

### **Conclusions – Stone and Words**

The memorials and cemeteries commemorating the dead of South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia are not merely backdrops against which identity was performed; their very form constructed specific messages about various aspects of individual, collective, national, and imperial identities, and the ways in which these intersected. Their centrality to analysis of interwar commemoration and identity, which this thesis argues for, is reflected in this chapter's placement at the apex of this thesis (Chapter III of five).

This chapter has demonstrated that both the physical form of these memorials and cemeteries, and the words inscribed upon them, are significant in understanding the meanings ascribed to them and the messages they were intended to convey. Stone and words are also

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<sup>192</sup> CWGC WG 219 Pt 2, "1 February 1922".

not distinct elements to be considered in silos; their positioning here as two parts of the same chapter has been intended to highlight their interrelationship and their mutually reciprocal importance. While the extent to which these objects and their words can be considered to have *agency* is highly subjective, this chapter brings forth concrete examples that demonstrate their *ability* to convey and reinforce various elements of identity.

However, a critical feature of this chapter is its focus not just on what eventually materialised as the final forms of the IWGC memorials and cemeteries in question, but also on those proposals which never became reality. It is the decisions made that led to these stone objects, as well as the eventual objects themselves, that shed worthwhile light on the values, intentions, and priorities of the various stakeholders involved in the creation of these sites. This exhortation to examine not only what is visible at these sites, but also what has been lost or never was, highlights the theme of absence and presence which is intrinsic to this thesis.

The various national memorials of South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia, plus the Menin Gate empire memorial which unites all four nationalities, were erected between 1926-1938, overlapping – though with a different zenith – the creation of the IWGC’s thousands of cemeteries, which largely took place during the 1920s. The distinction between the national character of the memorials, and the blended and intentionally non-nationally-segregated character of the cemeteries, serve as counterpoints to elicit the similarities, differences, and relationships between these two commemorative categories.

Having addressed the roles of both landscape and memorial/cemetery itself in creating specific messages about the identities of both the living and dead, and exploring the decision-making processes behind these eventual iterations, the next chapter will build on this foundation to discuss the role of tangible and imagined connections created between these sites and distant living people – and how these connections served to reinforce and articulate messages about various aspects of identity to a wide spectrum of audiences near and far.

## Chapter IV Keeping Touch

*“we who were charged with the duty of creating this tribute to our South African dead, seized the opportunity of securing replicas...and so keeping touch with our people.”*

– Percy FitzPatrick, Chair of the South African National Memorial Committee  
Pretoria, 22 July 1929<sup>1</sup>

The previous two chapters have focused on *place* and *object*: Hallowed Ground examined the landscapes and sites of IWGC memorials and cemeteries, while Pouring Forth zoomed in to focus on the stone material culture and inscriptions of these places. There is a crucial third element to this equation that must be considered, and which is the focus of this chapter: connection, and specifically connection across distance. Due to the distance between these places and many of the people they were meaningful to, how did those people create tangible and imagined bonds with these sites across the sea?

Let us return to Canadian Prime Minister Meighen’s quote discussed in Chapter I: “across the leagues of the Atlantic the heart-strings of our Canadian nation will reach through all time to these graves in France.”<sup>2</sup> The conduits for these “heart-strings”, for both Canada and other Dominions, took predominantly three forms: material items, involvement in decision-making (or attempts thereof), and visitation.

### **Distance and Tangibility in War and Memory Scholarship**

Distance and tangibility are the two themes most integral to this chapter. How is distance managed, spanned, negated, shrunken, ignored? What role does material culture, and specifically its tactility and portability, play in these processes? This pair of themes is a subset of the wider pairing dominating this thesis: absence and presence, and all the ways this

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<sup>1</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898A, “Replica of Memorial Presented to Nation,” *Rand Daily Mail* 22 July 1929.

<sup>2</sup> CWGC Add 1/1/93, “Canada’s Heroes,” *The Daily Telegraph* 4 July 1921.

can be reversed, inverted, and reconceptualised. One of the most significant works on the relationship between absence and presence is *The Anthropology of Absence*, whose editors argue that “absence – even if absence is only perceived absence – may have just as much effect as material presence,” that the relationship between the two is a spectrum rather than a binary, and that objects serve to mediate absence, all of which this chapter supports and aims to provide further case studies for.<sup>3</sup> Distance and tangibility, as a set, also refute the idea that absence and presence are reciprocal binaries; as Fowles argues, “absences become object-like”, illustrating the deep entwining between material culture, distance and tangibility.<sup>4</sup> Distance is a form of ‘absence’ which engenders material responses (‘presence’), but distance is not defined solely as an absence; the relationship between distance and tangibility can be construed not as negative-positive (an absence inviting a presence) but as positive-positive (a *presence* inviting a presence). It is important to consider the *presence* of distance, rather than construing distance as a state defined solely by what it is not.

The themes of distance and tangibility are everywhere and nowhere in First World War memory scholarship. If fish were to write books, they would not be writing treatises on water. There are very few works explicitly or entirely on these themes, but they are, with varying degrees of implicitness, present as crucial subtext to much of the work in this field. Tangibility, ironically, is the most difficult to grasp when searching in the literature; distance has more readily been addressed, though there are far more works where its presence is implicit compared to the number that specifically address it.

However, distance has been explicitly articulated as both a concept and an agent in First World War memory by a few key works in the field. Notably, a particular facet of

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<sup>3</sup> Mikkel Bille, Frida Hastrup, and Tim Flohr Sorensen, “Introduction: An Anthropology of Absence,” in *An Anthropology of Absence: Materializations of Transcendence and Loss*, ed. Mikkel Bille, Frida Hastrup, and Tim Flohr Sorensen (London: Springer, 2010), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Severin Fowles, “People Without Things,” in *An Anthropology of Absence: Materializations of Transcendence and Loss*, ed. Mikkel Bille, Frida Hastrup, and Tim Flohr Sorensen (London: Springer, 2010), 27.

distance's role in memory – its relationship to grief – is the one that has received the most overt attention. The relationship between grief and distance in the context of the First World War has most significantly received treatment from Bart Ziino and Alice Kelly. Ziino's groundbreaking work *A Distant Grief* focuses on the role that distance played in the management and expression of Australian grief.<sup>5</sup> Kelly uses the term “grief at a distance” in her discussions of women writing about death during the First World War,<sup>6</sup> while this thesis supports many of the concepts outlined by Ziino, in the context of this thesis Kelly's term is preferred, because it allows for a more heterogeneous and multifaceted conceptualisation of how distance-affected grief is manifested. Ziino's term, in contrast, implies a homogeneity that runs counter to this thesis' tenet that there were no single, cohesive, or uniform national experiences of interwar mourning.

First World War distance as a concept and agent not just in grief but in national identity formation has been addressed, albeit all too briefly in an article, by Waterton and Dittmer, who argue that

Imagining memory as distributed through a range of bodies, objects and sites enables us to think of memory not as autochthonous to the person or collective whose memory it 'is', but (potentially) produced through a range of spaces and sites that are not normally associated with the identity that 'owns' the memory. Collective memory at the scale of the nation-state, therefore, often relies on a range of bodies, objects and sites that are beyond its borders.<sup>7</sup>

The case studies examined in this chapter encompass all three of those categories – bodies, objects, and sites – and it is not just their existence outside the borders of the relevant Dominions and India, but also the means in which cross-border connections were formed in order to solidify and perpetuate the identities that 'owned' the memories, that are examined

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<sup>5</sup> Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves, and the Great War* (Crawley: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Alice Kelly, “A Change of Heart: Representations of Death and Memorialization in First World War Writing by Women, 1914-39,” PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Emma Waterton and Jason Dittmer, “Transnational war memories in Australia's heritage field,” *Media International Australia* 158:1 (2016), 60.

here. The concept of cross-border connections also features in Sierp and Wustenberg's work on how local and transnational memory processes shape each other; particularly relevant to the relationship between fixed places and connections bridging distance is their argument that "there is a basic tension between processes of reckoning with historical events that are *rooted in particular places*... and flows that transcend borders or involve transnational institutions."<sup>8</sup>

The distance between the fighting and domestic fronts *during* the war, and the role that objects played in bridging this is examined by Saunders, who triangulates between materiality, space, and distance to argue that "space is an index of time."<sup>9</sup> This concept of space being an indicator or measure of time can be a useful lens through which understand the role of objects, particularly portable ones including the types examined in this chapter; Keeping Touch demonstrates that their ability to traverse, witness, and record both of these dimensions means that the relationship between space and time was not and is not a stable ratio or unit of measurement that can be calibrated, and instead was subject to fluctuation based on the role of objects at their intersection. Till and Kuusisto-Arponen's argument for viewing conflict landscapes as "complex space-times" liable to shift in meaning also supports this.<sup>10</sup>

A specific aspect of distance in relation to postwar commemoration is the bridging of distance via pilgrimage and tourism. This was not specific to the British *imperial* context, and in fact due to its greater proximity, pilgrimage to the Western Front battlefields from Britain itself was more extensive than pilgrimage from the Dominions and colonies.<sup>11</sup> The subject of

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<sup>8</sup> Aline Sierp and Jenny Wustenberg, "Linking the local and the transnational: rethinking memory politics in Europe," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23:3 (2015), 323.

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Saunders, "Materiality, Space and Distance in the First World War," in *Modern Conflict and the Senses*, ed. Nicholas Saunders and Paul Cornish (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Karen E. Till and Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, "Towards responsible geographies of memory: complexities of place and the ethics of remembering," *Erkundung* 69:4 (2015), 302.

<sup>11</sup> See for example caretaker reports from South Africa's Delville Wood memorial regarding visitor statistics of British versus South African visitors per month in the 1930s: NASA PWD 422 898A, e.g. "Delville Wood Memorial report for the month ending 31 July 1936".

Western Front pilgrimage is rich enough to fill several entire works (and has done so), and pilgrimages, both of the 1920s-30s and today, are heavily ritualised. Thus, this thesis aims to engage with it – with a honed focus on the specific four countries whose commemoration is examined – without straying too far away from material culture and into ritual. This thesis has argued that material culture is too often treated by current scholarship as a mere backdrop for the performance of identity through ritual, and thus will aim not to repeat this oversight. However, the existing work on battlefield pilgrimage is very strong in its analysis of the practice and ritual of pilgrimage, and this thesis intends to extend rather than refute its arguments.

The body of scholarship on this is too extensive to include here in full, but some key works must be highlighted here to help contextualise this thesis. David Lloyd's *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada, 1919–1939* remains the most definitive work, though it is now 20 years old.<sup>12</sup> It traces the role of interwar battlefield tourism in shaping collective and individual memory, but it isolates both Dominion (Australia and Canada's) narratives in a single chapter, and in focusing on travel and pilgrimage, memorials are incidental to his narrative rather than meriting analysis as historical evidence themselves. Simon Gregor's PhD thesis in progress from the University of Wolverhampton appears poised to bring a fresh perspective to this field, tracing how the focus of battlefield tourism changed from visiting specific site of death to specific site of named commemoration over the course of the interwar period.<sup>13</sup> This highlights the important factor of the material culture of battlefield commemoration,

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<sup>12</sup> Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*.

<sup>13</sup> Gregor, "Changing Spaces." This shift is not unique to the First World War; for an earlier precedent, see David Petts, "Memories in Stone: Changing strategies and contexts of remembrance in early medieval Wales," in *Archaeologies of Remembrance: Death and Memory in Past Societies*, ed. Howard Williams, (New York City: Springer Science, 2003), 193, who analyses how commemoration of the dead in early medieval Wales shifted from commemorating the body in close proximity to the burial site to being "focused on remembering the soul [and] not so intimately linked" to the site of death itself.

articulated and explored in Chapter II, that the spatial relationship between battle sites and battlefield commemoration sites was variable and shifting. Moving away from British imperial tourism and pilgrimage analysis, Lisa Budreau extensively covers *American First World War battlefield pilgrimage* in her book *Bodies of War*, including the performative aspect of these journeys and their potential public-relations clout.<sup>14</sup> It is also productive to examine anthropological works examining people's interactions with space, as these insights can in some cases be fruitfully applied to tourism and pilgrimage settings; for example, Setha Low's argument for "the person as a mobile spatial field...who creates space as a potentiality for social relations, giving it meaning, form, and ultimately... produces place and landscape."<sup>15</sup>

Work which considers pilgrimage to Gallipoli raises concepts that can be applicably transferred to Western Front battlefield tourism. For example, "Battlefield Tourism at Gallipoli" examines the role of battlefield tourism in using national heritage to buttress political legitimacy,<sup>16</sup> and "Motives for a secular pilgrimage to the Gallipoli battlefields" identifies five distinct motives for visits to these "non-substitutable" pilgrimage sites (spiritual, nationalistic, family pilgrimage, friendship and travel) and situates these in conceptual venn diagrams with both religious pilgrimage and leisure tourism.<sup>17</sup> Scates' classic *Return to Gallipoli* is also valuable, particularly for its assertion that "pilgrimage for many was impossible in literal terms but became "a journey of the heart, a journey of the mind."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Budreau, *Bodies of War*, 218; see also all of that book's Part III which concerns pilgrimage and tourism (167-241).

<sup>15</sup> Setha Low, "Spatializing Culture: An engaged anthropological approach to space and place," in *The People, Place and Space Reader*, ed. Jen Jack Giesecking, William Mangold, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, and Susan Saegert (London: Routledge, 2014), 35.

<sup>16</sup> E. Yeneroglu Kutbay and A. Aykac, "Battlefield Tourism at Gallipoli: The Revival of Collective Memory, the Construction of National Identity and the Making of a Long-distance Tourism Network," *Almatourism 7:5* (2016), 61-83.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth F. Hyde and Serhat Harman, "Motives for a secular pilgrimage to the Gallipoli battlefields," *Tourism Management* 32 (2011), 1343.

<sup>18</sup> Scates, *Return to Gallipoli*, 4.

The examination of battlefield tourism and pilgrimage raises an important question. Is there such a thing as nationally-specific distance or absence? Romain Fathi and Katrina Bormanis both argue in their theses that reactions to the distance between Dominion and Western Front manifested in ways unique to, and determined by, national characteristics.<sup>19</sup> Switzer's *Ulster, Ireland and the Somme* also supports this.<sup>20</sup> An article by Peter H. Hoffenberg, in a parallel argument, discusses a nationally-specific "special relationship" between Australians and landscapes, that always and already existed, and which Australians then transposed onto First World War battlefield landscapes in order to help them make sense of their connection to the conflict.<sup>21</sup> This thesis argues that Australia, Canada, and South Africa<sup>22</sup> shared both the common impulse of keeping touch and the imperial framework through which some of the main manifestations of this were realised, and thus the concept of a broader 'imperial grief at a distance' is a more productive category of analysis than the siloing effect of considering distance and absence through solely national lenses. However, within these shared structures and similarities there were some differences in these countries' tangible manifestations of 'keeping touch', and both the details of and motivations for these different forms will be discussed in further detail below.

Distance is a factor that also affects commemoration and memory of other conflicts. In an extension of the principle that one must be wary of, yet not disregard, the extent to which concepts from scholarship on pilgrimage to other First World War theatres is transferrable to the Western Front, it is debatable how many extrapolations for the First World War can be drawn from examinations of distance's role in other wars' memories; yet it

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<sup>19</sup> Bormanis, "Monumental Landscape"; Fathi, "Do Not Forget Australia".

<sup>20</sup> Catherine Switzer, *Ulster, Ireland and the Somme: War memorials and battlefield pilgrimages* (Dublin: The History Press, 2013).

<sup>21</sup> Peter H. Hoffenberg, "Landscape, Memory and the Australian War Experience, 1915-18," *Journal of Contemporary History* 36:1 (2001), 111.

<sup>22</sup> This was much less the case, or manifested in ways outside the scope of thesis, for India; this is discussed further below.

is certainly not so negligible that it can be responsibly ignored here. The recent *Military Pilgrimage and Battlefield Tourism: Commemorating the Dead* provides both a distinction between battlefield tourism (conducted by civilians and veterans) and military pilgrimage (conducted by military members on active service), and argues for a complicated relationship between pilgrimage, travel and tourism, where “people’s emic understandings show how people draw clear distinctions between these three categories.”<sup>23</sup> *Proximity and Distance: Vietnamese Memories of the War against the USA* utilises a twofold meaning of ‘distance’, employing it as both a spatial and temporal construct (examining both the geographical space between the USA and Vietnam, and the chronological distance between the generation that experienced the Vietnam War and their descendants).<sup>24</sup> Pickering and Keightley do not foreground that term in their work, yet their examination of Holocaust memory transmission across both “vertical and horizontal” temporal planes, particularly their argument for the role of imagination where these two planes intersect, directly engages with the effects that spatial and temporal distance can have on memory-based connections.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, *War at a distance: romanticism and the making of modern wartime* raises the important point that perceived distance *between* wars should be interrogated: that it is a “reflex of modernity” to mark a conflict as unprecedented, new, and special.<sup>26</sup> The relationship between distance and war memory is also not confined just to material culture and ritual, but is also present in literature. This is demonstrated by, among others, “Commemoration from a Distance: On Metamemorial Fiction”, which – in stark contrast to the proximal relationship between battle

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<sup>23</sup> John Eade and Mario Katić, “Commemorating the dead: military pilgrimage and battlefield tourism,” in *Military Pilgrimage and Battlefield Tourism: Commemorating the Dead*, ed. John Eade and Mario Katić (New York: Routledge, 2018), 1.

<sup>24</sup> Helle Rydstrom, “Proximity and Distance: Vietnamese Memories of the War with the USA,” *Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology* 17:1 (2007), 21-39.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley, “Communities of memory and the problem of transmission,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 16:1 (2012), 124.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Favret, *War at a distance: Romanticism and the making of modern wartime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 44.

and memorial site for this thesis' case studies – examines the *distance* between site of violence and its memorial, through the lens of American and South African fictional works.<sup>27</sup>

Ironically, even more ephemeral than distance in war memory scholarship is tangibility. First, this chapter's use of three intertwined terms must be articulated and justified; to borrow the phrasing of Berthold Molden regarding his work on collective memory, "common, though by no means unambiguous, terms are reloaded [here] with specific definitions."<sup>28</sup> Tangibility is the characteristic of being "perceptible by touch."<sup>29</sup> Tactility, its close synonym, is here understood as 'perceptible by touch' with the added connotation of "designed to be perceived by touch."<sup>30</sup> Lastly, 'sensory' more broadly refers to the characteristic of being perceived by the senses. For this chapter, the relevance of the distinction between these terms revolves around their relationship to presence: with presence and absence being a central concept interrogated in this thesis, *degrees* of presence are important. Based on the definitions given above, when arranged on a presence-absence spectrum the three terms are ordered as: tactility (most present), tangibility, and sensory (least present). You can perceive something with your senses (sensory) even if that thing does not have physical immediacy, at all or in relation to you; a thing can be defined by its having a touchable presence (tangibility) without you personally being able to touch it or without that being its central characteristic; and there are things that can be and *are* touched as a central aspect of their function and meaning (tactility). Unfortunately, hardly any works directly address the role of tangibility in First World War commemoration; its importance is evident, as this chapter also demonstrates, but in most secondary material and certainly in nearly all the primary material addressed in this thesis its importance is implied rather than articulated.

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<sup>27</sup> Shameem Black, "Commemoration from a distance: On Metamemorial Fiction," *History and Memory* 23:2 (2011), 40-65.

<sup>28</sup> Berthold Molden, "Resistant pasts versus mnemonic hegemony: On the power relations of collective memory," *Memory Studies* 9:2 (2016), 125.

<sup>29</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, "Tangible," <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tangible>.

<sup>30</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, "Tactile," <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/tactile>.

A potential exception is “Affective spaces, sensuous engagements: in quest of a synaesthetic approach to ‘dark memorials’”, which argues that perception created by physical immediacy is “a dynamic continuity between bodily/affective and intellectual cognitive faculties that are activated in the vibrant interaction with the architectural landscape of the ‘dark site.’”<sup>31</sup> Sarah de Nardi’s work, albeit on *Second World War* tangibility and memory, is also useful, particularly her argument that the “materiality and embodied dimension” of war memory can be a window to the “worlds of feeling” of those who experienced it.<sup>32</sup>

In expanding our lens more broadly, to the role of the sensory in war *or* memory – rather than war memory – key works are more evident, though still regrettably sparse. Most notable is Santanu Das’ *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature*, which argues that the texture of tactile experience at the Front shaped later representations of it.<sup>33</sup> Saunders’ work addressed above, “Materiality, space and distance”, also convincingly posits that “materiality creates and constitutes a series of overlapping social universes for individuals and societies” and that the presence of war-related objects could create sacred spaces out of secular ones during the conflict and its aftermath.<sup>34</sup> Addressing a more temporally distant conflict, *Military men of feeling: emotion, touch, and masculinity in the Crimean War* argues that emotion and “men of feeling” played a significant role in nations’ ability to reconcile their supposed ‘civilisation’ with their participation in organised conflict.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, outside of war scholarship, Shanti Sumartojo’s work on the sensory and affective roles of

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<sup>31</sup> Dorota Golańska, “Affective spaces, sensuous engagements: in quest of a synaesthetic approach to ‘dark memorials,’” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 21:8 (2015), 773.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah de Nardi, “An embodied approach to Second World War storytelling mementoes: Probing beyond the archival into the corporeality of memories of the resistance,” *Journal of Material Culture* 19:4 (2014), 444.

<sup>33</sup> Santanu Das, *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Saunders, “Materiality, Space and Distance,” 38.

<sup>35</sup> Holly Furneaux, *Military men of feeling: emotion, touch, and masculinity in the Crimean War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

memory sites posits that “their meanings are contextualised by [visitors’] own thoughts and feelings.”<sup>36</sup>

It is also important to note that archaeology – whose concepts, and practice of foregrounding material culture, is central to this thesis – is inherently tangible and sensory. For example, the most applicable concept found in *Archaeology and the senses: human experience, memory, and affect* is that “Things are extensions of the human body; they can act as sensorial prostheses. This is not meant to devalue their power and agency but rather to foreground and highlight their ability to enable the body to expand its sensorial capabilities. And since things were and are infinite, sensorial modalities are also multiple and infinite.”<sup>37</sup> John Harries’ “A stone that feels right in the hand” also highlights the power of tactility, arguing that stone “*becomes* [an] artefact that index[es] the presence of an absent other.”<sup>38</sup>

Marrying the two themes of distance and tactility is photographs, which were a transportable and therefore tactile means of creating connection between memorials or cemeteries and people. Photography has been previously addressed here in Chapter II, but its role as statistically one of the most widely-practised forms of ‘keeping touch’, and thus its prominence in this chapter, warrants a closer examination of relevant photography theory. Four of the most notable works not previously discussed are Susan Sontag’s *On Photography*, Marianne Hirsch’s *Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Postmemory*, Gillian Rose’s *Visual Methodologies*, and Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart’s *Photographs Objects Histories*. Sontag’s most prescient argument in relation to this thesis is her articulation of the relationship between recording and intervening: that these are mutually

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<sup>36</sup> Shanti Sumartojo, “Sensory Impact: Memory, Affect and Sensory Ethnography at Official Memory Sites,” in *Doing Memory Research: New Methods and Approaches*, ed. Danielle Drozdowski and Carolyn Birdsall (Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), 22.

<sup>37</sup> Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory and Affect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 113.

<sup>38</sup> John Harries, “A stone that feels right in the hand: Tactile memory, the abduction of agency and presence of the past,” *Journal of Material Culture* 22:1 (2017), 110.

exclusive aims, and yet photography can serve either.<sup>39</sup> Hirsch's work positions photographs as "instruments of ideology" and employs the concept of the 'gaze' also seen in this thesis; however, as Patrick Maynard rightly notes, she specifically employs it within the term 'familial gaze', which she then consistently avoids defining.<sup>40</sup> Rose outlines five approaches (content analysis, compositional interpretation, semiology, psychoanalysis, and discourse analysis) for understanding the construction, perception and analysis of images more broadly, rather than solely photographs, but these are certainly wholly applicable to the latter. Of particular note is her use of the term "scopic regime", in reference to the ways in which not only what is seen but how it is seen are cultural constructs.<sup>41</sup> *Photographs Objects Histories* argues that "while photographs are images, they are also objects, and this materiality is integral to their meaning and use",<sup>42</sup> and indeed it is their role as transmittable items rather than their role as images that is interrogated in this chapter. Photography also plays a role in creating meaning for landscapes, and this is constructively addressed in Smith and Lefley's *Rethinking Photography* chapter "Semiology: How images make meanings."<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, one of the most significant recent works on war and photography has only two passing mentions to grave photography; most of the book is concerned with images of conflict itself, not its aftermath, but its argument that the transmission of war-related images forms "emotional communities" can be argued to apply to the postwar photographic circumstances explored in this chapter as well.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1977).

<sup>40</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 7; see also review by Patrick Maynard in *Biography* 22:1 (1999), 119.

<sup>41</sup> Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage, 2001), 6.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (eds), *Photographs Objects Histories: on the materiality of images*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), i.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Smith and Carolyn Lefley, *Rethinking Photography: Histories, Theories and Education* (London: Routledge, 2016), "Semiology: How images make meanings," unpaginated [accessed online].

<sup>44</sup> Anders Engberg-Pederson and Kathrin Maurer, "Introduction," in *Visualizing War: Emotions, Technologies, Communities*, ed. Anders Engberg-Pederson and Kathrin Maurer (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), xx; passing references mentioned are on 5 & 10.

The presence of distance, and the absence of easily available tactile engagement, also prompted living relatives to request (or demand) input into the decision-making processes about the memorials and cemeteries in question. Unfortunately, as with distance and tactility, the role of input is both everywhere and nowhere in First World War memory literature. This thesis engages with a variety of triangulations: we have already discussed the triangulation between dead, living, and landscape, and that between landscape, monument, and material connections, but another significant one is that between dead, living, and institution, with institution (meaning, in the specific context of this thesis, most often the IWGC or government) playing a mediating, conductive, and not-neutral role. Families created relationships with these institutions (even when sometimes it was a ‘throw mud at every wall and see what sticks’ approach to having their voices heard), but these institutions also did make efforts to initiate contact too, including sending requests to next-of-kin for identifying information, headstone details, and epitaphs, as will be discussed further below.

This chapter is structured in three parts, discussing three forms of ‘keeping touch’ used to create and maintain connections between these battlefield memorial and cemetery sites and the home societies of the imperial dead they commemorated. These connections were wholly less ephemeral than might be presumed, and material culture in various forms played a critical role in creating connection; this chapter addresses in turn material culture physically transported in both directions between home and battlefield, input into decision-making processes, and visitation and its associated material and sensory outputs.

## Material Culture: battlefield → home<sup>45</sup>

### *Photographs*

The most mass-produced form of tangible connection was the photographs of graves sent to families. This operated on a request basis in the years immediately following the war, which meant that the photographs were almost unanimously of the graves' temporary wooden crosses rather than their permanent stone headstones.

Even while the war was still being fought, relatives were requesting images of their loved ones' graves. Many of the cemeteries that the dead would eventually be buried in did not exist during the war; they were collection cemeteries, ones created postwar in order to consolidate burials that had been either isolated or in smaller cemeteries. It is very indicative of this that in 1915, the War Office issued the order that grave location reports should be sent monthly, "where possible" with a cemetery name listed but more likely referenced "by the approximate measurement from some easily recognised spot... with a view to identification of the site in future."<sup>46</sup>

The IWGC never provided a photographic service themselves, as "no provision was made for this in the Commission's Charter, neither is there a special fund available for such a purpose."<sup>47</sup> Thus it fell to an assortment of grave photography schemes (particularly for Canada and Australia) and private contractors to fulfill the outpouring of grave photograph requests from throughout the British empire.<sup>48</sup> Around 1938, the Commission released a list

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<sup>45</sup> A type of First World War material culture transmitted between battlefield and home front which is absent from this thesis is war trophies, often captured weapons and artillery, many of which were subsequently used to create memorials throughout the British Empire. The reason for this is twofold; first, it strays too far from this thesis' focus on material culture relating to the dead, and second, it has already been extensively covered by William M. Taylor, in his article "War remains: contributions of the Imperial War Graves Commission and the Australian War Records Section to material and national cultures of conflict and commemoration," *National Identities* 17:2 (2015), 217-240, particularly the section "Collecting trophies and making history," 228-234.

<sup>46</sup> AWM 25 135/20, "15 September 1915".

<sup>47</sup> AWM 93 17/1/117, "13 September 1938".

<sup>48</sup> For a comprehensive biography of Ivan Bawtree, who worked as a war graves photographer, including an extensive visual record of his work, see Jeremy Gordon-Smith, *Photographing the Fallen: A War Graves Photographer on the Western Front 1914-1919* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2017).

of trusted vendors who they had licensed for both grave photographs and wreaths to lay at graves, due to complaints over the poor quality of many of those procured,<sup>49</sup> however, as the following pages detail, throughout the earlier part of the interwar period arrangements were somewhat more ad hoc.

In the Canadian case, grave photographs were generally sent in blue paper holders, which listed particulars on the left side with the facing page having slots to secure the photo's four corners. The particulars began with the heading, "Overseas Military Forces of Canada", followed by the individual's service number, name, and unit. Date of death was then written in under the subtitle "Gave his life for his country", followed by "and is buried at" with cemetery name and grave section, row, and plot numbers.<sup>50</sup>

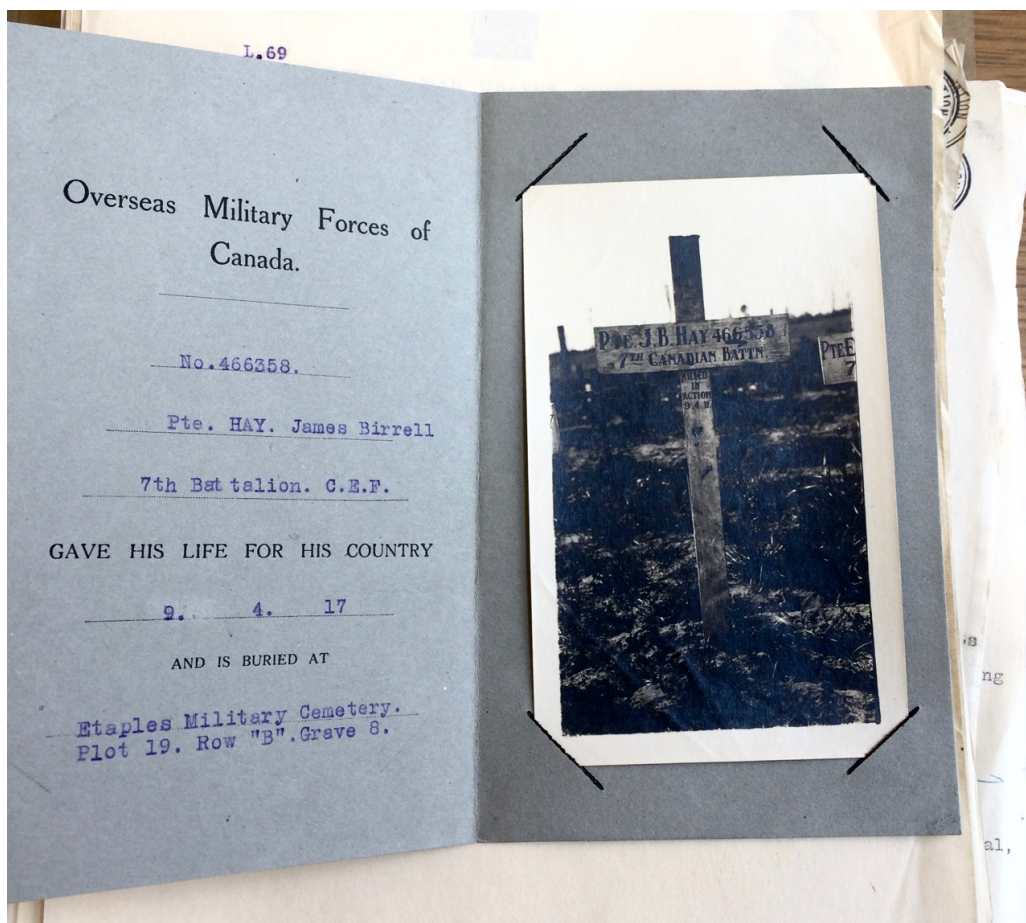


Image 4.1. Grave photograph for Pte James Birrell Hay.

© Government of Canada. Reproduced with the permission of Library and Archives Canada (2019).  
Source: Library and Archives Canada/RG 25 A-2, Vol. 343, War Graves Special 67

<sup>49</sup> AWM 93 17/1/117, "List of firms to whom wreath and photographic permits have been issued".

<sup>50</sup> For example, LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 67, "Pte HAY, James Birrell".

In 1922 the grave photography scheme for the Canadians was running into difficulties: the photographer hired by the High Commissioner for Canada was having trouble locating not just certain Canadian graves but, in some cases, entire cemeteries, which were included in official cemetery lists but seemed not to exist in reality.<sup>51</sup> For example, of “Souchez Canadian Cemetery”, he wrote “this cemetery does not exist...I spent the whole of one day looking for it on Vimy Ridge at the map reference given.”<sup>52</sup> This connects to several key themes of this thesis: the fluidity and dynamic nature of Western Front commemoration (these places were not static); the vagaries of interwar recordkeeping precision; and the role of landscape. It also presents a paradox: given the nearly universal importance accredited to these sites, how could entire cemeteries be *lost*? In the case of Souchez, there are two likely outcomes. No IWGC site named ‘Souchez Canadian Cemetery’ exists today, and it is relatively safe to assume that this was also the case in 1922. It is possible that that cemetery was a small cemetery that had been created during the war, but then was emptied by having all of its burials transferred into a larger collection cemetery; it is also possible that the cemetery existed under a different name. ‘Souchez’ is a battlefield village in France, which is home to several IWGC cemeteries that have large proportions of Canadian burials, including Cabaret Rouge and Givenchy-en-Gohelle.

Finding and photographing these graves was a mammoth undertaking, though exactly how mammoth was in seemingly constant flux – even to the people carrying it out. Photographs were not automatically taken of every Canadian grave; families had to submit an application in order to receive a photograph, but these requests numbered in the thousands. However, they were being received and completed in 1921-1922, a time of flux regarding Canadian presence of the Western Front; this meant that applications were being variously

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<sup>51</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (43), “9 June 1922”, “22 May 1922”.

<sup>52</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (43), “22 May 1922”.

received by the Office of the High Commissioner for Canada in London, the Canadian Defense Department, the specific ‘Canadian Detachment’ of the IWGC (which was later disbanded), and the IWGC itself. In September 1921, according to the Canadian Deputy Minister of Defence there were still 3,700 of these applications that needed to be fulfilled;<sup>53</sup> a surprising number, considering that two months earlier, the contracted photographer completing the requests, Harry Kemp, informed the High Commissioner of Canada that there were only 400 left to be completed.<sup>54</sup> Even more intriguingly, two months before *that* estimate, in May 1921, the Office of the High Commissioner stated that “the number of requests for photographs remaining to be dealt with was in error, as after a careful investigation it had been found that the number not dealt with was 1321, as against 8-10,000, as originally mentioned.”<sup>55</sup>

These Canadian photograph requests were originally being completed by the Imperial Photographic Section, but this unit was disbanded in June 1921 before completing its work; this led to the contract hiring of the photographer Kemp.<sup>56</sup> Before their disbanding they had been working in partnership with the Director of Graves Registration and Enquiries, and had been able to complete photographs at a speed of 400 per month.<sup>57</sup> The impact that these photographs were having in Canada was noted by one of the Photographic Section staff in a letter to the High Commissioner, when making the case for why the Section’s work should continue: “from a propaganda point of view it must show that the people in Canada are very keen over these photographs as further requests have been following up to a great extent these last 6 months.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “3 Sept 1921”.

<sup>54</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “11 July 1921”.

<sup>55</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “5 May 1921”.

<sup>56</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “Photographs of Canadian Graves in France and Flanders,” 15 April 1921.

<sup>57</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “2 April 1921”.

<sup>58</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44), “2 April 1921”.

Unlike Canada, South Africa did not have an official scheme for grave photography in place, which opened the door to enterprising freelancers. In November 1922, the High Commissioner of South Africa received a letter from a British veteran living in Pont-du-Guy, France, offering to take three photographs for ten shillings.<sup>59</sup> He had already provided such services for other relatives of the fallen, and was open to both individual requests and taking large numbers of photographs on account, should a “scheme [be] put forward by a governing body.”<sup>60</sup> He argued that if the Commissioner would forward this offer to “the residents in South Africa”, “a large number of people would avail themselves of the opportunity of securing genuine photographs of the graves of those dear to them.”<sup>61</sup>

Due to the length of time it took for the IWGC cemeteries to be completed and all the headstones to be put up, the grave photography scheme was enacted while graves were still covered by their temporary wooden crosses. For some relatives this was not enough: Miss E. Court of Regina in 1921 wanted photos of her relative’s both temporary and permanent grave markers, but the Canadian Department of Militia and Defense had to inform her that the grave photography program would not still be running by the time the headstones were in place.<sup>62</sup> The length of cemetery creation time also meant that for some of the dead, they were not in their final resting place yet when their relatives first submitted a grave photograph request. For example, H.J. Woolway, who served in the Canadian infantry, died in 1916, but in January 1920 his body was either discovered unburied or was purposefully exhumed from a small cemetery, and reburied in the concentration cemetery of Zantvoorde.<sup>63</sup> His mother first requested a grave photograph in 1916; receiving no response, she made several

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<sup>59</sup> NASA GG 875 27/502, “18 November 1922”.

<sup>60</sup> NASA GG 875 27/502, “18 November 1922”.

<sup>61</sup> NASA GG 875 27/502, “18 November 1922”.

<sup>62</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 Folder W 18/26 (43), “17 December 1921”.

<sup>63</sup> CWGC Find War Dead database, “HJ Woolway.” <https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/160643/woolway>.

subsequent applications until at least June 1921.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately there is no record of whether she ever received a photograph.

Grateful letters from the recipients of these photos demonstrate the value they held for bereaved families. J.C. Beamish, widow of a South African soldier, wrote in 1924 to the South African Agency of the IWGC expressing her gratitude for the “kindness [she] had received in connection with this matter.”<sup>65</sup>

This demand for photographs was a twofold proxy system for actual visitation: both visual and tactile. Photographs are a way of seeing, but a substitutional, restricted, and facilitated form of seeing.<sup>66</sup> Can a grave be considered to have been ‘seen’ via a photograph, or is seeing restricted to in-person presence? Photographs were also a proxy for visitation in terms of proxy tangibility: a photograph is something to hold and touch in lieu of the headstone they depicted. Photographs thus occupied a specific place on the spectrum between transportability and tactile immediacy, two poles which in this context were frequently at cross-purposes.

### *Replicas*

Arguably the most unusual manifestations of the various attempts to resolve the incompatibility between these poles were the replica Delville Wood memorials sent to South Africa. As discussed in the previous chapters, the site of South Africa’s national war memorial was at Delville Wood, in France, and the memorial was one of the earliest major monuments to be erected on the Western Front, in 1926. However, this still left South Africa

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<sup>64</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 66, “15 June 1921”.

<sup>65</sup> NASA PWD 1248 15/3294, “12 ? 1924”.

<sup>66</sup> See for example Judith Binney and Gillian Chaplin, “Taking the Photographs Home: the recovery of a Maori history,” in *Museums and Source Communities*, ed. Laura Peers and Alison K. Brown (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), 100-110, particularly their assertion that photographs “exist as a bond between the living and the dead” (110), and that the act of bringing photographs of the deceased to their living relatives functioned “as if we were bringing the ancestors, the *tipuna*, to visit” (100).

itself bereft of a major memorial to its First World War dead, and it was considered unacceptable that South Africans would not have something closer to home that they could connect with in lieu. The knowledge of *place* and *object* was not enough:

The spirit of the dead whom we commemorated in the Memorial has inspired all. From the first there has been the feeling that, however appropriate it may be to have our great Memorial in France, however honoured the position among the heroes of the world, however sanctified and hallowed for all time is the ‘sacred way’, thousands of South Africans are denied sight of it because the pilgrimage is beyond their resources, beyond their hopes. So we who were charged with the duty of creating this tribute to our South African dead, seized the opportunity of securing replicas of the touching and inspired work of Mr. Turner, the sculptor of the Delville Wood Memorial, with a view to their erection [in Pretoria] and in Cape Town, and so keeping touch with our people.<sup>67</sup>

This concept of “keeping touch with our people” is striking, and has given this chapter its name.<sup>68</sup> Its beauty lies in the fact that it contains both meanings, both refractions of the connection between the living and their faraway dead: by bringing the replicas home to South Africa, is it the dead who are now able to ‘keep touch’ with their people, the living left behind in South Africa? Or is it the living who the memorial allows to keep touch with their ‘people’, their dead across the sea?

The *Cape Times* explained that the South African National Memorial Committee had offered these replicas to the Union Government for the twofold benefit of the South African public:

as the great majority of South Africans will have no opportunity of visiting Delville Wood, the gift would allow an opportunity for those deeply interested to realise both the *appearance* and *meaning* of the Memorial to our honoured dead who fell in all fields of the World War.<sup>69</sup> [emphases added]

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<sup>67</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898A, “Replica of Memorial Presented to Nation,” *Rand Daily Mail* 22 July 1929.

<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that Percy Fitzpatrick, who uttered the quoted words, was also responsible for introducing another form of ‘keeping touch’ across distance, this time intangibly: the two-minute silence, which originated in wartime Cape Town after FitzPatrick proposed its wider adoption in a memo to the War Cabinet, was adopted across the empire. (See Gregory, *The Silence of Memory*, 8-11). FitzPatrick’s initial iteration of the concept was a daily “Noon Pause” across South Africa instituted in July 1916; see Nasson, “Delville Wood and South African Great War Commemoration,” 66.

<sup>69</sup> NASA GG 1169 27/607, “In honour of the dead,” *Cape Times* 23 February 1929.

The original idea for the replicas was from the memorial’s architect, Herbert Baker, who explicitly conceived of it as a means “to create a link between the memorial in France and in South Africa.”<sup>70</sup>



Image 4.2. Delville Wood memorial replica overlooking Pretoria, South Africa, 2017.

These “very striking and imposing” replicas, which, like the original, had figures larger than lifesize,<sup>71</sup> were erected in Pretoria and Cape Town, in 1929 and 1930 respectively. They are not true replicas of the entire Delville Wood memorial; rather, they are replicas of sculptor Alfred Turner’s Castor and Pollux statue that crowns the monument, and the replicas are mounted on similar arches to the original. The team behind the original memorial in France (both Turner and Baker, the architect) were involved with the replicas scheme, with Turner recreating his sculpture and Baker designing the arches it would be mounted on and

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<sup>70</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 2, “11 October 1926”.

<sup>71</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, “28 April 1927”.

how to situate and integrate it within the landscape of each city.<sup>72</sup> Both replicas were paid for by a combination of government and National South African (Delville Wood) Memorial Committee funds: £7,500 and £2,500 respectively for Cape Town's, and at Pretoria, £2,500 from each plus £1,000 from the Pretoria Municipality.<sup>73</sup>

An eyewitness report for *The Cape Argus* in 1928, on seeing the replicas at a casting works facility in England before they were shipped to South Africa, waxed lyrical about the memorial's comparative merits and the replicas' upcoming place in South African society:

Mr. Turner's sculptured symbol of unity is bound to become at least as well known in South Africa as Watt's "Physical Energy". Most war memorials are so ugly that the best thing that one can do is to try and forget that they exist. Mr. Turner's group does not deserve, and will certainly not suffer, such consignment to oblivion. It is simple and dignified and will take an honoured place among the very few memorials in South Africa that are worth looking at and worth remembering.<sup>74</sup>

In both Pretoria and Cape Town substantial consideration and debate arose concerning the erection and location of this "moving work of art which grips the imagination."<sup>75</sup> As the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee argued to the South African president, "the whole Memorial will be so striking that the choice of a suitable site and background will be a very important consideration."<sup>76</sup>

In Pretoria the choice of location was simple: outside the Union Buildings, on a bluff overlooking the city. The difference in type of site selected for the two replicas was recognised to have an effect: most notably that unlike Pretoria's, Cape Town's would not be seen from a distance.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> However, Baker's design was actually executed by Mr. Cleland, A.R.I.B.A, Chief Government Architect; see NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "extracts from correspondence between Sir Herbert Baker and Mr. O.W. Staten, Secretary for Public Works".

<sup>73</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "2 June 1928".

<sup>74</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "Another War Memorial For Cape Town," *The Cape Argus* 17 April 1928.

<sup>75</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "extracts from correspondence between Sir Herbert Baker and Mr. O.W. Staten, Secretary for Public Works".

<sup>76</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "28 April 1927".

<sup>77</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "undated letter from Herbert Baker, likely March 1928". Baker had also mentioned this a few months previous; see NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "4 January 1928".

In Cape Town's case, while location discussions were in progress another question arose: a proposal was made to dispose of the city's Boer War memorial. The Town Clerk wrote to the Secretary of Public Works that "it becomes clear, as the traffic problem develops in Cape Town, that one or more monuments will have to be removed, e.g. the South African War Memorial."<sup>78</sup> The timing of this is notable. Was there not room for two major war memorials, either spatially or conceptually, in Cape Town? To what extent was this tangibly representative of the displacement of Boer War memory by the First World War in public imagination?

Baker was corresponding with Cape Town's Secretary of Public Works regarding the replica's location, in search of a "worthy site"<sup>79</sup> for the memorial: after his first choice site of de Waal Drive was rejected,<sup>80</sup> his next preference was for a design that would be "linked up with the heart of Cape Town" and extremely prominent, at the centre of Government Avenue near the Art Gallery.<sup>81</sup> This would require re-landscaping to widen out the existing oak trees, but then "looking both up and down, this work of art marking such a great event in history would add interest and distinction to the avenue."<sup>82</sup> This plan would disrupt the avenue, which was "much too long for its breadth" anyways,<sup>83</sup> by widening its centre for the memorial; a disruption both spatially and practically, which Baker invoked Rudyard Kipling in order to dismiss:

I designed a memorial cross for a church in Sussex, on the Committee of which Rudyard Kipling was an active member. There was only one good place for the memorial and that was on the centre of the narrow straight path which lead [sic] from the gate to the church porch. Most of the committee objected to this site because it would obstruct their walk to the church but Kipling's reply which settled the matter, was that nothing could be better for the people than to have to go a little out of their

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<sup>78</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 2, "19 July 1928".

<sup>79</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "11 January 1928".

<sup>80</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "2 June 1928".

<sup>81</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "11 January 1928".

<sup>82</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "11 January 1928".

<sup>83</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "1 March 1928".

way every time they went to church as that would be the best reminder to them of the sacrifices of the War. I hope the citizens of Cape Town will feel like this.<sup>84</sup>

The citizens of Cape Town did *not* feel like that, at least at first. The Cape Town *Star* reported that the secretary of the National Association for the Preservation of Historic Objects and of the Historic Monuments Commission spoke for both associations in opposing it, on the grounds that

as a citizen of Cape Town... it would be a pity to break into the continuity of the Avenue by placing a war memorial in its centre. Sentiment has a very strong hold on the public. The Avenue has been the pathway of Cape Town for many generations, and I feel sure that if people realized what was being done they would raise an objection.<sup>85</sup>

This concept of the memorial interrupting the ordinary underscores the crucial function which the replicas could play that the original could not: to serve as disruptive, tangible reminders for the South African public. In South Africa, the replicas would be a pricking of disturbance to the bubble of everyday life and amidst everyday space: whereas in France, the memorial is part of a wider two-tiered landscape of remembrance, with both the combined memorial/cemetery of Delville Wood, and even more broadly the postwar Western Front, conceived as hallowed ground. At those places, the memorial is not the agent that shifts the visitor; entering the site does that. Whereas the replicas are dots within cityscape sites, and thus it is they themselves that first jolt the visitor out of the everyday.

Notably, opposition to the Cape Town replica was in other cases framed as cleaving along sociolinguistic lines, with the city's Afrikaner population rejecting the memorial.<sup>86</sup> F.C.

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<sup>84</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, "1 March 1928".

<sup>85</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 2, "Delville Wood Memorial: Cape Town objection to memorial site," *Star* 1 March 1928.

<sup>86</sup> Interwar South Africa experienced various societal divisions, with the Afrikaner / British divide continuing to be one of the strongest. For an overview of the political context of this divide during the decades the Delville Wood memorial and its replicas were being constructed and erected, see William Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), particularly 74-83 and 109-116; see also Isabel Hofmeyr, "Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924," in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, ed. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Routledge, 1987), 95-123. For an overview of South African interwar political divides more broadly and their intersections with race, see Barbara Bush, *Imperialism, Race and Resistance: Africa and Britain, 1919-1945* (London: Routledge, 1999), chapter "'Fighting for the underdog': British liberals and the South African 'native

Kothe wrote to South Africa's Governor General that "there is very strong opposition to the proposal among the Afrikaner people", without stating a reason.<sup>87</sup> He praises the Governor General's "chivalrous impartiality" heretofore on "South African national questions", and therefore concludes that either the newspaper in which he read that the Governor General approved the scheme was inaccurate, or the Governor General "is not aware of the patriotic opposition to the scheme."<sup>88</sup> The fact that sentiment both for and against the replicas could be couched in language of patriotism is indicative of the instability and divisive nature of South African 'national' identity at the time.

An anonymous editorial in the Afrikaner newspaper *Die Burger* echoed these arguments and themes:

Attack upon attack has made been on this one quiet place in the heart of Cape Town... the latest attack was not only to improve the Avenue. It was just a frontal attack to destroy the Oak Avenue by erecting in the centre thereof a replica of the war monument at Delville Wood. An exceptional and unsurpassable monument which the whole of South Africa loves must be destroyed, so that an imitation of a war monument could be put in the place thereof... it is now time that the Avenue was left at rest. It is to be hoped that in the future [attacks like] this will no longer be the case, and that everyone will realise that the old Oak Avenue is an historical monument of which the Afrikaner is proud, one which must remain intact.<sup>89</sup>

Here too we see the concept discussed in Chapter II: landscapes (in this case the oak avenue) can be monuments, and sometimes they are the most important ones. The writer's choice of language for his derision is also of significance: "an *imitation* of a war monument." What is the difference between 'imitation' and 'replica', and would an 'original' monument have fared any better in the hearts of the opposing Afrikaners?

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question" (181-201). For a discussion of the role science and technology was utilised for in attempts to consolidate conceptions of South Africa as a nation-state, see Saul Dubow, *A Commonwealth of Knowledge: Science, Sensibility, and White South Africa 1820-2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 203-234.

<sup>87</sup> NASA GG 1169 27/607, "15 February 1929".

<sup>88</sup> NASA GG 1169 27/607, "15 February 1929".

<sup>89</sup> NASA GG 1169 27/607, "Free translation from *Die Burger* of 25 February 1929: 'A further attack warded off'".

The gravity given to the original Delville Wood memorial by its location – next to a cemetery, on a site full of as-yet-undiscovered further dead, and on ground that was intensely fought over – was partially stripped by its removal from this context, and replaced with connotations more focused on civic pride: “[the memorial] will be a feature of Cape Town second to none in importance and interest and a source of pride in the city – something around which the affections of the citizens may well centre.”<sup>90</sup>

The Cape Town Secretary for Public Works considered it crucial to report that the replicas project was essentially devoid of individual agenda or gain, saying

I want to stress once more that throughout this whole business there has been an entire absence of personal motive or petty consideration. It is not a single idea scheme and it has only been feasible because everybody has thought only of the big thing. It is nobody’s stunt and nobody wants any personal kudos out of it.<sup>91</sup>

No memorial is entirely devoid of personal motive. The personal motives of those involved with the replicas scheme are unfortunately beyond the reach of the capabilities of this thesis and its archival material,<sup>92</sup> but when considering these replica memorials – even if the exact motives are uncertain – it is critical to acknowledge that personal motives were also a factor, and thus have also added layers of meaning to these monuments.

Personal motive is not the only thing no memorial is devoid of; no memorial is devoid of responsibility, either. At the unveiling ceremony of Pretoria’s replica, the memorial was used to endow responsibility upon Pretoria’s citizens, using the argument that distance engenders ignorance and they are no longer eligible for that excuse:

To you, the people of Pretoria, there is given a trust. Many will come here and will see this monument, many who have had no opportunity to know the far-away scenes of battle or to understand the services rendered and sacrifices made by those who fell. You will see to it that they know the meaning of the memorial.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, “2 June 1928”.

<sup>91</sup> NASA PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1, “extracts from correspondence between Sir Herbert Baker and Mr. O.W. Staten, Secretary for Public Works”.

<sup>92</sup> Though their politics, in many cases, can be deduced; however, the personal and political intersect to such an extent that it would be an overreach to presume full understanding of their motives here.

<sup>93</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 1, “Delville Memorial at Pretoria: Bronze unveiled yesterday; Sir P. Fitzpatrick’s speech; Completion of ten years’ task,” *Star* 22 July 1929.



Image 4.3. Newspaper clipping of the Delville Wood memorial replica unveiling in Pretoria. NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 1, "Delville Memorial at Pretoria: Bronze unveiled yesterday; Sir P. Fitzpatrick's speech; Completion of ten years' task," *Star* 22 July 1929.

In Chapter II it was discussed how the presence of memorials can cast meaning over the surrounding landscape, like a blanket settling over the earth. The above quote from Pretoria's replica unveiling transposes this concept onto people: that the physical presence of a memorial can cast *responsibility* over those in proximity to it.

### *Wooden crosses*

Shipping entire memorial replicas was an unusual iteration of the transfer of material memory between battlefield and domestic spaces of commemoration. Much more feasible, and conducted on a more mass scale, was shipping home to the bereaved the temporary wooden crosses that had marked IWGC graves, once they were replaced with permanent headstones.

This cross return scheme proved a point of contention – and authority – between the IWGC and the Dominion governments. In 1920 the Commission had publicly announced that relatives might request the wooden crosses of their loved ones, despite the fact that the governments of Australia and Canada (and New Zealand) were explicitly against this plan and subsequently tried to discourage requests.<sup>94</sup> By September 1920 they had received 129 requests for returned wooden crosses from Canadian relatives; 1,132 from Australians; 57 from South Africans; and 76 from New Zealanders.<sup>95</sup> For unclear reasons, this was not permitted in Newfoundland: the Governor in Council for Newfoundland decreed in 1920 that wooden crosses could not be returned to Newfoundland families, but that the metal plates on them (listing name, number, date of death) should be stripped from them and *those* could be mailed to the families.<sup>96</sup>

The length of time involved in constructing the IWGC cemeteries and erecting permanent headstones posed an additional conundrum for the return of wooden crosses: what should be done if the wooden cross had to be replaced with another temporary wooden cross due to degradation, before it could be replaced with a stone marker? This was discussed by Commissioners in December 1920, who had to decide “whether the original cross should be

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<sup>94</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Wooden Crosses, Soldiers’ Graves”, “Wooden Crosses: Next of Kin May Have Them By Making Application,” *Hamilton Herald* 1 June 1920; LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>95</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920,” “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>96</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Covering Letters,” “2 March 1920”.

returned to the relative or the new cross although it might only have been on the grave a short time.”<sup>97</sup> It was warned that “there would be difficulties in the Dominions”, and Australia and Canada in particular were listed as countries to consider logistically when deciding.<sup>98</sup> The IWGC Vice Chairman argued that they could tell the families that the original crosses had gotten into such bad condition that they could not be returned, but another Commissioner refuted that, with the point that “a relative who had been to France and had actually seen his cross in position could hardly be told that it had fallen to pieces.”<sup>99</sup>

The lifespan of the wooden crosses was calculated to be approximately five years,<sup>100</sup> so by 1920 it was starting to be necessary to replace some crosses, since most had been erected during the war. The fact that the Commission thought “the relatives would prefer to have the original [cross] rather than a substitute”<sup>101</sup> raises questions regarding how objects are imbued with meaning.<sup>102</sup> In this scenario, the families are faced with two wooden crosses, identical except for weathering; one which has been on the grave site since it was created, and one which has newly replaced it. They are of the same form and have the same words written on them; so why does the former hold more emotional weight?<sup>103</sup> We can deduce that it is the original cross’ *time* spent in the presence of the grave site that is the crucial difference. This reveals another iteration of the reciprocal imbuing of meaning occurring

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<sup>97</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “Minutes of the Proceedings of the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 December 1920”.

<sup>98</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “Minutes of the Proceedings of the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 December 1920”.

<sup>99</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “Minutes of the Proceedings of the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 December 1920”.

<sup>100</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “10 December 1920 memo ‘Return of Wooden Crosses to Next of Kin’”.

<sup>101</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “10 December 1920 memo ‘Return of Wooden Crosses to Next of Kin’”.

<sup>102</sup> If only part of the cross was being substituted, this would be a perfect example of the Ship of Theseus philosophy problem, which questions at what point an object’s identity changes if it slowly has all of its constituent components replaced.

<sup>103</sup> For an excellent introduction to how objects’ ‘authenticity’ is determined and how this can vary by society, see Jeanette Atkinson, *Education, Values and Ethics in International Heritage: Learning to Respect* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 87-91.

between site and object that has been argued as a significant concept in the previous two chapters.

In light of the race against time this five-year cross lifespan created, the Commission ultimately decided to adopt its Director of Works' proposal that when next-of-kin applied for cross return, they should be asked whether they were comfortable receiving the original immediately if that meant then erecting a temporary one before the headstone could replace it. By December 1920 more than 11,000 cross return requests had been received from Britain and the Dominions,<sup>104</sup> and so it was crucial to decide upon the simplest, most universally satisfactory manner in which to proceed.

Among these 11,000 requests were some that had to be refused. This raises the critical point that the connection between the living and their dead across distance cannot be simply conceptualised as a straight line from one to the other; rather, in many cases these connections were multi-nodal. Cross return requests had to be refused when the same cross was requested by more than one next-of-kin. This was a different historical time than that in which a single object (or body) could become multiple relics with wide geographic dispersal (as in, for example, medieval European religious contexts), either through the creation of dishonest replicas or breaking up the original; that would not pass muster in the 1920s, leaving the IWGC the conundrum of having single objects that could not be broken apart yet were the subject of multiple desires. The solution, resolved in May 1920, was that if competing return claims were submitted, neither would be acquiesced to, unless the family members in question could “come to some arrangement between themselves.”<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “10 December 1920 memo ‘Return of Wooden Crosses to Next of Kin’”. For an excellent mapping and surveying project of wooden crosses returned to the UK (and a handful to other countries), see the “Returned from the Front” project, supported by the University of Kent and “Gateways to the First World War” centre, <http://thereturned.co.uk/the-grave-markers/>.

<sup>105</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14), “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1920”.

Also facing similar truncated lifespans due to weathering were wooden crosses that had been erected either to units or groups, or over graves of unknown soldiers. In these cases, there was no specific family with the right to claim them. For Australian cases of this, several of these crosses were sent to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, who stored them for years and then in many cases forwarded them on to various schools and chapels throughout the country. For example, in 1937 the Director of the Australian War Memorial wrote to the headmaster of the Church of England Grammar School in Mowbray Heights, Tasmania, saying

I have been requested to offer you a memorial cross to be placed in the school chapel. The cross was erected during the War in memory of Australians who fell during the fighting at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm in 1916... the cross is about four feet six inches in height and two feet nine inches in width.<sup>106</sup>

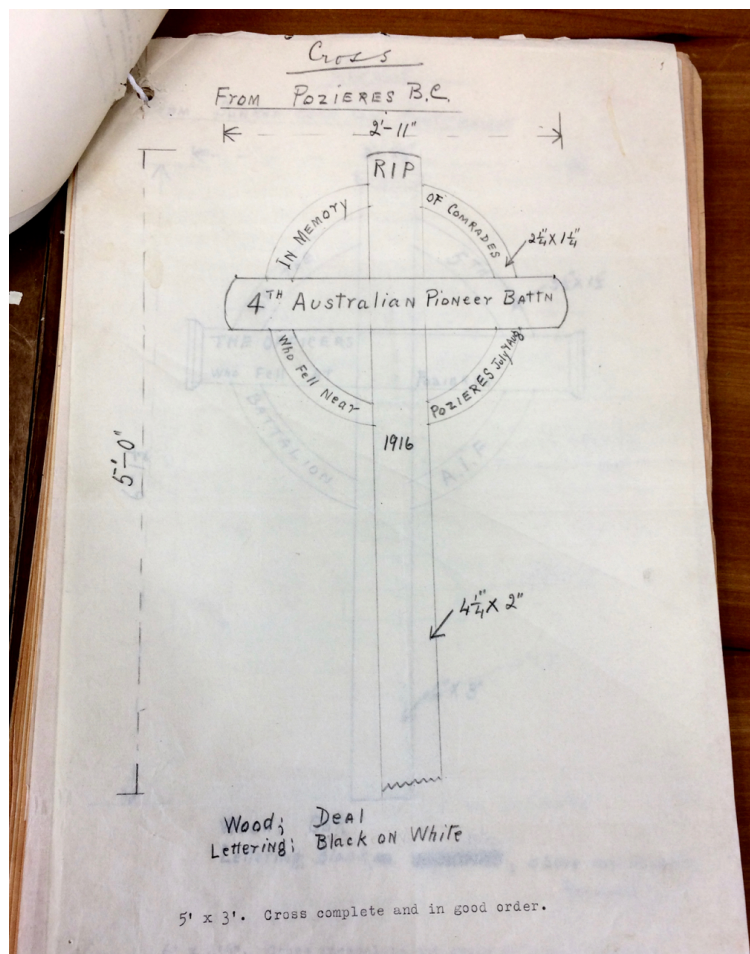


Image 4.4. Sketch of the wooden cross being offered to the school in Mowbray Heights described above. AWM 3 1 5 748/001/007, “Cross from Pozieres”.

<sup>106</sup> AWM 3 1 5 748/001/007, “12 August 1937”.

Of course, the number of wooden crosses that were requested for return by either families or organisations paled in comparison to the number of those that did not. The question of how to properly dispose of the remainder connects to themes discussed in Chapter II, regarding substitutive presence and burying things other than bodies. The IWGC had decided in previous meetings in 1919-20 that wooden crosses with no family who wanted them should be buried – and that there were “sentimental reasons” against burning them.<sup>107</sup> However, this proved impractical due to the labour and space required and the sheer number of crosses involved, and so in 1920 the IWGC passed a decision to burn them after all.<sup>108</sup> This also occurred at domestic rather than battlefield IWGC sites: regarding the care of First World War soldiers’ graves in South Africa (those who had died there but still fell within the ‘war grave’ definition), in Pretoria at least a similar burning practice was followed: “when permanent granite headstones were erected over the War graves the iron crosses were broken up and burned so that no parts could be taken as souvenirs or misappropriated for sacrilegious purposes.”<sup>109</sup>

A third option was available which neither repatriated nor destroyed the crosses. In spring 1931, a ceremony was held in which some of the wooden crosses from the graves of unidentified soldiers were physically handed to IWGC Commissioners for later installation at Toc H (Talbot House), a First World War soldiers’ recreation centre in Poperinge, Belgium. Despite the unidentified nature of the dead in question, the ceremony was still highly focused on the individual: it featured IWGC gardeners being called forth by name, and each

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<sup>107</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>108</sup> LAC RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”.

<sup>109</sup> NASA PWD 1248 15/3294, “Military Crosses”, 21 October 1927 memo from S.A. Agency Imperial War Graves Commission”.

relinquishing hold of a particular wooden cross that had marked a grave that he had been personally responsible for.<sup>110</sup>

### **Material Culture: home → battlefield**

The concept of connection through tangible transmission had iterations in both directions of transfer. Through the examples of photographs, replicas, and crosses above, we have seen how objects could be sent *from* these sites of battlefield commemoration to create connection. However, connection flowed in the other direction too: links created by the transfer of objects from ‘home’ to the battlefield.

#### *Ashes*

One of the more unusual iterations of this direction of connection was only utilised by one country, Australia: burning the ribbons attached to floral offerings laid at war memorials in Australia, and then sending the ashes to France to be scattered on Australian graves in 1938.<sup>111</sup> They had invented this practice a few years earlier, during the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli: the ribbons from flowers laid at the cenotaph in Sydney had been collected, burnt, and scattered on the Gallipoli beaches. Colonel Ross Jacob was chosen to convey and scatter the ashes as a representative of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors’ League of Australia.<sup>112</sup> This action was designated as an “Act of Remembrance” and formed part of the official unveiling ceremony at Villers-Bretonneux; the ashes were scattered on the graves of its adjoining cemetery.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> NAA A458 P337/6 Attachment 3, “Confidential Draft: Minutes of Proceedings of the 139<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1931”.

<sup>111</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 3, “11 February 1938, ‘Distribution of ashes on graves’”.

<sup>112</sup> NAA A663 0100/1/102 Attachment B, “28 April 1938”.

<sup>113</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 3, “Statement by Australian Prime Minister J.A. Lyons, 15 June 1938”, “18 February 1938”.

This practice picks up on a theme explored in Chapter II: the tangibility of the body in mourning and commemoration. In the absence of proximal bodies, it was instead their commemorative substitutes that were burned.

### *Seeds*

The two types of material connections travelling in the ‘home → battlefield’ direction are starkly juxtaposed signifiers of death and life. Ashes are of the dead, both due to the destructive properties of fire and the predominant connotation of ashes as those of cremated remains. In contrast, another attempt in creating connection between the living and their faraway dead was through the use of seeds, which by their potential for growth are emblematic of life. In December 1919 Miss Pidge E.W. Matthews, of Simcoe, Ontario, sent a very unusual package to the Imperial War Graves Commission: 35,000 copper maple tree seeds, from the maple trees surrounding her home.<sup>114</sup> She first sent it to the Canadian Deputy Minister for Militia and Defence, who forwarded it to the Canadian High Commissioner in London, who sent it on to the Imperial War Graves Commission in France.<sup>115</sup> They came with these earnest instructions:

it is only in very rare cases that the seeds from this particular tree are fertile. Miss Matthews, however, informs this department that the seeds from the trees surrounding her home invariably grow, if properly cared for... the seeds should not be buried in the ground, but rather scattered over suitable soil, where they will fertilize and grow with little or no care.<sup>116</sup>

Unfortunately, the package was damaged during this intercontinental odyssey, and by the time the IWGC received it some of the seeds had been lost.<sup>117</sup> However, by January 1920, the Commission had confirmed that the package containing the surviving seeds had been

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<sup>114</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12), “9 December 1919”.

<sup>115</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12), “9 December 1919”, “8 January 1920”.

<sup>116</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12), “9 December 1919”.

<sup>117</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12), “8 January 1920”.

received, and that “arrangements have been made for these to be planted near the graves of Canadian soldiers in France and England.”<sup>118</sup>

This private donation was unusual, but was part of a wider phenomenon in which the IWGC attempted to create connections between the dead in their cemeteries and their faraway homelands through flora. Experts at Kew Gardens were heavily consulted by the Commission, producing lists of plants and flowers relevant to each country of the Empire and details on the environmental conditions they needed to grow. This complicates the perception established above of ‘home to battlefield’ as a linear spoke: the involvement of Kew reconfigures it as a triangulation, in which the British institution is a filter and mediator for the expression of these countries’ national identities through horticulture.<sup>119</sup> In 1916 the IWGC’s Botanical Advisor, Lieut. Arthur Hill at Kew, submitted a report on plants that would grow suitably on the graves of each major British Empire country’s dead in France. For Australia, the Blue Gum Tree was considered the only native plant that would thrive on the Western Front; Kew had already obtained and started growing seedlings to be shipped to France for cemeteries.<sup>120</sup> For Canada, maples were the primary plant associated with national identity; though Canada’s national flag emblazoned with the maple leaf would not be adopted until 1965, the maple leaf had been considered a Canadian symbol since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>121</sup> Accordingly, several strains of maple tree had been identified as suitable and were being grown at Kew accordingly, with views to be planted along with Canadian hemlock spruce at two Canadian-laden IWGC cemeteries.<sup>122</sup> Notably “the maples will be available for

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<sup>118</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12), “13 January 1920”.

<sup>119</sup> Kew had a long history of serving a central role in the creation and propagation of a British imperial scientific knowledge system; this is aptly explored in Richard Harry Drayton, “Imperial science and a scientific empire: Kew Gardens and the uses of nature, 1772-1903,” PhD thesis, Yale University, 1993, particularly relevant is Chapter 6, “Kew at its imperial zenith, 1873-1903,” 369-436.

<sup>120</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

<sup>121</sup> Helmut Kallman, “Maple Leaf (emblem),” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 20 January 2014, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/maple-leaf-emc>.

<sup>122</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

other cemeteries where Canadian soldiers may be buried” too,<sup>123</sup> yet the precise method of how to calculate whether a cemetery was ‘Canadian enough’ (ie had enough of a Canadian majority among its dead) to warrant such maple treatment is never elucidated. India got flowers as well as trees: not only was the *Cupressus mascoarpa fastigiata* deemed hardy enough for France, so too were flag irises, and by 1916 had already been planted in cemeteries with Indian burials.<sup>124</sup> Hill also noted that marigolds were commonly planted in cemeteries in India, and that some were being grown in France already for this purpose.<sup>125</sup> South Africa too was allocated flowers: torch lilies, orange and white daisies, and blue Nemesia would all flourish on graves.<sup>126</sup> The incompatibility between the Dominion and Indian climates and that of northern France and Belgium was certainly a challenge; the report concludes, almost wistfully, that many appropriate flora suggestions could be made for hypothetical cemeteries “in warmer climes where Colonial Troops have been buried.”<sup>127</sup>

Hill’s recommendations appear to have not been widely communicated and/or fully accepted, because five years later the IWGC was asking the India Office for recommendations of “flowers, shrubs or trees which would be considered specially appropriate for planting in Indian plots.”<sup>128</sup> The India Office in turn consulted a contact in India, whose letter of advice was forwarded on to the IWGC but now lost. However, the Office’s covering letter describing it delineates how religion dictated a different predominate form of body treatment for the dead, which in turn impacted their relationship with horticulture:

I enclose a letter from Sir Abbas Ali Baig on the subject of shrubs, trees etc for Indian graves and plots in France – I consulted him as a Mohammedan, so far as Hindus are concerned, of course they have no graves but only burning ghats – I understand however that the Bael[?] tree, hibiscus, and jasmine would be also quite suitable for

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<sup>123</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

<sup>124</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

<sup>125</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

<sup>126</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

<sup>127</sup> NAA A11849 2350/2, “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”.

<sup>128</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “20 October 1921”.

Hindu graves in France. My authority is [?] Gupta, who is in the office [India Office] here.<sup>129</sup>

Despite the attempt to identify and plant suitable ‘national’ flora, regional sub-identities of the countries (and soldiers) in question were considered important enough to also receive horticultural representation. The maple was widely acknowledged as the national symbol of Canada – to the extent that, as described in the previous chapter, it was the Canadian headstone emblem – but the three varieties of maple chosen for Western Front planting were selected not only for their suitable hardiness but also their splayed geographic origins. In a statement by the Director of Kew Gardens issued to the Canadian press in December 1918, it is explained that in 1916 the “Dominion horticulturalist, Ottawa” assisted in the selection of these three species, which were now growing at Kew in preparation for planting: *Acer microphyllum*, “Oregon maple”, native to western Canada and the “noblest of maples”; *Acer rubrum*, “red maple”, native to eastern North America; and *Acer dasycarpum*, “silver maple”, whose “leaves silvery on the under surface make a picture of great beauty”.<sup>130</sup> These three had been chosen because “as the Canadian Army has been drawn from all parts of Canada... species of maples representative of all parts of the Dominion have been chosen.”<sup>131</sup>

The planting of native trees and flowers was significant at memorials as well as cemeteries. Native trees were considered at Australia’s Villers-Bretonneux memorial: eucalyptus had been planted at other IWGC battlefield sites, but were not planned for Villers-Bretonneux because of its chalky sub-soil.<sup>132</sup> Instead, other Australian shrubs and smaller plants were looked into. Eventually, Blue Gum trees were planted with seeds from Australia, and in a remarkable closing of the loop between home and battlefield landscape, twenty years later some of the mature trees were shipped from Villers-Bretonneux to Sydney, Melbourne,

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<sup>129</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, “26 October 1921”.

<sup>130</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (6), “Statement by the Director of Kew Gardens, 30 December 1918”.

<sup>131</sup> Considering that central and northern Canada are not represented, this is not strictly accurate.

<sup>132</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18 Pt 5, “24 December 1936”.

and Tasmania.<sup>133</sup> In South Africa's case too, their national Delville Wood memorial architect Herbert Baker conceived of the home-battlefield connection not as a spoke but as a loop: that the trees to be planted at Delville Wood should be "South African oaks, the parent seeds of which were once taken from Europe by the early settlers of South Africa."<sup>134</sup> Note that again it is not a closed relationship between Dominion and battlefield, but again is filtered through the metropole: in this instance it is not a closed loop between two points, but rather includes unspecified-but-presumably-British-and-Dutch origin points as a third node in this spatial relationship. South African oaks were eventually planted onsite (though the exact nature of their parentage was not specified): in 1924 the oaks were being grown in the IWGC nurseries,<sup>135</sup> and although their planting date is unknown, in the February 1934 Delville Wood caretaker's report they were described as "flourishing strongly."<sup>136</sup>

Trees were a very visible symbol of the flourishing and strength of connection between home and battlefield commemorative site. However, significant connections were formed not only through material culture, but also through involvement in decision-making processes, as the next section will address.

## **Involvement in decision-making**

### *Domestic materials and labour*

The materials used for the construction of these memorials and cemeteries also became a flashpoint for feelings of national identity and connection to home. This was particularly well documented in Canada, where opinionated correspondence was received by the Commission on the subject of where the stone for Canadian IWGC headstones should be sourced from.

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<sup>133</sup> AWM 93 12/8/14/1, "28 November 1938", "29 November 1938".

<sup>134</sup> NASA GG 2238 1/232, "30 May 1922".

<sup>135</sup> NASA PWD 423 2/898 Pt 3, "9 January 1924".

<sup>136</sup> NASA PWD 422 898A, "Delville Wood Memorial Report for the Month Ending 28 February 1934".

In April 1919 the Commission had decided that Canadian companies were to be given fair chance at competing with British manufacturers for the chance to produce the headstones for Canadian graves in IWGC cemeteries. The potential Canadian tenderers were instructed that it would likely aid their case if they could ship their stones to England rough and then complete the detail work in England.<sup>137</sup> However, tenders had been pouring in haphazardly – to the Canadian High Commissioner in London, for example – since before the war even ended; including from the McIntosh Granite Company in Toronto, who sent their tender in April 1918. They explained that they “have our own granite quarries in this Country and all the facilities for doing this work in most efficient manner.”<sup>138</sup> Notably, they drew on historical precedent to strengthen their case: McIntosh was the firm who had “made all the Headstones for the Canadian soldiers who were killed or died in the South African War, and understand they gave perfect satisfaction.”<sup>139</sup>

A letter to the Commission in June 1919, written by stone businessman and former Canadian Member of Parliament James Morris, describes a previous meeting he had attended with “some of the Cabinet Ministers in Ottawa” on the subject of the stone commemoration of Canadian soldiers in France, in which it was their opinion that “Canadian stone should be used and the work done by Canadian workmen.”<sup>140</sup> Morris was wholeheartedly behind this sentiment, and his letter proposed himself as overseer of Canadian headstone construction for overseas graves: “I have been in the Monumental business here in Canada all my life and am familiar with all the different kinds of stone that are produced in Canada suitable for monumental work...if I were appointed to superintend this work I would see to it that nothing defective would be used.”<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7), “24 June 1919”.

<sup>138</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W18/26 (42), “26 April 1918”.

<sup>139</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W18/26 (42), “26 April 1918”.

<sup>140</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7), “23 June 1919”.

<sup>141</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7), “23 June 1919”.

By the end of the summer, the IWGC was corresponding with the Canadian Public Works Department in Ottawa regarding the process for how headstone tenders from Canadian manufacturers would be collected and administrated.<sup>142</sup> It was agreed that the Department would receive the tenders and forward them, with recommendations, on to the IWGC in London. It was repeatedly stressed by the Commission that there was not yet any fixed deadline for when these tenders had to be received, since no decisions were to be made until the IWGC's first cemeteries – the three experimental cemeteries that had been agreed upon as the testing ground for the IWGC's proposed cemetery and headstone formats – had been completed. In September 1919, these cemeteries were still under construction.

In Australia, too, the use of domestic stone for Australian graves overseas was considered to be important. In a 1920 memo for the Australian Department of Defense from Australia House in London, we hear that “in Australia there exists a strong sentiment that where possible the graves of our men should be permanently marked by the erection of essentially Australian stones.”<sup>143</sup> However, the challenges this posed, in terms of cost and logistics for transporting that quantity of stone to cemeteries around the world (to satisfy the demand that “all AIF graves” be commemorated in Australian stone) were significant. A compromise was proposed by the IWGC: that instead, certain cemeteries with a high proportion of AIF graves would be constructed entirely from Australian stone. Since no IWGC cemeteries were created along strictly national lines, this would then mean that Australian stone would also be used for all of the *non*-Australian graves in those cemeteries.<sup>144</sup> This would have had interesting repercussions for the perceived identities of the non-Australian dead commemorated with headstones at these sites; however, this

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<sup>142</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7), “10 September 1919”, “Memorandum re Headstones for the Graves of Canadian Soldiers, 5 September 1919”, “RE: Tender for headstones for Canadian memorials, 30 August 1919”.

<sup>143</sup> NAA A458 M337/6, “Memorandum for the Department of Defense, 22 March 1920”.

<sup>144</sup> NAA A458 M337/6, “Memorandum for the Department of Defense, 22 March 1920”.

proposal (which did not come to fruition) does not appear to have been shared with representatives from other Dominions who would have been affected.

### *Identification, epitaphs, and effects*

Faraway families and communities were asked, or in some cases offered, to play a participatory role in the creation of memorials and cemeteries by virtue of their key possession: information. They identified their dead based on descriptions of effects, submitted epitaphs, and corrected the personal information listed on headstones such as name spelling, age, and date of death.

For example, in March 1921 a father from Manitoba wrote to the IWGC listing the effects that his son had been wearing when killed serving with the 27<sup>th</sup> Canadian Battalion in 1916: a wristwatch, a steel chain jacket, and a ring, of which he enclosed a sketch.<sup>145</sup> He had been previously informed by the IWGC that those articles were buried with his son Trevor, as Trevor had initially been buried anonymously but was later exhumed for successful identification.<sup>146</sup> His father's question now was: what happened to those items after exhumation? The family wanted them back.<sup>147</sup> Unfortunately there is no archival indication of whether this request was granted.

The descriptions of identifying effects was a two-way street: in contrast to the previous example, families being *sent* descriptions of effects on a body also occurred. J.W.G. Gray of Pretoria was asked whether descriptions of a snuffbox, whistle, and gold medal recognisably matched those of his father's: he replied, "the snuffbox I remember well... I have no hesitation in saying that I am convinced that the body was that of my father... I should like to acquire these articles."<sup>148</sup> Again we see the potential role that the tangibility of

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<sup>145</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 68, "18 March 1921".

<sup>146</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 68, "18 March 1921".

<sup>147</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 68, "18 March 1921".

<sup>148</sup> NASA BLO 64 111/11, "2 May 1934".

returned small effects could play as a form of connection, between the absent dead and their families who lacked the tangibility of a body as a mourning aid.

In another instance it was not the family but the local shoe manufacturer who was able to provide the crucial information: when a South African Scottish body was found in Delville Wood in 1934 wearing “ankle boots (size 9) made by Messrs. Medwin & co”, enquiries by the IWGC revealed that that company had made two pairs of boots in that size (nearly twenty years earlier!) for Charles Stewart Bell, who died at Delville Wood in July 1916.<sup>149</sup> This combined with the discovery of two Boer War medal ribbons (a conflict in which Bell had also served) on the body solidified the identification, and the body was reburied under Bell’s name.<sup>150</sup>

The mother of T.E. Boyle wrote from Winnipeg in 1922 that the date of death carved into her son’s wooden grave marker was incorrect, reading 1917 instead of 1916.<sup>151</sup> She knew this because she had recently been sent a photograph of his grave.<sup>152</sup> The temporary nature of the wooden markers gave families the sense that the details of their loved ones were not ‘set in stone’ commemoratively either literally or figuratively: Rena B. Clarke wrote to the Office of the High Commission for Canada to report a discrepancy of four days between her brother’s actual and inscribed dates of death, stating that “I note that the marking of the grave is of a temporary nature and therefore wish to point out” the inaccuracy.<sup>153</sup> This urgency to catch and correct mistakes while the information was still malleable – before the permanency of headstones descended – is also reflected in Mrs. R.E. Malyard’s letter to the IWGC: her son had died serving with the 19<sup>th</sup> Canadian battalion one day before the

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<sup>149</sup> NASA BLO 64 111/11, “22 February 1934”.

<sup>150</sup> NASA BLO 64 111/11, “22 February 1934”.

<sup>151</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W18/26 (43), “14 February 1922”, “2 March 1922”.

<sup>152</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W18/26 (43), “14 February 1922”. As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, grave photographs served as an important method of ‘keeping touch’, but their additional function as fact-checking tools had not been originally envisaged by the Imperial War Graves Commission.

<sup>153</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 67, “23 November 1921”.

Armistice.<sup>154</sup> In her case the error was uncovered not through grave photography, but through visitation: her 1921 letter begins, “I have been to Mons (Belgium) to visit my son’s grave and have found that a little mistake has been made”, and the cemetery gardeners informed her that the headstones would shortly be put in place so she should make the problem known immediately.<sup>155</sup>

In at least one instance, the family was relied upon not just to correct particulars but to keep track of the cemetery location of their lost one. In 1926, the IWGC wrote to Mrs H.J. Erasmus in South Africa, asking her “will you please be so good as to inform me in what cemetery your son... who died on 25 October 1918, is buried?”<sup>156</sup> Why the IWGC was not already in possession of this information is unclear, and resorting to asking the family for it served to undermine the delicate trust they were trying to build on both individual and collective levels with the bereaved families overseas that they were morally responsible to.

Sadly, soldiers’ next-of-kin could not always be reached; sometimes ‘keeping touch’ was possible in only imagined rather than practical ways. The IWGC sent forms to next-of-kin for them to fill out regarding their desired epitaphs for their dead relatives, but the IWGC’s information on last known addresses was not entirely reliable, resulting in numerous of these letters being “returned unclaimed.”<sup>157</sup> The IWGC was still making attempts to contact relatives more than two decades after the war ended (and indeed, in the midst of another one), as evidenced by correspondence from May-June 1940 between the IWGC and the Secretary for Defense in Pretoria, compiling lists of South African First World War soldiers whose next-of-kin were untraceable.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 67, “23 May 1921”.

<sup>155</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 67, “23 May 1921”.

<sup>156</sup> NASA PWD 1248 15/3294, “17 September 1926”.

<sup>157</sup> NASA BLO 64 111/11, “21 May 1940”.

<sup>158</sup> NASA BLO 64 111/11, “7 June 1940”.

The choice of what to write in the epitaph was one of the most personal and emotional ways in which relatives were able to ‘keep touch’ with their dead through input rather than through the tangible transfer of objects. Especially considering the imposed uniformity of the IWGC cemetery and headstone formats, and the dissent from relatives this invoked, epitaphs were recognised as a suitable outlet through which to express the individuality of both the dead and their next-of-kin. A petition by various British Peers and Members of the House of Commons asked that “reasonable latitude should also be given as to the wording of the inscription on the cross or the headstone, so as to allow the surviving relatives to express their devotion to the dead in their own way”, though this actually matched the IWGC’s existing stance on the matter.<sup>159</sup> However, there are extant examples in the Canadian and Australian archives of proposed epitaphs that were rejected by the Commission, including “a noble son sacrificed for capitalism”,<sup>160</sup> “set out to help save England. Result: England permanently damned”,<sup>161</sup> and “he left our home to fight the Hun. Little did we think he would never return.”<sup>162</sup> This demonstrates again the extent to which relatives’ relationships with their distant dead was institutionally mediated.

#### *Input and dissent regarding designs and policies*

Contact between the bereaved and the Commission was not always initiated by the Commission, as in the cases above where information held by the families, or their submission of epitaphs, was sought. The transmission of opinions and information between the IWGC and relatives also flowed in the other direction: families contacted the

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<sup>159</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7), “Copy: Petition to his Majesty’s Government [1919]”.

<sup>160</sup> NAA A457 M404/7, “Minutes of Proceedings of the 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18 January 1921”.

<sup>161</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 330 folder W18/26 (26), “DRAFT Minutes of Proceedings of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 February 1922”.

<sup>162</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 330 folder W18/26 (26), “DRAFT Minutes of Proceedings of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 February 1922”.

Commission, either directly or by expressing opinions to the newspapers or the government, concerning their opinions for how the dead and their commemoration were being handled.

‘National’ lines are blurry here. Sentiments were shared by members of the bereaved across national borders; due to the intertwined nature of metropole and dominion, and the fact that the umbrella nature of the IWGC meant that decisions affecting Britain’s dead would also be applied to its imperial dead, it is constructive to examine complaints, opinions, and petitions even when they originated in England, since they would have had practical ramifications for the imperial dead and were sentiments likely shared by the bereaved of the Dominions.<sup>163</sup>

For example, throughout 1919 there were repeated outcries from the bereaved regarding the proposed shape of IWGC headstones. A petition was put forward to the Prince of Wales, asking for the right to erect cross-shaped rather than rounded headstones when families desired it: petitioner Lady Florence Cecil argued that the right to dictate the form of material commemoration for their dead “has been from all time the privilege of the bereaved”, and therefore should not be denied to the bereaved of the First World War.<sup>164</sup> The British War Graves Association, an unofficial organisation not affiliated with the IWGC and comprised mainly of bereaved women, passed a resolution in 1920 that the bereaved should have the same privileges as America and France in “bringing home the bodies of their dear ones.”<sup>165</sup> They also repurposed the relationship between death and commemoration in their rhetoric, arguing that “many thousands of mothers and wives are slowly *dying* for the want of the Grave of their loved ones, to visit and tend themselves” [emphasis added].<sup>166</sup> The final

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<sup>163</sup> The relevance this was considered to have for the Dominions can be demonstrated by the fact that the correspondence cited immediately below is held at Library and Archives Canada.

<sup>164</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7), “Copy of petition from Lady Florence Cecil to HRH The Prince of Wales [1919]”.

<sup>165</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “Resolution: British War Graves Association Central Branch, 15 November 1920”.

<sup>166</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “Resolution: British War Graves Association Central Branch, 15 November 1920”.

clause of that sentence is the most important: the dead in question *did* actually have graves, they were not ‘in want’ of them, but it was the graves’ inaccessibility for the acts of familial visitation and tending that was seen as a grievance worthy of petition.

The IWGC’s policy of uniformity meant that despite the geographic distance between the Dominions and the battlefields, the decisions made by the Commission regarding headstone designs would still be visible domestically to the bereaved families. This was due to the fact that many of those imperial dead who fit the definition of a ‘war grave’ were not buried in cemeteries in the theatres of war, or in the overseas hospitals they had been treated in, but rather in their home countries which they had come home to but had died in. Quoting from the introduction to the Commission’s 1926 report, in 1927 the Chairman of the IWGC’s South African Agency in a speech to the mayor and citizens of Johannesburg reminded them that

Relatives and the General Public in Great Britain and in the Dominions and Colonies, who are unable to visit the cemeteries on the old battle fronts, may be reminded that in their own countries they will find examples of the headstones and monuments which the Commission are erecting abroad... [in many cemeteries] may be seen also the Cross of Sacrifice, the same in design and intention with those which have been set up in France and Belgium and other places throughout the world where our dead of the Great War are laid to rest.<sup>167</sup>

Not only South Africa but Canada, Australia, and India all had domestic IWGC First World War headstones. These quasi-proxies removed one layer of distance between IWGC sites of the Western Front and domestic mourners, but still would not have been able to replicate either the emotional resonance of seeing the carved name of their specific relative, or the impact of visiting the battlefield landscapes whose events had imbued meaning upon the IWGC sites in question.

Though the bereaved were not formally consulted on headstone designs and thus had to voice their concerns unsolicited, the IWGC did request the input of officers from imperial

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<sup>167</sup> NASA GG 2274 2/233, “[undated untitled speech, presumably late September 1928]”.

regiments concerning the headstone designs for their men. These surviving soldiers were themselves among the bereaved, though the two are often seen as different groups. Early sketches sent by the Deputy Chairman of the IWGC to the colonels of all Australian regiments in 1918, for the solicitation of Australian soldiers' opinions, reveal a glimpse into the period when the degree of headstone uniformity was still in question amongst IWGC staff and military representatives:

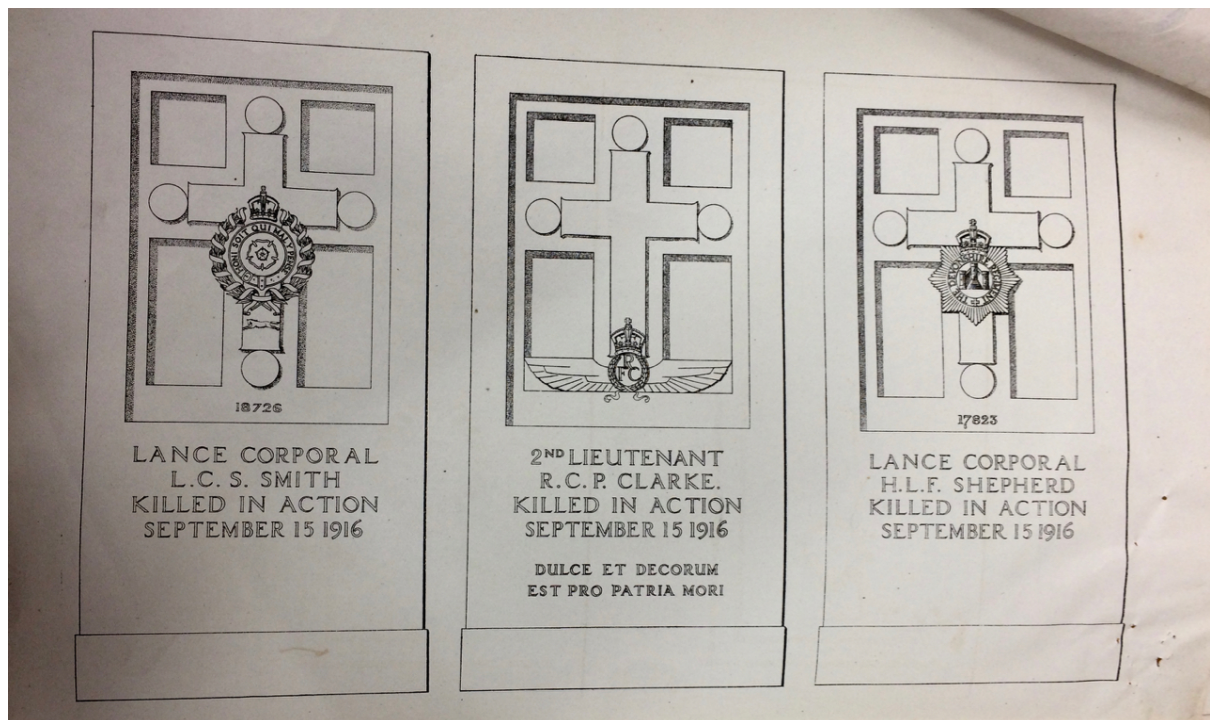


Image 4.5a. Draft headstone designs sent to Australian military representatives for input, 1918. AWM 25 135/36, "26 January 1918".

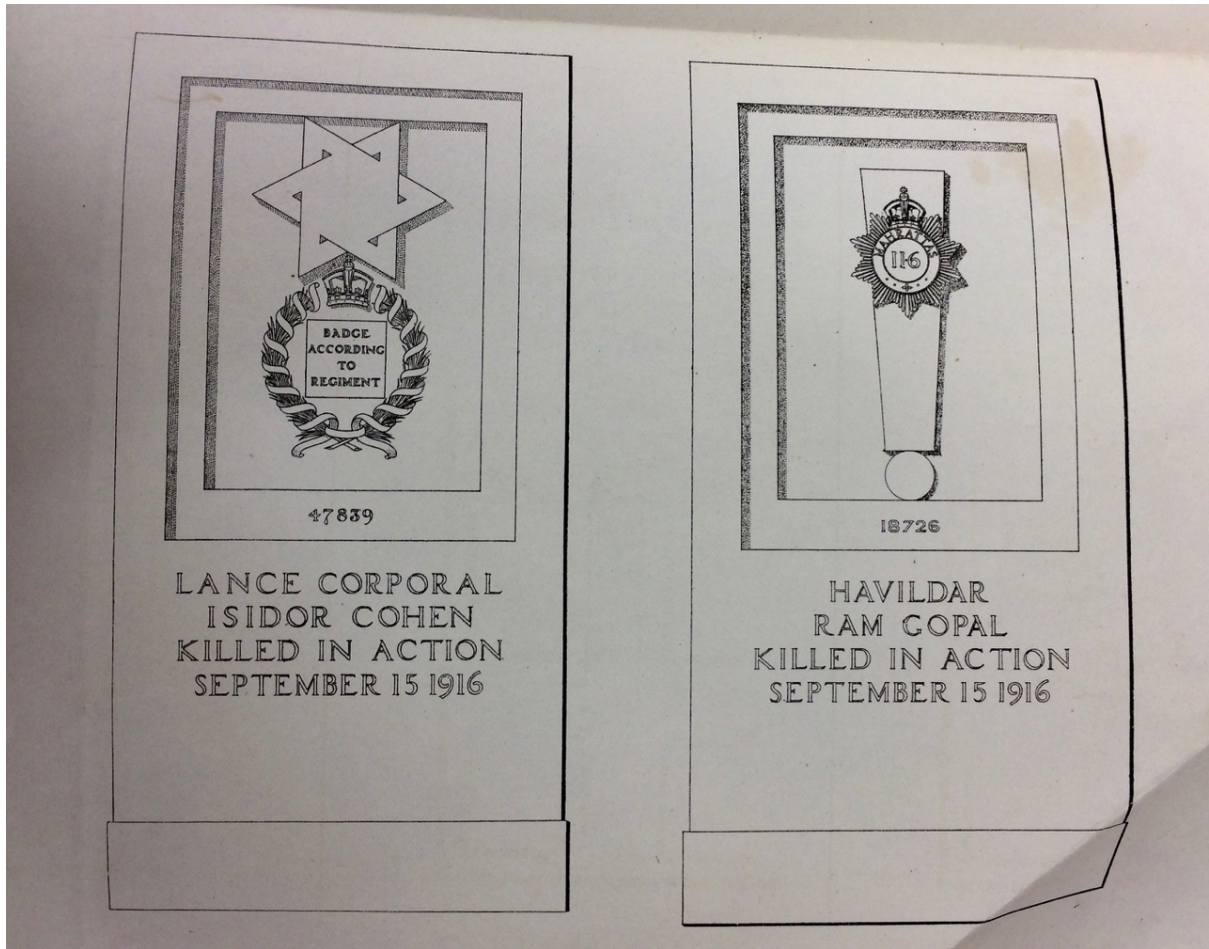


Image 4.5b. Draft headstone designs sent to Australian military representatives for input, 1918.  
AWM 25 135/36, "26 January 1918".

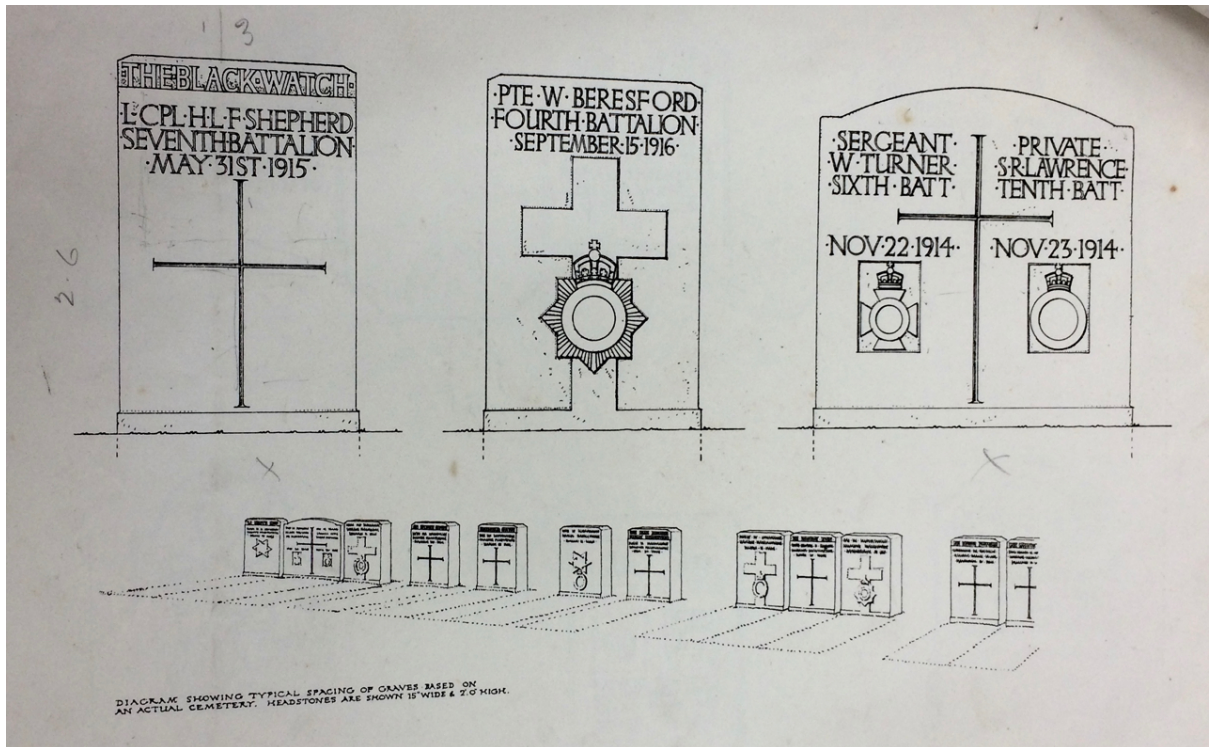


Image 4.5c. Draft headstone designs sent to Australian military representatives for input, 1918.  
AWM 25 135/36, "26 January 1918".

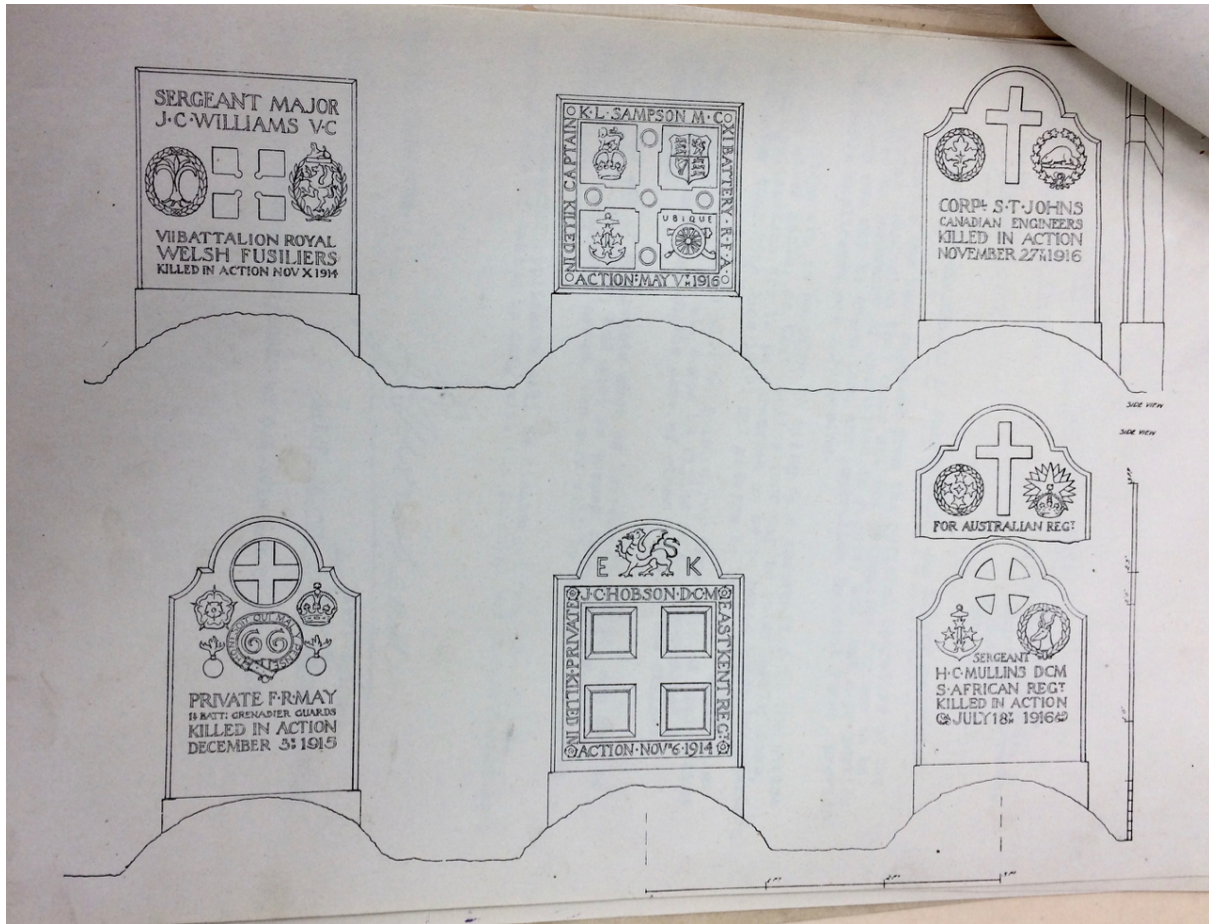


Image 4.5d. Draft headstone designs sent to Australian military representatives for input, 1918. AWM 25 135/36, "26 January 1918".

Unfortunately, it is unknown what feedback the IWGC received in response to these sketches, and what if any changes it made in response. However, it is worth noting that none of the sketches feature the slightly rounded top that became the chosen standard for nearly all Western Front IWGC graves.

## Visitation

In addition to objects and decision-making participation, visitation provided a third form of connection bridging the physical and emotional gulf between these memorials and cemeteries and the people they mattered to.

As discussed in this chapter's opening literature review, battlefield tourism and pilgrimage, particularly during the interwar period, is a large enough topic to warrant entire

monograph(s) itself, and indeed many have already been written. The prior scholarship on this topic is one reason why this thesis indulges only partially in addressing it; however, there are two more crucial reasons, both methodological. First, this thesis considers visitation as *part* of a wider narrative of ‘keeping touch’: the forms of which were interrelated and – as this chapter aims to demonstrate – informed and influenced each other. To focus exclusively on visitation would thus serve to silo that phenomenon rather than incorporating it into a more holistic narrative that allows us to better understand how it operated within the wider context of connection-forming initiatives during the interwar period. Second, a tenet of this thesis is the remit to consider memorials and cemeteries themselves as focal points, as primary sources and foregrounded actors, rather than considering them merely as a background to ritual; an overemphasis on visitation risks decentring this work from one of its most basic analytical principles.

### *Mass pilgrimage and unveilings*

It is beyond the scope of this project to address individual visits, due to both the methodological considerations outlined above and the practical limitations of obtaining in any way ‘balanced’ archival sources for individual visitations from all four countries that this thesis addresses. However, mass pilgrimages, often connected with the unveiling ceremonies of national memorials on the Western Front, warrant addressing here for the significant role they played in creating and reinforcing both connection and identity, and due to the uniformity of primary material – namely news clippings, reports, and publications – which they spurred production of for all four countries in question.

In 1936, 200,000 people gathered on Vimy Ridge for the unveiling of Canada’s Vimy memorial, including over 8,000 travelling from Canada itself. The Canadians at the Vimy memorial’s unveiling “had crossed the ocean to show that they had not forgotten their

dead,”<sup>168</sup> and this provided “a chance at emotional closure. There was immense power in those names.”<sup>169</sup> The previous two sections have demonstrated that the transfer of both materials and opinions across the sea served to show that the living of the empire had not forgotten their dead, but there was nevertheless an indelible primacy, immediacy, and tangibility afforded to the act of visitation. The speech by King Edward VIII at the ceremony served to reinforce the theme of forming connection across distance through visitation: “It was ‘over there’ that Canadian armies fought and died. It is ‘over there’ that their final monument must stand. Today, 3000 miles from the shore of Canada, we are assembled around that monument – yet not on alien soil.”<sup>170</sup>



Image 4.6. Aerial view of Vimy memorial unveiling, 1936. LAC, MIKAN number 3224321, taken by the National Film Board of Canada. Public domain because it was subject to Crown copyright and was produced before 31 December 1968.

<sup>168</sup> LAC RG 25 Vol 1778 folder 184 Pt 3, “King Edward VIII and M. Albert LeBrun Inaugurate the Monument At Vimy,” *Exposition Paris 1937* magazine, issue #4 August 1936, 8.

<sup>169</sup> Eric Brown and Tim Cook, “The 1936 Vimy Pilgrimage,” *Canadian Military History* 20:2 (2011), 50.

<sup>170</sup> Quoted in William Waldie Murray, *The Epic of Vimy* (Ottawa: The Legionary, 1936), 96.

The rhetoric of the speeches at the ceremony underscored the unveiling's threefold attempt to create connection: connections between the living and the dead; amongst the Canadian living, via messages of unity and pride anchored in place-centred achievement; and amongst Britain, France, and the empire in the face of a growing threat of further conflict, via pleading messages of peace.

In the attempt to 'keep touch with their people' through pilgrimage, the importance of place is underscored. It was imbued with the imagined presence of the dead, in a way that could not be extracted, captured, replicated, or shipped. An eyewitness account of the Vimy unveiling highlights this, describing a moment of presence of the dead that could not have been achieved in a more, arguably, 'artificial' commemorative space:

[During the two minutes' silence] the atmosphere seemed to be weighted with a superhuman density during the moments in which the crowd was plunged [sic] in pious meditations. Then a sudden gale of wind raised all the drooping flags and the invisible presence of the dead seemed to prostrate and surround us like a sort of obsession.<sup>171</sup>

The dead were not only said to be present, but also to be *visible*.<sup>172</sup> By 1936, though bodies were still being unearthed accidentally, they were by no means strewn about the landscape in a manner observable to a passerby. Thus, the insinuation below that the dead could be *seen* poses an interesting inference for the role that memorials and cemeteries could play in the connection between the living and the dead: since it was not the bodies themselves being seen, was their material culture of remembrance considered enough of a proxy that seeing memorials and cemeteries counted as 'seeing' the dead they were erected in honour of?

Thereon are concentrated and united millions of souls flashing as a light like those which, from the Sea to the Vosges, dominate our monuments. Each evening, at the

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<sup>171</sup> LAC RG 25 Vol 1778 folder 184 Pt 3, "King Edward VIII and M. Albert LeBrun Inaugurate the Monument At Vimy," *Exposition Paris 1937* magazine, issue #4 August 1936, 8.

<sup>172</sup> The popularity of this belief is also indicated by the success of 'spirit photography' during the interwar period, by which the dead were supposedly captured on film; see for example Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 74-75.

same hour of the kindling of the Flame beneath the Arc de Triomphe, they speak to the Shades and say: 'I am awake, and I think of the dead'. The Dead! You have again seen them all around you in this country, in France gorged with hundreds of thousands of corpses, whose humble names on the wooden crosses will be unknown in history."<sup>173</sup>

The presence and visibility of the dead was not confined to Vimy – one speaker argued that it was at Menin Gate that they were strongest: “an emotion that seems to express itself nowhere else on the old Western Front takes possession of one at the Menin Gate. The names on the walls within begin to take definite form. One sees not the letters, but men – wraiths, which once were Comrades.”<sup>174</sup> It is worth noting that the carved names are visualised as the conduit for the dead; this underscores the surging desperation, from both the bereaved and official voices, that every member of the dead should be commemorated *individually* by name.

The dead were not only ‘seen’, but were considered to have agency. They could walk – “Our minds have been strangely stirred, for we have walked with our dead” –<sup>175</sup> speak – “I know that that feeling must have been with you at Vimy, that feeling that you were being watched by an unseen cloud of witnesses; and those witnesses are our dead, who are speaking to us today”,<sup>176</sup> and they were still “doing work”:

I have no doubt in my own mind that many of the troubles of this world are due to the fact that we have lost our best, and so many of our best, who to-day would be among our leaders. I am confident of this: that if the dead could come back to life to-day there would be no war. They would never let the younger generation taste what they did. You have all tasted that bitter cup of War. They drank it to the dregs, and even after all these years the dead are doing their work.<sup>177</sup>

The dead were also ‘urging’ and ‘throwing’: “without us their vision fades. Today on these slopes of Vimy a deathless army urges us on. To us they throw the torch. This Monument is a fresh pledge that we shall not break faith.”<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Paul Boncour, quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 171.

<sup>174</sup> Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 111-113.

<sup>175</sup> Rev. John Kelman on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 138.

<sup>176</sup> Stanley Baldwin (British Prime Minister), quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 120.

<sup>177</sup> Stanley Baldwin (British Prime Minister), quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 120.

<sup>178</sup> Hon. Lieut.-Col. the Reverend George Oliver Fallis of Toronto, quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 92.

Connection was also promoted amongst the Canadian living, via messages of unity and pride. Note that significantly, these messages were not solely internally generated but in some cases had an external locus crafting them: for example, Marshal Pétain opined, “Although her formation is but recent, [Canada] constitutes at present a community of interests and traditions, of hopes and confidence in the future which one calls a Country.”<sup>179</sup> The rhetoric used in first-hand reports of the pilgrimage also worked to support this: for example, that “the [Canadian 1936 Vimy] Pilgrims were the best citizens that Canada possess, and their bearing throughout was of a character that made the Dominion proud of them.”<sup>180</sup>

The unveiling at Vimy is located in and informed by a specific historical moment: the prelude to the Second World War. Pilgrims’ perceptions of the values it performed would have been different if it had been unveiled in 1926 or 1946, but occurring in 1936 meant that it carried both a desperation for peace and ominous foreshadowing of conflict, both heightened by the words spoken over it. The role of place is again crucial to understanding this: it anchored a spatial relationship between the battlefield and the Dominion, enacted by the flow of both combatants and mourners between them. “You are here; and you will come back again”, warned a French official from Blois,<sup>181</sup> and sure enough scant years later the Canadians *were* back in France in uniform during the Second World War.

This willingness of Canada to ‘be there’ was framed both as a positive national virtue and as an expression of a filial, or unequal fraternal, relationship:

It is not alone as soldiers that we esteem you. We admire you for the idealism you manifested in leaving your peaceful country, which natural conditions and peace-loving neighbours protect from the horrors of invasion, in order to travel beyond the seas to take part in our sacrifices... young countries recall to the older ones, who at times doubt themselves, that nations are not artificial creations, but living realities.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 156.

<sup>180</sup> Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 116.

<sup>181</sup> Quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 172.

<sup>182</sup> Marshal Pétain, quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 156.

The origins of Canadian virtue were contextualised in reference to Britain and France: M. Villey, Prefect of the Seine, mentioned that Canadian spirit was inspired by Britain,<sup>183</sup> and Lieut. Col. McIntyre of Canada articulated that “the Mother of Canada is France; the Father is England; and the Children of Canada are your friends.”<sup>184</sup>

It was not only Canadian values but also the significance of Canadian sacrifice that was seen to have interconnected meaning with Britain and France. Crucially, it was *presence* that created this, including the presence of blood:

Here, several hundred thousand men, from a faraway land, spilled their blood to defend their hearth; that they were willing to sacrifice their lives not for the satisfaction of material interests but for the beauty of an ideal and the mobility of a memory.... faithful to the call of blood.... returned to their ancient motherland to defend and revivify it by mingling with it again.”<sup>185</sup>

The ‘hearth’ in question is conveniently indistinct. Was France considered the ‘hearth’ of Canadians? The later phrase “ancient motherland” serves to reinforce this. Or is Europe more generally – i.e. including Britain too – the motherland under discussion?

The presence of bodies and material culture could also elicit a sense of interconnected identity: “you have left within our land, with the mortal remains of your war-time comrades, a monument whose imposing mass dominates a countryside truly French, and with a significance to everybody.”<sup>186</sup> It is also notable that here the memorial is conceptualised as being not *upon*, but *within* the landscape, which has stronger connotations of both tangible and imagined embeddedness.

Even broader connections of shared experience and values were drawn not just between Britain, France, and Canada, but between “Europe and the world”: “if the world – if Europe and the world – can find no other way of settling their disputes even now, when we are still finding and burying the bodies of those who fell 20 years ago – if they can find no

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<sup>183</sup> Quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 144.

<sup>184</sup> Quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 144.

<sup>185</sup> Albert Lebrun (President of France), quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 97.

<sup>186</sup> Mr. Raymond-Laurent (President of the Municipal Council of Paris), quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 144.

other way, then the world deserves to perish.”<sup>187</sup> Like the speech quoted earlier in this chapter from the unveiling of Pretoria’s replica, responsibility (“find another way or perish”) is framed as being evoked by tangibility (“still finding and burying bodies”).

Vimy is a memorial to the *missing*, and so the imagined presence of the dead at the unveiling was exactly that – imagined. However, the Delville Wood memorial, South Africa’s national monument, was erected on a site that was explicitly recognised to have unburied dead on site. Thus, though no more visible than the imagined Canadian dead at Vimy, (some of) the South African dead at Delville Wood were in fact present. This meant that the Delville Wood unveiling doubled as a consecration ceremony for the undiscovered dead in the wood.<sup>188</sup>

Since the dead were already known to be there, it was other imagined presences which crept into the rhetoric used to describe the Delville Wood unveiling. In the eyewitness report of the Chairman of the Delville Wood Memorial Committee, he describes the lay elements of the ceremony, then says “the religious ceremony: one more guest was added”, with the implication that the additional guest is God.<sup>189</sup> In the unveiling report for the *Natal Mercury* South African paper, another eyewitness describes of the memorial that “Sorrow and Joy are there, and Honour mounts guard beside it.”<sup>190</sup>

The Delville Wood unveiling occurred 10 years before Vimy’s: 1926 and 1936, respectively. There was only a small number of official delegates, including members of the South African National Memorial Committee; however, numerous South Africans and British people made individual arrangements to attend, causing the unveiling attendance numbers to balloon beyond the control or preparation of the Committee. (This despite the notice they

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<sup>187</sup> Stanley Baldwin (British Prime Minister), quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 120.

<sup>188</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]”.

<sup>189</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]”.

<sup>190</sup> NASA GG 1168 27/570, “Delville Wood,” *The Natal Mercury* 9 April 1926.

published asking, “The Committee would be glad if any persons who intend making the pilgrimage to Delville Wood, France, for the purpose of attending the Unveiling Ceremony on 10<sup>th</sup> October next, will advise the Honorary Secretary to the Committee, care of the High Commissioner for South Africa, Trafalgar Square, London, immediately on their arrival in London.”)<sup>191</sup>

In the Chairman’s subsequent report, he describes how the initial estimate was 120 people, and the actual figure was over 2,000: 500 who travelled from South Africa, 500 British and South Africans who travelled from England, and 1,000 people (including many British expatriates) who travelled from within France.<sup>192</sup> This left the Committee to quickly improvise transportation arrangements and other infrastructure to deal with this unexpected influx; as the Chairman defensively explained in an entire section of his report titled “The Committee’s Problem: To Provide For All”,

By far the greater number of intending visitors were not guests of the Committee, and we had no responsibility for them, and all means were adopted to let them understand this... we felt keenly that they, especially those who came from South Africa to attend the ceremony, either individually at their own cost, and without our knowledge, or who were sent by any other organisations and were the guests of those who sent them from South Africa, would under the impending pressure, be faced by certain difficulties. Impliedly, although despite our protest and our limited resources, we were the hosts, and for this occasion would be looked upon as in a great measure representing our country...<sup>193</sup>

This desperation to shed culpability directly connects to the previously discussed concept of the Western Front landscape being a performative space for national identity under an international gaze, and the inherent challenges of this paradigm. For each Dominion, the unveiling ceremony for their national memorial marked a key opportunity to reinforce the material statement of the memorial with ritual and speech; yet there were no ‘rules’ (and in

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<sup>191</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, “South African National Memorial [loose flyer]”.

<sup>192</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]”.

<sup>193</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]”.

1926, with Delville being the first major unveiling, no precedent either), and in this case, responsibility was not taken by the South African government and it fell through the cracks; leaving the memorial committee scrambling when they realised they were de facto responsible. As the committee recognised, the ceremony was a prime opportunity to represent South Africa on an international stage, and the high number of resident and expatriate South Africans in attendance also meant that it was a unique opportunity to present in tandem a construction of identity to South Africans themselves.

However, this opportunity was not entirely wasted: though the logistics had not been carefully crafted, the messages in the speeches given certainly were: most notably that by South Africa's Prime Minister, J. Hertzog. Hertzog was leader of the Nationalist party and had distanced himself from any association with the imperial cause during the war; he continued being "studiously aloof to the British war connection" during the unveiling, emphasising instead national unity and connections to France.<sup>194</sup> His rhetoric, in addition to explicitly framing national unity in terms of shared sacrifice, emphasised two key themes concerning the function of the memorial in and for South African identity: the relationship between the living and the dead, and the continuing responsibility, endowed by the dead, that leaders must work to ensure peace. The relationship between the living and the dead, while couched in the usual terms of pride and sacrifice, has an unusually emphasised element in Hertzog's speech: connotations of possession. This is framed not in the context of the *present* living in relation to the dead, but future generations of South Africans, articulating, like Meighen's "heart-strings will reach through all time" speech, a connection spanning not only distance but also time. He opined,

The part played in that drama by these our Dead, will ever be an inspiration to us...and as it will ever be recorded with pride in the pages of our history, so, as future generations of South Africans, in the quiet of the evening, turn over those pages, they

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<sup>194</sup> Nasson, "Delville Wood and South African Commemoration," 77-78.

will hear the distant footsteps of men marching to their fate, and, in the proudness of their hearts, they will claim them as their Dead.<sup>195</sup>

This conceptualises the relationship between the living and the dead as one not of passive inheritance, but of active re-inscribing of ownership in order to incorporate the dead (by dint of their deeds) into the self-perceived identities of the living. The second and broader dimension of the relationship between dead and living which Hertzog sets up is not specifically with the *South African* living, but the responsibility that the Dead have incurred upon the European leaders of the interwar period. This strongly echoes the sentiments in the speeches given at Vimy's unveiling, discussed above, but the ten-year gap between them (Delville Wood in 1926, Vimy in 1936) means that this theme, nascent in the South African unveiling, had come to much fuller, more desperate, and more explicit fruition at the Canadian ceremony. Hertzog described this responsibility as,

If that high purpose has not been realized; if militarism still stalks over the face of Europe; if the fields fallowed by their swords for the purpose of receiving peace, threaten to be once more sown with dragons' teeth, the blame is surely not theirs. The sword has achieved the task entrusted to it, and having laid victory at the feet of those who professed the high ideals which inspired the soldier to success...on the statesmen of Europe there still rests a great and awful responsibility; not only to the Dead, but also to the living; not alone to Europe, but to the world.<sup>196</sup>

This responsibility had presumably reached even more crucial heights two years after the Vimy unveiling, at the unveiling of Australia's national memorial at Villers-Bretonneux on the eve of the Second World War. However, it was not so explicitly addressed as in Canada's case above. Australia's unveiling pilgrimage in 1938 was also not its first organised mass pilgrimage to the Western Front battlefields. As the 1938 pilgrimage has been thoroughly

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<sup>195</sup> NASA GG 1168 27/570, "[unveiling speech, Delville Wood Memorial] The Reply of General the Honourable JBM Hertzog".

<sup>196</sup> NASA GG 1168 27/570, "[unveiling speech, Delville Wood Memorial] The Reply of General the Honourable JBM Hertzog". This speech was deeply informed by Hertzog's ongoing scepticism of the war's cause, and therefore his strongly held positioning of the war dead as *victims*.

addressed by other scholars,<sup>197</sup> the brief spotlight on Australia in this section will instead focus on its *first* mass pilgrimage.

Twelve years before the pilgrimage for its memorial unveiling, Australia had a first mass pilgrimage trip to northern France in 1926. The report to IWGC founder Ware about it articulated the sense of responsibility felt by pilgrims as *representatives*, of that great majority of their peers back home who were unable to make the journey. At several cemeteries en route including Adelaide British Cemetery (in France), the pilgrims acted as a conduit for the forging of a tangible connection through flora: “As the visitors moved along the rows of graves a number of the mothers laid the sprigs of Wattle sent from Australia by those unable to join in the pilgrimage.”<sup>198</sup> The Arras Office made arrangements for additional sprigs – 2,500 in all – to be laid on Australian graves in cemeteries that lay outside the pilgrimage route. When some pilgrims deviated from the route to visit graves in outlying cemeteries, they were “greatly impressed by the fact that they found sprigs of Wattle had already been placed there by our gardeners.”<sup>199</sup>

This pilgrimage of Australia’s is an interesting case in contrast to the other three countries’ visitation examples addressed here, in that it demonstrates how pilgrimages were constructed when there was not a single site (a completed national memorial) to act as an emotional and geographical centre of gravity for the itinerary.

Though there was not a mass pilgrimage from India to the Neuve Chapelle memorial unveiling (unlike the Canadians, South Africans, and Australians), representatives from India did travel to attend the ceremony and the speeches given were used to reinforce particular aspects of identity and the theme of connection across distance.

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<sup>197</sup> Most notably Fathi, “Do Not Forget Australia.”

<sup>198</sup> NAA A461 E337/1/9 Pt 1, “Extracts from report made to Fabian Ware: Australian War Graves Pilgrimage”.

<sup>199</sup> NAA A461 E337/1/9 Pt 1, “Extracts from report made to Fabian Ware: Australian War Graves Pilgrimage”.

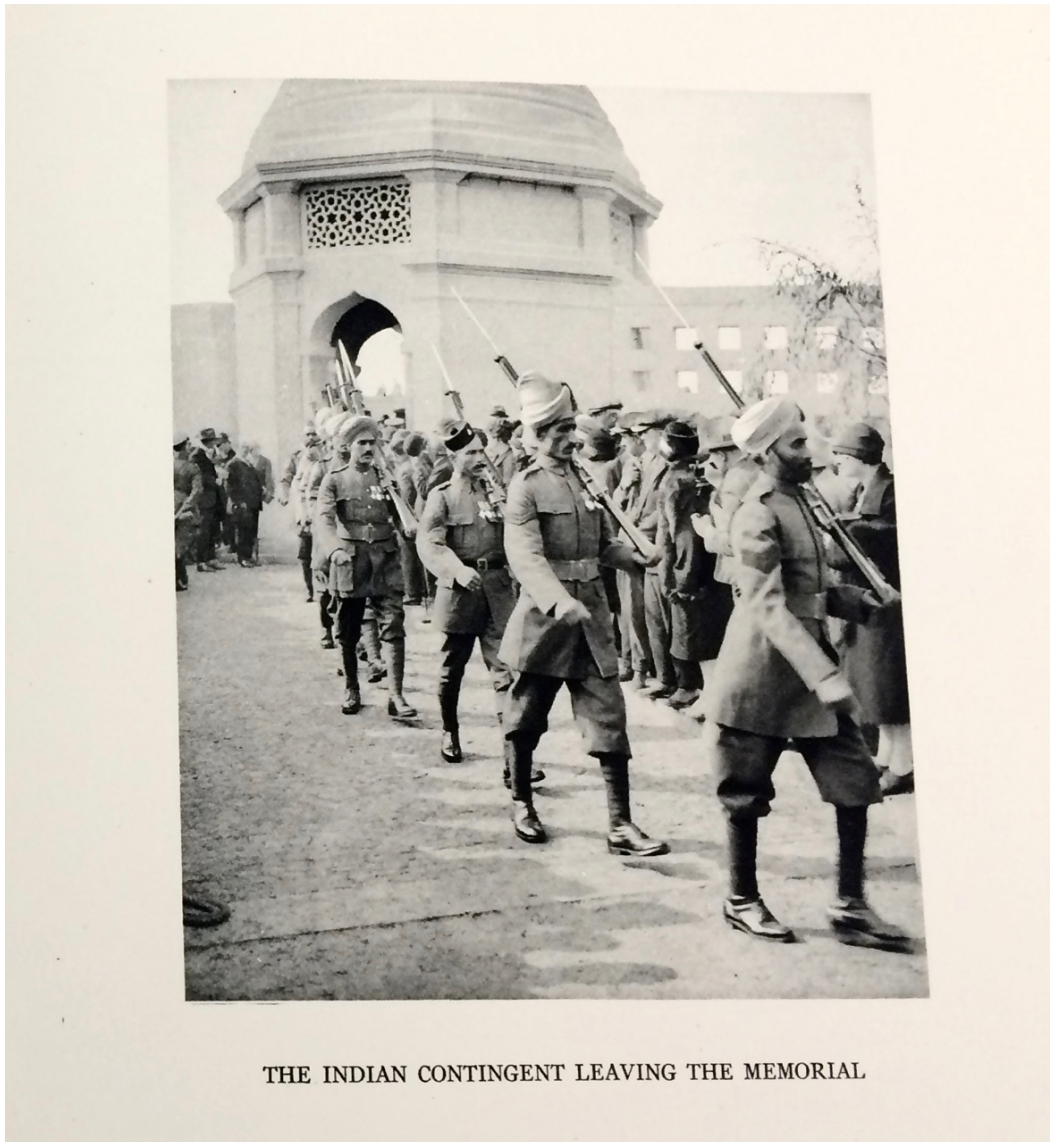


Image 4.7. Indian troops at the Neuve Chapelle memorial unveiling, France, 1927.  
BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France, 1927* (no pagination).  
© British Library Board

The French Marshal Foch elicited several key themes in his speech to the Indian

Contingent:

Return to your homes in the distant, sun-bathed East and proclaim how your countrymen drenched with their blood the cold northern land of France and Flanders, how they delivered it by their ardent spirit from the firm grip of a determined enemy; tell all India that we shall watch over their graves with the devotion due to all our dead.<sup>200</sup>

Again, being in the presence of a significant site is constructed to imbue responsibility upon its visitors: “return to your homes... and proclaim”, and “tell all India.” A new additional

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<sup>200</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France, 1927* (no pagination).

element of responsibility, not seen in the other examples of conferred responsibility examined in this chapter, is that of the caretakers: the graves of Indian dead in France are not only creating in their visitors a responsibility to remember through proclamation, but are also creating in their hosts – not the IWGC, who was legally responsible for these sites, but the wider nation in which they were situated – a responsibility to care for them (“we shall watch over their graves”).

The Maharaja of Kapurthala also made a speech which heavily emphasised themes of geography and distance, the wider context of empire, and the relationships for which the memorial was a conduit, saying

[The memorial] has been erected under the auspices of the Imperial War Graves Commission, to whom, for their unflagging labours in the widespread fields of battle, is owed a debt felt most keenly by the kin of the fallen, but in no mean degree by all who value perpetuation of the memory of the achievements of the Empire. The monument is fitting tribute from all parts of that Empire to the deeds of one section of its many peoples who fought in the Allied cause. Others are worthily commemorated elsewhere. To speak only of the soldiers of India, there are already comparable memorials at Cape Helles, Basra, Port Tewfik. But today we do honour peculiarly to those who came from my country to do battle on the historic soil of France... strange is the history of the world that the ancient civilizations of the East and West should have met to do battle side by side.<sup>201</sup>

The Maharaja’s speech attributed agency fully to the Indians who had volunteered to serve; Lord Birkenhead’s subsequent address, notably not addressing the Indians directly despite their presence at the unveiling (he speaks entirely of ‘they’ rather than ‘you’), in attempting to compliment them instead strips them of both intelligence and agency. He posits that the Indians deserve extra praise for fighting so valiantly despite not only having no vested interest in the outcome, but also not fully grasping the complexities of the conflict:

While all who fought suffered greatly and wrought nobly, the endurance of the Indians was specially to be remarked. First, they fought thousands of miles from their homes...secondly, they fought in a climate to which their bodies were not inured...and thirdly, these men who have died fought in a quarrel of which their understanding was less perfect than was that of those by whose side they contended. The Belgian remembered a happy and innocent country which he had almost wholly

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<sup>201</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India’s Memorial in France, 1927* (no pagination).

lost. The French saw all around them the cruel signs of local destruction... and so, too, in History, those whose valour was rendered immortal by Thucydides fought near to their homes and in a quarrel with known dangers. Nor did the Spartans who perished at Thermopylae offer their lives upon an issue obscurely understood. It would be an insincerity to pretend that in this sense the objects with which this war was waged could have been known, or were known, to the majority of the Indian Army. Many a humble soldier must have wondered what inscrutable purpose of whatever deity he worshipped had projected him into this sinister and bloody maelstrom.<sup>202</sup>

These sentiments were also then echoed in Rudyard Kipling's speech, who referred to the Indian troops as being "of a great simplicity and an utter loyalty."<sup>203</sup>

### *Pilgrimage and Unveiling Attendance Privilege*

For the unveiling of each national memorial in France, the selection of who was invited to attend as representatives created a message about how each Dominion and India wished to represent itself.

The Australian Returned Soldiers League was given the opportunity by the Australian Prime Minister to send a representative to attend the Villers-Bretonneux unveiling. This prompted a request that another type of Australian representative should also be sent: a bereaved mother. A proposal to this effect was submitted by E. Kinchington in March 1938:

I notice in this morning's "Herald", you have asked the Returned Soldiers League to send a representative to the Villers Bretonneux Memorial opening at the Government's expense. Why not also send a mother? Who has given her whole family of boys, why should not that courtesy be shown to the best and noblest of human beings?<sup>204</sup>

Unfortunately, that proposal does not appear to have been heeded, but bereaved mothers – and widows – in South Africa were given the opportunity to apply for a place on the official delegation to the Delville Wood unveiling. The requirements were that their son or husband had to have originally attested in Pretoria; Cape Town and Johannesburg also orchestrated

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<sup>202</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

<sup>203</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

<sup>204</sup> NAA A663 0100/1/102 Attachment B, "To the Prime Minister, 14 March 1938".

similar arrangements of soliciting applications for their own representatives, but unfortunately Pretoria is the only city for which there are extant archival sources for this initiative.<sup>205</sup> The notice inviting applications, issued by the Pretoria Town Clerk in spring 1926, also announced an opportunity for two returned soldiers (non-commissioned officers or privates) to attend the unveiling as official delegates.<sup>206</sup> The soldiers' selection included the similar criterion that they must have originally attested in Pretoria, with the additional qualification that they must have served on the Western Front and they must supply the particulars of their war service.<sup>207</sup>

This notice, which was widely publicised via newspapers, received an outpouring of applications from Pretorian veterans, many of whom supplied not only the minimal required facts of their war service but wrote heartfelt letters to the Town Clerk making their cases. For example, F.W. Richardson wrote that he had enlisted at age 16 in January 1915, and proceeded to serve with the 3<sup>rd</sup> South African Infantry at Vimy, Butte de Warlencourt, Arras, and Ypres – to name the most famous of the long list of engagements he provided – before being wounded in 1917 and eventually invalided home in 1918, en route to which he survived the torpedoing of the *Galway Castle*.<sup>208</sup> However, all of this information was the *last* part of his letter: he couched his deservedness and eligibility not only in terms of his own service but within the milieu of his entire family's sacrifice, and it was those details he listed first. His father and youngest brother (who died at age 18 in 1918 after serving for more than two years) were both killed in the conflict; another of his brothers was wounded during the course of four years of service with the South African Brigade; and his eldest brother also served with the Brigade for three years.<sup>209</sup> The service of family members was also often

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<sup>205</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "British Kindred Societies Joint Committee, 4 August 1926".

<sup>206</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "26 August 1926".

<sup>207</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "26 August 1926".

<sup>208</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Richardson application, received 28 August 1926".

<sup>209</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Richardson application, received 28 August 1926".

recorded in the notes made on veteran applicants by those administering the selection process. For example, the summary page for Melville Vernon Wakeford's application, with information compiled from his letter of application and his records, lists at the bottom, "Military character: very good. Lost a brother at Messines Ridge. Total service 3 years 140 days."<sup>210</sup>

Officially no special consideration was given to soldiers who had fought at Delville Wood itself, but those applicants who had generally made sure to highlight it in their letter. For example, Gideon Johannes Cruse, who served first in Egypt and then on the Western Front until returning home in spring 1919, was wounded at Delville Wood in July 1916.<sup>211</sup> He also wrote "I beg to state that I went with the Regiment to France from Egypt, and never left them till the war was over."<sup>212</sup>

The information in these applications was compiled into charts, listing for implicit comparison and easy reference the veterans' particulars including name, unit, length of service, and "remarks" (mainly regarding battle locations and wounds).<sup>213</sup> Notably, though this was not stated in the advertisement inviting applicants, only officers – not the rank and file – were eligible for consideration, as stated in the National South African Memorial Committee Chairman's report following the unveiling.<sup>214</sup> However, this was considered fair because due to the voluntary nature of South African service (this Dominion never introduced conscription), by the end of the war nearly all of its officers were men who had begun their careers in the ranks and then earned their promotions by active service.<sup>215</sup> The Committee also selected South African representatives for the unveiling with the aim of representing

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<sup>210</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Wakeford application [undated]".

<sup>211</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Cruse application, 2 September 1926".

<sup>212</sup> NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Cruse application, 2 September 1926".

<sup>213</sup> For example, see NASA MPA 3/3/579, "Delville Wood War Memorial: Name, regiment, length of service, remarks [1926]".

<sup>214</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, "Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]," 8.

<sup>215</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, "Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]," 8.

“both the white races of South Africa, every field in which South Africans fought, and every branch (infantry, artillery, mounted forces, medical, nursing).”<sup>216</sup> Other guests invited by the Committee to attend included the widows of two South African generals, a representative of blinded veterans, and women representing a veterans’ charity and the Military Nursing Staff.<sup>217</sup>

In a special section of his report entitled “Special Efforts for Representation”, the Chairman explained why all of the South African representatives were white: “it was not our duty, nor was it possible to for us to assure adequate representation for all”, but the resulting absence of people of colour was one which the Committee “would earnestly wish to mitigate.”<sup>218</sup> This mitigation was done not by inviting representatives from the Cape Coloured Corps, the Native Labour and Driver contingents, and the British Indian population in South Africa, but rather by espousing their virtues in this report and by arranging for, in the former two cases, their white commanders to attend on their behalf.<sup>219</sup> Despite having “no representation of their own blood coming from South Africa to share with us in the ceremony”, they had “given abundant proof of sharing the effort and sacrifice in the same cause.”<sup>220</sup> The invited representative of the British Indians in South Africa is the only person of colour named as attending the service: an Indian barrister based in London, Serjeant-Major Christopher, had founded the South African Indian Bearer Corps, and the Committee invited

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<sup>216</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926],” 8.

<sup>217</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926],” 9.

<sup>218</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926],” 10.

<sup>219</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926],” 10.

<sup>220</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926],” 10.

him to attend and represent “not only his own immediate comrades of the Bearer Corps, but others of his countrymen whose voluntary service in the war had been so valued.”<sup>221</sup>

People of colour were less egregiously missing from the unveiling at Neuve Chapelle, but that is a false comparison to draw. More accurately, the unveilings for both India and South Africa’s memorials in France were (with the sole exception of Christopher) completely lacking in representation of their non-white labour forces. Neuve Chapelle’s unveiling included Indian martial and political representatives, including the Maharaja of Kapurthala who gave a speech (the Maharajas of Rajpipla and Rutlam were also invited, but unable to attend).<sup>222</sup> Appendix I of the Neuve Chapelle unveiling publication gives a selected list of the attendees, but these are almost entirely British and French politicians and military leaders and senior IWGC staff and contractors; exceptions included a note that the Maharaja was “accompanied by Sirdar Muhabbet Rai” and that a woman “representing the widows and relatives of the Indian soldiers who fell in France” was also in attendance.<sup>223</sup> Images from the publication reveal a substantial contingent of Indian officers present, but their names are not recorded.<sup>224</sup>

### *Broadcasts*

Being physically present at a memorial’s unveiling was not the only way to engage with the ceremony. The later unveilings – Canada’s and Australia’s, at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux, taking place in the 1930s – were able to make use of technological developments in order to serve as a connection opportunity for those who could not physically attend.

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<sup>221</sup> NASA TES 1385 F6/39X, “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926],” 11.

<sup>222</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India’s Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

<sup>223</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India’s Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

<sup>224</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India’s Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

Specifically, radio broadcasts in tandem with both the Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux unveilings were used to transmit the ceremony to those at home.<sup>225</sup>

The use of radio broadcast at the Villers-Bretonneux unveiling allowed the speech given by King George VI to reach Australians at home. This was significant because he used the opportunity to “emphasise Australians as belonging to the Empire” amidst a setting which visually was the pinnacle of reinforcement for a “Dominion Nationalism” version of Australian identity, in which the lines between nation and empire were blurred in order to promote participation in both as a cohesive rather than contradictory approach.<sup>226</sup> Due to the time difference between Australia and France, direct transmission would have been “most unsatisfactory”, and so a delay-relay system of sorts beginning with the BBC in London was set up using transmitters offered free of charge by Hong Kong and Canada, which after reaching Australia would then be transmitted to New Zealand.<sup>227</sup> The broadcast was one hour and fifteen minutes in length.<sup>228</sup>

At Vimy, both a broadcast and a sound film were taken.<sup>229</sup> The Canadians raised an aspect of identity representation for consideration: “the question of accent of the announcer should be borne in mind.”<sup>230</sup> Unlike the Australians, who accepted seemingly unquestioningly the fact that the Villers-Bretonneux transmission would not be transmitted

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<sup>225</sup> This was part of a wider trend in which broadcasting was used as a means of cultural imperialism, to connect and forge a sense of shared participation in a Britannic world amongst the British Dominions and colonies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as Britain declined in economic and military power. This concept is thoroughly explored in Simon Potter, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World 1922-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and Chandrika Kaul, *Communications, Media and the Imperial Experience: Britain and India in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

<sup>226</sup> Deirdre Gilfedder, “The Imperial Nature of the Australian National War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux,” *Revue électronique d’études sur le monde anglophone* 10:1 histoires de l’oubli (2012), paras 25-26 (no pagination).

<sup>227</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 3, “Decode of cablegram from Prime Minister of New Zealand, 4 July 1938”.

<sup>228</sup> NAA A461 H370/1/15 Pt 3, “Australian Broadcasting Commission, 31 May 1938”.

<sup>229</sup> The production of these underscores the role that technological sophistication was seen to have as an aspirational hallmark of national identity in interwar Canada, yet also how this striving was part of an “evolution towards civilization and the presentation of the modern sophisticated Canada [that] was thoroughly British”; Joan Coutu, “Vehicles of Nationalism: Defining Canada in the 1930s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37:1 (2002), 196.

<sup>230</sup> LAC RG 25 Volume 1778 folder 184 Pt 1, “Vimy memorial outstanding questions discussed with Mr. King, 8 May 1936”.

live, the immediacy and connection created by a shared broadcast was seen as a priority by the Canadians, as a moment in which connection could be shared by immediacy in *time* in lieu of immediacy in *place*:

It seems that only suitable hours which would enable all Canadians to hear broadcast without inconvenience would be two pm or preferably three pm Greenwich Time... eleven am Vimy time which you say organisers have in mind would be unsuitable as it would mean broadcast would come through to most parts in Canada very early in morning or in middle of night.<sup>231</sup>

This invention of the term “Vimy time” underscores the distinct and liminal characteristics of the Vimy site: it was set apart, of the landscape but not fully, to the extent that it was considered enough of a lodestone to metaphorically have its own time zone.

It was not only the vast majority of Canadians who would not be physically present at the Vimy unveiling: their Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, would not be either. His request to deliver a speech to be transmitted to Vimy closed the loop of the connection formed by the broadcast scheme by making Canada not only the destination but the *origin* of part of the broadcast:

Mr King would be pleased to deliver a message at Ottawa for transmission to Vimy, there to be sent out over the public address system which is being put up. The message would then become part of the broadcast from Vimy now being arranged.<sup>232</sup>

The speechmakers of the unveiling were not alone in delivering scripted addresses: the Canadian announcer describing the ceremony also had his words written in advance, and these words too had authority to shape the meanings and values ascribed by the public to the memorial. While the speechmakers’ audience was both the onsite audience at Vimy and those reached through recordings, the announcers’ words were only heard by broadcast listeners – those who were imagining the memorial without seeing it. The announcer was onsite himself, and his words emphasised the strength of connection created by physical presence onsite –

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<sup>231</sup> LAC RG 25 Volume 1778 folder 184 Pt 1, “Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, to Canadian High Commissioner, London, 26 February 1936”.

<sup>232</sup> LAC RG 25 Volume 1778 folder 184 Pt 2, “4 July 1936”.

essentially insinuating that his audience could not possibly fully understand without being there themselves:

To attempt to describe in words this moving and memorable picture is almost an impossibility... any words of description seem feeble in comparison with the actuality. This is a scene which will never be forgotten by those privileged to have been among the reverent spectators.<sup>233</sup>

Broadcasts were only one attempt to “describe in words” these unveiling occasions – one step further removed in immediacy than broadcasts were publications, which also tried to do this.

### *Publications*

The publications released on the subject of these memorials and cemeteries, often timed to coincide with their unveilings, offered another form of tangible connection between these sites and people in the Dominions.

Cemetery registers were one of the most widely produced forms of publication related to IWGC sites. These can still be found today at every IWGC cemetery: an alphabetical list of names with their corresponding grave plot reference numbers. The Canadian government wanted to purchase a copy of the relevant register for every bereaved Canadian family,<sup>234</sup> and by 1936 50,000 of them had been distributed.<sup>235</sup> Registers were also created for memorials: in other words, lists of names of the missing. The Vimy memorial register (the names of all Canadians who went missing in France) was sent to more than 10,800 families.<sup>236</sup>

Another widely distributed publication was the IWGC’s *Graves of the Fallen*, a placatingly informative soft-bound volume written mainly for the distant bereaved. Written by the IWGC’s literary advisor Rudyard Kipling, and illustrated by MacPherson, it addressed

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<sup>233</sup> LAC RG 25 Vol 1778 folder 184 Pt 3, “Vimy Broadcast Announcements”.

<sup>234</sup> LAC RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18), “13 January 1921”.

<sup>235</sup> LAC RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 3, “Next of kin receive registers with names of missing in war,” *The Ottawa Journal* 15 October 1936.

<sup>236</sup> LAC RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 3, “Next of kin receive registers with names of missing in war,” *The Ottawa Journal* 15 October 1936.

topics including the mission and finances of the IWGC, summary of work in progress, and explanation of decisions concerning horticulture, memorial design, and the recovery of bodies.<sup>237</sup> Copies of this were purchased by the Australian government to send to bereaved families.<sup>238</sup>

A separate, nationally-specific publication was also written for Australia's mourners: *Where the Australians Rest*, released by the Australian Department of Defense in 1920. Originally written by A.G. Hampson, though substantially redrafted by others, it was originally targeted only to those who had lost people buried in known graves. However, a reviewer's report of the manuscript, sent to the Department of Defense, argued for an expansion of its remit to bring comfort to those who mourned the *missing* too; saying that if published as-is, the book's "effect would be only to make more poignant the bitterness of those who had lost friends who were *missing*. They would say to themselves – 'it is very well for those who know where their boys are buried. But we have no word of ours.'"<sup>239</sup> To remedy this, it was suggested that the book include specific mention of the treatment of unknown bodies and the nature of their material culture of commemoration in cemeteries, which would "make all the difference" to the bereaved of the missing, as they could "gather from it at any rate the *sort* of surroundings in which their boys lie, although over their graves is only the mark 'to an unknown soldier.'"<sup>240</sup>

With each copy of *Where the Australians Rest* addressed "with the compliments and deepest sympathy of the Minister of State for Defence, Senator G. F. Pearce", the book contains pastoral and euphemistic descriptions of the locations on the Western Front, at Gallipoli, and in England that the Australian dead are buried in. The level of detail seems intended to allow faraway readers to clearly visualise these sites that they would never see:

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<sup>237</sup> Rudyard Kipling, *Graves of the Fallen* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1919).

<sup>238</sup> As stated in the typed inscription of the copy of *Graves of the Fallen* held by Oxford's Bodleian Library.

<sup>239</sup> AWM 38 3DRL 6673/371, "18 February 1920".

<sup>240</sup> AWM 38 3DRL 6673/371, "18 February 1920".

One walks into the Anzac Cemetery over a little wooden bridge with painted railing. Willow trees grow along a ditch near the roadway, and the cemetery is in the midst of cornfields. Across the narrow, cobble-stoned roadway is a Canadian cemetery,<sup>241</sup>

and at Villers-Bretonneux the trenches had become almost gentle and feminine: “the chalk, which shows wherever the surface is disturbed, makes the trenches, now that they are filled in, look like white ribbons amid the grass.”<sup>242</sup> Etaples too was rearticulated in idyllic terms:

Flowers bloom on the graves, which are tended with loving care. Etaples is now a haunt of peace. No sound of hostile aircraft breaks the silence of the skies. Cattle browse by the riverside, and a cool ocean wind fills the sails of fishing craft, which cruise where the river flows into the sea.<sup>243</sup>

The good condition and permanence of these sites were also repeatedly emphasised: “A small rustic gate gives entry to the enclosure... the cemeteries here are well kept, and Nature assists in veiling, if not repairing, the ravages of war”,<sup>244</sup> “It is amid these scenes that our noble dead are buried. They sleep far from their homeland; but their memory will never fade”,<sup>245</sup> and that the IWGC believed each cemetery as a whole and each grave specifically “should be made as permanent as man’s art could devise.”<sup>246</sup> Thus this rhetoric, in the tangible form of a book that could create connection by being sent and held and read, also served as scaffolding for the formation of intangible connection: imagined mental pilgrimages to these places by those who needed them, fabricated and distorted by the descriptive yet manipulatively pastoral language used in the text.

Another such publication was *The Epic of Vimy*, produced by the Canadian Legion in the immediate aftermath of the 1936 pilgrimage and unveiling ceremony. This volume was a detailed travelogue of each day, including copious photographs and the full texts of official

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<sup>241</sup> Australian Department of Defense, *Where the Australians Rest: A description of many of the cemeteries overseas in which Australians – including those whose names can never now be known – are buried* (Victoria: Government of Australia, 1920), 8.

<sup>242</sup> Australian Department of Defense, *Where the Australians Rest*, 45.

<sup>243</sup> Australian Department of Defense, *Where the Australians Rest*, 33.

<sup>244</sup> Australian Department of Defense, *Where the Australians Rest*, 10.

<sup>245</sup> Australian Department of Defense, *Where the Australians Rest*, 49.

<sup>246</sup> Australian Department of Defense, *Where the Australians Rest*, 6.

speeches given. It also expansively chronicled the planning process for the pilgrimage and the practicalities of logistics en route. Sprinkled throughout were anecdotes relating to individual pilgrims and their experiences.

This publication served to crystallise, expand upon, and even further disseminate the pervasive rhetoric of the pilgrimage and unveiling ceremony: reverential and idealising treatment of the dead combined with overt nationalist messages, reification of the shared values of civilisation shared by Canada, France, and Britain, and, given its 1936 setting, pleading calls for peace, as discussed above. Though much of the most powerful rhetoric in the book is actually the text of speeches delivered (and thus has been examined elsewhere in this chapter), the editorial and observational remarks made by the book's author also served to reinforce these themes. The book begins by describing the pilgrimage as a journey to visit "our comrades left sleeping in those friendly lands",<sup>247</sup> and that "like their British comrades-in-arms the members of Canada's fighting forces felt the need, unexpressed probably even to themselves, of seeking fresh courage for the battle of life by worshipping at the shrine of the glorious dead."<sup>248</sup> Both of these centre *place* when describing, in highly pastoral and hagiographical terms, the importance of this pilgrimage for heightening the relationship between the dead and the living.

The 8,000 people who participated in the pilgrimage each had an individual experience, from which elements were drawn to create a composite narrative. Creating an official single publication, to recount the pilgrimage and allow non-attendees to share in it vicariously, calcified the narrative of the pilgrimage; which gave the author/editor considerable power of selection in shaping the narrative to be presented. As such a dominant historical source for the pilgrimage, it is difficult to disentangle fact from editorial choice

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<sup>247</sup> Walter S. Woods, Vice-Chairman of the Canadian National Pilgrimage Committee, foreword to Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 5.

<sup>248</sup> John Hundevad, executive editor of *The Legionary*, quoted in Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 6.

when examining details of the event. For example, the pilgrims presented through the book via photographs and quotes are overwhelmingly white; in 223 pages, the only indication to the contrary is a single photograph of six Japanese-Canadian pilgrims from British Columbia.<sup>249</sup>

A significant exception to the rapacious interest with which the above publications were consumed was *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, released in 1927 to recount the memorial's unveiling. As Claud Jacob describes, who accompanied Fabian Ware to a meeting about Indian commemoration,

Fabian Ware also told the Viceroy that that very nice publication giving an account of the Neuve Chapelle Indian Memorial in France and its unveiling by the Secretary of State for India had absolutely fallen flat. Apparently very few copies were sold in India and the interest in it taken by the Indian Army appears to have been nil. The Viceroy asked me to represent this to you and suggested that Indian regiments might be reminded of the existence of this book and expressed the hope that officers and other ranks might take more interest in the memorial. I notice what very great interest is taken by all the Dominions and the people in the British Isles over the work of the War Graves Commission. All publications connected with cemeteries registers and memorials are eagerly bought up. The only exception to this is India which apparently takes no interest at all... it is not pleasant hearing reproaches from outsiders that India is the only part of the Empire which takes no interest in the work of the Commission.<sup>250</sup>

Without further documentary material available to elucidate the reasons for this 'nil' interest in India, it would be unfair, unwise, and beyond the remit of this volume to speculate extensively. In common with the other unveiling publications introduced above, *Neuve Chapelle* quotes in full many of the speeches given at the event. It also contains a dedication by the King specifically for the publication, which is notable for directly addressing the concepts of tangible connection and distant grief:

I hope that it will be the means of bringing to their kin in India – most of whom can never visit the far distant scene of battle – vivid realisation of the loving care and profound homage with which all parts of my Empire have combined to perpetuate the memory of the Indian fallen.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Murray, *Epic of Vimy*, 33.

<sup>250</sup> CWGC WG 861/2/3/11 Pt 2, "Extract from a letter dated 25 September 1929, from Sir Claud Jacob to Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood".

<sup>251</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419, *Neuve Chapelle: India's Memorial in France*, 1927 (no pagination).

This quote also demonstrates the conflation of meaning between landscape and memorial, as discussed in Chapter II. The King is describing how Indians cannot easily reach the location, and he chooses to locate the significance of the place within its identity as a *battle* site, rather than as a *memorial* site – but the “loving care and profound homage” that the publication will visually convey refers to the visible evidence of that on the landscape: the memorial.

### *Medals and Models*

In addition to print, medals and models were another form of publication created on a mass scale to appeal to domestic audiences in connection with national memorial unveilings on the Western Front.

A souvenir medal was struck for the Villers-Bretonneux unveiling, with much preceding discussion concerning its design and production. This was erroneously understood to have been struck by the French mint, but had actually been privately produced in Paris.<sup>252</sup> The artist for this medal, de Possesse, had previously designed the medal for the Vimy memorial’s unveiling in 1936; this had been “without any commission or special authority” from the Canadian High Commission, but nevertheless the High Commissioner seems to have been fairly pleased with the results, as he kept one of the medals and facilitated the introduction between the Australian High Commissioner and the artist two years later.<sup>253</sup> The Australian reply to de Possesse, sent via the Canadian High Commissioner, illustrates the risks involved in allowing commercial representation of a national memorial and, concomitantly, national identity to be left in the hands of an unsanctioned designer. de Possesse had sent a proposed design for the Villers-Bretonneux medal – which, as with Vimy’s, he technically did not need permission for, and which was filling the lacuna of

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<sup>252</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18/7, “22 March 1939”.

<sup>253</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18/7, “19 May 1938”.

officially commissioned medals by either country – and the Australian High Commissioner spotted a litany of inaccuracies and problems.<sup>254</sup> He reaffirmed that it was “not proposed to give this gentleman any sanction to produce a medal”, and nevertheless “should perhaps point out that the [proposed design] is wrong in a number of particulars”, including the number of Australian dead, the name of the Australian veterans’ organisation, incorrect years of Australia’s participation on the Western Front, and an unauthorised reproduction of Australia’s coat of arms.<sup>255</sup>

There was at least one other person intending to strike a Villers-Bretonneux medal in tandem with the unveiling; L.J. Kirtland of Paris also wrote to the Australian High Commissioner asking for permission, and was told that “it is not proposed by this office to authorize anyone to produce a commemorative medal. If, however, you decide on your own responsibility to strike a medal, there can be no possible objection on the part of this office.”<sup>256</sup> Kirtland had asked about the logistics of selling the medal onsite, and was told that he would need permission from the French authorities.<sup>257</sup>

Unlike medals, models were generally not created on a mass scale; in fact, often there was only one copy. This proved particularly problematic in the case of Menin Gate, since it was an empire rather than national memorial. The year of its unveiling, the IWGC had commissioned a model of the memorial; the Australian War Memorial (museum in Canberra) got word of this and requested to have it, which the IWGC eventually agreed to on the condition that “if presented to Australia, Canada would not ask for a similar model.”<sup>258</sup>

Models of the national memorials did not face inter-Dominion competitions for ownership. The summer of the Vimy memorial’s unveiling in 1936, a London firm wrote to

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<sup>254</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18/7, “18 May 1938”.

<sup>255</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18/7, “18 May 1938”.

<sup>256</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18/7, “1 June 1938”.

<sup>257</sup> NAA A2909 AGS6/1/18/7, “1 June 1938”.

<sup>258</sup> AWM 93 17/4/17, “8 September 1927”.

the High Commissioner for Canada in the UK, offering to sell the 43.5x47.5-inch scale relief model of the Vimy battlefield landscape that was currently on display in their showroom. The role of material culture in re-inscribing memory onto battlefield landscapes is perfectly encapsulated by this enticement in the sales pitch: the model came already with roads, buildings, streams, woods, railways, and the British front line position all indicated by different colours, but the offer was made to the High Commission that “further details could of course be added [to the model landscape] to cover your special requirements.”<sup>259</sup> Long before this in 1928, the Australian War Memorial (museum in Canberra) had also considered commissioning a scale model of the Villers-Bretonneux cemetery and memorial site, on the advice of the Australian representative of the IWGC Secretariat.<sup>260</sup> However, the extreme size of the site – cemetery 200x840 feet, and adjoining memorial site 660x660 feet – prompted the AWM Director to consider a more reasonable and still suitably ‘Australian’ site instead:

If the Villers-Bretonneux Cemetery is rejected [as the selected site to model], I am inclined to favour the V.C. Corner Australian Cemetery...the cemetery is comparatively small and modelling would not be a heavy task. There is, I understand, an interesting military cemetery on the hills overlooking Jerusalem... but I think it will be advisable to select a Western Front cemetery in view of the fact that such a cemetery will be typical of those where probably 80% of the Australian soldiers are buried.<sup>261</sup>

This focus on selecting a model site that would resonate with the largest possible demographic of bereaved Australians emphasises the importance placed on models as visible, tangible means with which to form connections between distant mourners and the battlefield landscape sites they could not easily see.

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<sup>259</sup> LAC RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 1, “6 August 1936”.

<sup>260</sup> AWM 93 13/1/47, “18 August 1926”, “2 August 1928”.

<sup>261</sup> AWM 93 13/1/47, “18 August 1926”.

## Conclusions

Understandings of the landscapes and monuments of IWGC sites are incomplete without also examining the various forms of connection they were both nodes and conduits for. The tangible and imagined bonds between these memorials and cemeteries on the Western Front and their domestic communities of the living illuminate both the importance placed on “keeping touch with our people” and the inextricable ways that elements of personal and collective identities were included in these expressions. These methods of ‘keeping touch’ can be categorised into three broad realms: material items (including replica memorials, ashes, seeds, photographs, wooden crosses); involvement in decision-making, or attempts to do so, regarding identification, effects, epitaphs, designs, policies, and domestic stone and labour; and in-person visitation, most notably on organised pilgrimages, and the associated broadcasts, publications, and small material culture outputs that were produced to reinforce and reify a collective narrative of these visits that would also allow them to be shared more widely. Each of these forms emphasise the importance placed on tangibility and participation by those involved in creating and sustaining these connections.

Having addressed in turn the reciprocal relationships – and ramifications for individual and collective identities – of landscapes, memorials and cemeteries, and the forms of connection bridging the distance between them and domestic mourners, the next chapter (Chapter V: Conclusions) will bridge the temporal distance between the time period so far examined (1918-1938) and the present, addressing modern ramifications for these sites and tying together the strands of this thesis as a whole.

## Chapter V Conclusions

*“I cannot look at this memorial without emotion... it shall stand here for all time to remind those who come after us”*

– Earl of Birkenhead, speech at  
Neuve Chapelle memorial unveiling, 1927<sup>1</sup>

This epigraph introduces three key themes of this thesis’ conclusion: emotion, perpetuity, and contemporary relevance. In his first seven simple words, Birkenhead highlights not only the inextricable role that emotion plays in memorial meanings, but also picks up on the theme of ‘gaze’ addressed throughout this thesis – making explicit the role played by the audience engaging with a memorial and tying *that* to emotion as well – and notably says “cannot” rather than “should not”, eliciting the theme of agency addressed in previous chapters, by making us question the ability of both viewer and memorial to create and control the infusion of emotion into their interaction. With his next phrase, “it shall stand here for all time”, Birkenhead raises the theme of perpetuity – which is misleading and therefore important to address. Though he made his statement in reference to the specific example of Neuve Chapelle, the sentiment was widely agreed to apply more broadly to IWGC sites: they were designed to be lasting, permanent additions to the landscape. So far, in 2019, they still appear as such: but their apparent stasis belies the vast amount of upkeep and adaptation they have required in order to maintain this image. Lastly, “to remind those who come after us” draws our attention to two key points concerning IWGC sites’ contemporary relevance. First, such direct reference to future generations underscores both the imagined role interwar people hoped these sites would have for us in 2019, and also how we in the present imagine that generations in *our* future will interact with these places. Second, the use of “remind” is a good prompt to consider the many purposes these memorials

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<sup>1</sup> BL L/MIL/17/5/2419 *Neuve Chapelle: India’s Memorial in France, 1927* (no pagination).

were intended to have, and makes us question what other verbs could have also fit, including ‘teach’, ‘warn’, and so forth. It also serves as an example of the concept “collective future thought,” in which individuals conceptualise the future of groups,<sup>2</sup> and supports the recent trend in cognitive and neuroscientific memory studies of arguing that “memory serves to connect individuals not only to their pasts but also to their futures.”<sup>3</sup>

In order to understand the effects these IWGC sites have today, however, parts of the picture must be filled in which are outside this thesis’ remit or ability to complete: namely, the ‘afterlives’ of these monuments and cemeteries after they pass through the end of this project’s temporal window. As Shelley Hornstein argues, “architecture attempts to capture memory so that memorialisation can stay relevant,”<sup>4</sup> and as of 2019 these sites’ relevance is certainly not in question, but their longevity certainly should be. Most grave markers, in general, are intended to be durable – in his work on ancient war dead, Adam Nicholson aptly puts it as, “[tombs are] scarifications, intended to make the skin of the planet meaningful... their aim is to deny time, making something lasting and permanent in a world which promises only transience”<sup>5</sup> yet very few truly are.<sup>6</sup> An intrinsically connected concept to this is these sites’ *appearance* of stability and durability, because this affects our perceptions of their authority and meaning; as Till and Kuusisto-Arponen argue, it is our responsibility to “problematize singular claims to the authenticity of place made through universal narratives and seemingly stable material landscapes.”<sup>7</sup> IWGC cemeteries are particularly intended to

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<sup>2</sup> Piotr M. Szpunar and Karl K. Szpunar, “Collective future thought: Concept, function, and implications for collective memory studies,” *Memory Studies* 9:4 (2016), 377.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel L. Schacter and Michael Welker, “Memory and connection: remembering the past and imagining the future in individuals, groups, and cultures,” *Memory Studies* 9:3 (2016), 242.

<sup>4</sup> Shelley Hornstein, *Losing Site: Architecture, Memory and Place* (Abingdon: Ashgate/Routledge, 2011), 25.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Nicholson, *The Mighty Dead: Why Homer Matters* (London: Collins, 2015), 167.

<sup>6</sup> However, many of the oldest extant sites in the world *are* tombs. Additionally, durability of meaning as well as physical durability is elusive for monuments. As Osborne argues, the “great irony of monuments” is that by materialising memory in a specific object, “monuments simultaneously render that memory vulnerable to contestation and reinterpretation.” James F. Osborne, “Counter-monumentality and the vulnerability of memory,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 17:2 (2017), 167.

<sup>7</sup> Till and Kuusisto-Arponen, “Towards responsible geographies of memory,” 291.

appear perennial, and yet it takes a great deal of upkeep and repair work to maintain that appearance. All of them survived the Second World War, but not unscathed. Villers-Bretonneux suffered the most structural damage,<sup>8</sup> but nearly all of the major memorials in question experienced a suspension of the high levels of caretaking they had been receiving in order to keep them and their landscapes in good order. For example, a June 1940 news article reported how the caretaker of the Delville Wood memorial had had to flee with his family from their home onsite and “[take] his place in the endless cavalcade of refugees” attempting to escape France.<sup>9</sup> That article’s report that the Delville Wood area had been “the subject of heavy bombing” (yet had incurred no significant damage) was fairly credible, as it was based on the eyewitness report of the caretaker, who when the bombing began was told to leave within one hour by local authorities; he was able to share this report after safely reaching London, where he was given a temporary post with the South African High Commission.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, widespread rumours that the Vimy memorial had been bombed and heavily damaged – which the South African caretaker article actually repeats – were not based on eyewitness testimony and were later proved to be false.<sup>11</sup> In addition to being in structural danger due to their locations within the war zone, and more general neglect and disarray due to the evacuation of caretakers and horticultural staff, IWGC memorials and cemeteries on the Western Front also suffered a more intangible loss: continuity of knowledge about their care. Not all the caretakers and IWGC staff returned to their posts after the war, and this combined with the loss of records and instructions to create significant uncertainty about best and existing practices as these sites were slowly reclaimed in the aftermath of the Second

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<sup>8</sup> Widely reported; see for example AWM 93 12/8/14, “14 October 1944, Report to Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force”.

<sup>9</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “Delville Wood Memorial in German Hands: Custodians’ Fortunate Escape,” press cutting from unidentified London newspaper, 8 June 1940.

<sup>10</sup> CWGC WG 1049/1 Pt 4, “Delville Wood Memorial in German Hands: Custodians’ Fortunate Escape,” press cutting from unidentified London newspaper, 8 June 1940.

<sup>11</sup> See Serge Durlinger, “Safeguarding Sanctity: Canada and the Vimy Memorial During the Second World War”, in *Vimy Ridge: A Canadian Reassessment*, ed. Geoffrey Hayes, Andrew Iarocci, and Mike Bechthold (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), 296.

World War. For example, instructions on caring for Indian graves were noted in 1949 to have been lost during the war.<sup>12</sup> Another intangible effect of the Second World War upon these sites was the suspension of remembrance rituals; for example, the Last Post ceremony at Menin Gate, which had been occurring every night since 1929, was halted during the time that Ypres was occupied by Germany 1940-44. The Second World War also saw a massive expansion of the IWGC's remit, with its First World War sites no longer being its only charge. The IWGC actively took on the role of planning and constructing cemeteries for Second World War dead from 1943 onwards, following the same architectural and horticultural principles established in the creation of its First World War sites.<sup>13</sup>

First World War IWGC sites' roles, particularly memorials, in affirming and rebuilding post-*Second* World War identity for various countries is exemplified by the case of Villers-Bretonneux. In a 1944 proposal from the IWGC to the Australian War Memorial Director, again we see the significance of *objects* in forming connections both between home and battlefield and between past and present:

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1938, I wrote to Colonel Treloar about 'relics' from the [Villers-Bretonneux memorial] unveiling ceremony of the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1938, and gave particulars of the Australian flags. There were four Australian flags, two of 9 ft. length and 2 of 27 ft. length, which were subsequently sent to Canberra...I should like you to consider the question of sending back to England one of the smaller flags. I have in mind that shortly after the liberation of France it might be appropriate to hoist the Australian flag again at the Memorial. It would be of particular interest if it were possible to run up one of the original flags which was flown at the unveiling ceremony.<sup>14</sup>

The afterlives of these places in more recent decades has seen increasing numbers of visitors. 'Dark tourists' – tourists motivated to visit by a place's association with death, pain, or trauma, though both the definition and the very existence of this concept (also known as

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<sup>12</sup> CWGC WG 909/7, "Horticulture: Treatment of Indian Graves," 17 August 1949.

<sup>13</sup> This new responsibility of the IWGC is detailed in Seumas Spark, "The Treatment of the British Military War Dead of the Second World War," PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009, Chapter Six Section II "The IWGC and its Second World War Task," 241-256.

<sup>14</sup> AWM 93 12/8/14/3, "11 January 1944".

‘thanatourism’) is contested – visit in large numbers, with a widely noted spike during the centenary.<sup>15</sup> The ways in which these sites have engaged with high visitor numbers has increasingly included the addition of accompanying visitor centres with museum elements. Delville Wood’s was the frontrunner, opening in 1984; Beaumont-Hamel received a visitor centre in 2001; a visitor centre was built at Thiepval in 2004, expanded and refurbished in 2016; a ‘temporary’ centre was built at Vimy in 2005, which was finally replaced and expanded in 2017; and Australia opened the Sir John Monash visitor centre at Villers-Bretonneux in 2018.<sup>16</sup>

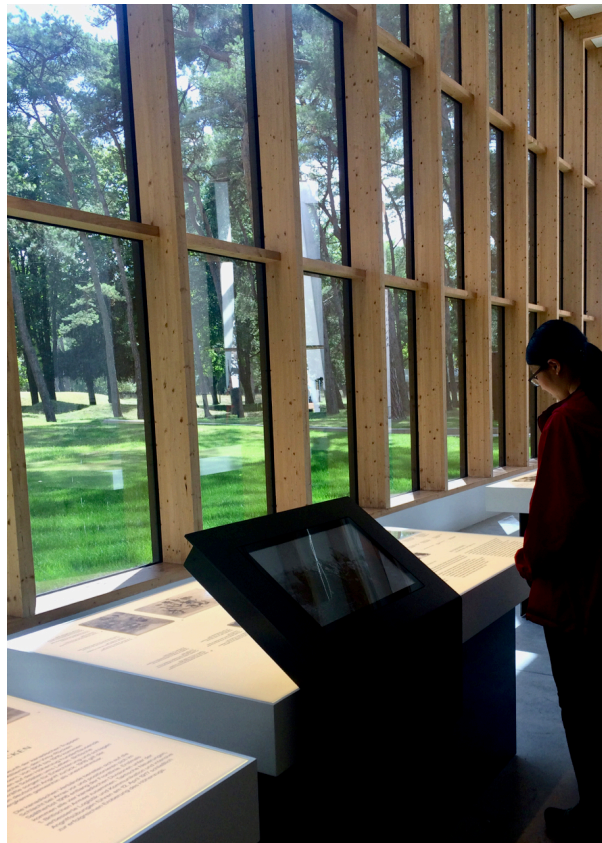


Image 5.1. New visitor centre at Vimy, 2017.

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<sup>15</sup> For a representative discussion on the definitions and existence of ‘dark tourism’, see Stephen Miles, “Battlefield sites as dark tourism attractions: an analysis of experience,” *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9:2 (2014), 134-147, which uses battlefields in the UK as case studies and provides a thorough state-of-the-field analysis and review which extends to the First World War case. For a discussion of how First World War battlefield interment events occupy a blurrier zone between thanatourism and “reflexive nostalgic tourism,” see Peter Clarke and Andrew McAuley, “The Fromelles Interment 2010: dominant narrative and reflexive thanatourism,” *Current Issues in Tourism* 19:11 (2016), 1103-1119.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the functions served by two other major Western Front museum openings or expansions in the early 2010s (connected to different battlefield locations than those examined in this thesis), see Caroline Winter, “The multiple roles of battlefield war museums: a study at Fromelles and Passchendaele,” *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 13:3 (2018), 211-223.

These openings, and their timings, emphasise the heavy focus on education in 21<sup>st</sup>-century conceptualisations of the roles and meanings of these sites. The loss of living memory of the conflict was nearly concurrent with the centenary (this varied by country and by definitions of service), and these twin occasions have prompted a resurgence of battlefield visitation, which now forms an important economic sector for France and Belgium particularly.<sup>17</sup>

This resurgence has been accompanied by a heavier focus on education; for example, the British government's First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours programme, led by University College London's Institute of Education, aimed to bring at least two students and one teacher to the Western Front battlefields from every state-funded secondary school in England between 2014-19.<sup>18</sup> Centenary educational initiatives in India were notably few; while the former Dominions, particular Canada and Australia, mounted significant educational initiatives, but not to the extent of Britain. Canada and Australia's centenary education efforts have occurred both domestically (mainly exhibits and events) and on the Western Front battlefields (visitor centre development, battlefield tours, and ceremonies), and have been funded by a combination of government, charity, and school sources. Throughout the centenary period, some of the most significant educational opportunities have been specific centenaries, though some of these opportunities were seized more than others. For the dawn service commemorating the Gallipoli landing centenary, second place in the "cascading hierarchy of memory credentials" was given to Australian schoolchildren, for which 400 places were reserved; this was "*de rigueur* at all commemorations today to testify to the supposed cross-generational transmission of the ANZAC legend."<sup>19</sup> The ceremony at

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<sup>17</sup> For an overview of the statistical evidence and underlying reasons for battlefield tourism's importance to the French economy during the centenary, see David Foulk, "The impact of the 'economy of history': The example of battlefield tourism in France," *Mondes du Tourisme* 12 (2016), particularly 4-6 for statistics and charts.

<sup>18</sup> UCL Institute of Education, "First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours Programme: About Us," <https://www.centenarybattlefieldtours.org/about-us/>.

<sup>19</sup> Joan Beaumont, "Commemoration in Australia: a memory orgy?" *Australian Journal of Political Science* 50:3 (2015), 538-539.

Thiepval in July 2016 to mark the centenary of the Battle of the Somme's first day drew upwards of 10,000 people; while it did not include a formal educational component, it was a significant learning opportunity for its child and adult attendees. Although Canada marked the entire centenary period, its focus was particularly intense during 2017: this was the centenary of the battle for Vimy, and very handily also was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canadian confederation, and thus became a year of heightened attempts to reinforce nationalist and 'birth of a nation' narratives domestically.<sup>20</sup> For the Vimy centenary ceremony in April 2017, upwards of 25,000 people attended including 10,000 Canadian students.



Image 5.2. Vimy centenary ceremony, 9 April 2017.

In 2018, nearly 8,000 Australians travelled to France to participate in the centenary dawn service ceremony at Villers-Bretonneux on ANZAC day. 11 November 2018 happened to fall on Remembrance Sunday, tidily uniting the diverging remembrance observance traditions of Britain (which primarily observes the Sunday, though now often observes a two minute

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<sup>20</sup> For a contextual introduction to the problematic nature of this overlap, and how the Historical Thinking Concept of 'considering the ethical dimension' can be used to teach and understand it, see Lindsay Gibson, "The Ethical Dimension of Canadian Commemoration Controversies," *Canadian Social Studies* 49:2 (2017), 15-19.

silence on the 11<sup>th</sup> as well) and its Dominions (which observe the 11<sup>th</sup>, regardless of day) into a single day. The divergent occurrences on the centenary of the Armistice throughout the former British Empire are the subject of a forthcoming edited volume.<sup>21</sup> As the formal centenary period ends and First World War specialists look ahead with uncertainty to the future place of the war in public memory, we enter yet another new phase of this conflict's remembrance which will impose yet more new layers of meaning and messages about contemporary and historical identities onto IWGC sites. Some future work on post-centenary memory of the First World War will surely be received with great interest in decades hence; with this thesis being submitted in 2019, however, all this work can do is offer a critical foundation upon which post-centenary analyses will hopefully build.

This conclusion aims to tie together some threads of a topic which, like the conflict itself, can and should sustain endless debate concerning its end points. It has already briefly addressed the lives of these memorials and cemeteries after 1938, including how they were impacted by the Second World War, and discussed the role these sites have played in contemporary centenary remembrance. It now will survey the key original contributions this thesis has made to its fields, before reiterating the main arguments of this work both overall and from each chapter specifically. Lastly, this conclusion offers directions for future research, which were outside the scope of this thesis but would be beneficial additions to various scholarly fields.

This thesis is an original contribution to knowledge in three key ways: in its source material, its interdisciplinarity, and its approach. Throughout these chapters, archival material from six archives has been analysed; many of these are already well-trawled institutions by First World War scholars, but hardly ever all examined within a single project, and the South African material from the national archives at Pretoria is almost entirely that which has not

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<sup>21</sup> Led by Shanti Sumartojo of the *Commemoration Reframed* project; no publication details as of yet.

before been utilised in prior war memory scholarship. The treatment of memorials and cemeteries themselves as primary sources has also been a relatively innovative addition, with this project hopefully serving as a model for how to integrate these two types of primary sources (object and archival) and articulating why focusing only on one would be problematic due to their highly interconnected and reciprocally informing nature. The focus on material culture as source is a result of this project's interdisciplinarity: while much excellent scholarship exists on war memory, material culture, collective memory, landscape, and death and mourning in history, anthropology, geography, archaeology, memory studies, museum and heritage studies, tourism studies, and visual and material culture theory, this thesis breaks ground in its demonstration of how approaches and concepts from these fields can be fruitfully combined to produce new insights about First World War material culture, memory, and identity. While this interdisciplinarity is one facet of this thesis' approach, its approach is also original in examining its subjects heavily through the lens of emotional relationships, and in thinking laterally to explore the wide spectrum of ways those manifested through the prism of material culture.

A key innovation in terms of the emotional approach this thesis has taken is its concept of the 'absent dead'. This project has demonstrated that the First World War dead of the British Empire were 'absent' in various ways, and the nature of these absences positioned the dead at the intersection of multiple identities. The six types of absence identified and explored throughout the thesis are the missing dead, the unidentified dead, imagined absence, illicit exhumation, cremation, and absence created by distance. The distinction of these types is significant because each created unique conditions for the intersections and expressions of different types of identity, due to differing triangulations between place, body, name, and mourner; because the six are not mutually exclusive categories; because the latter four are generally underexamined due to the widely-cast shadow of the former two; and because they

have a shared function as serving as nexuses of identity, yet despite this commonality have not received sufficient critical attention as a set.

The central contention of this thesis is that beyond being sites of memory and sites of mourning, the memorials and cemeteries representing South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia on the First World War's Western Front also function as sites of identity. They are perennial testaments to those who died, those who missed them, and the emerging nations who lost them. Between 1918 and 1938, the processes through which the living understood and articulated their place in the world with relation to the dead were unstable, due to shifts and uncertainties in the presence or absence of the dead and their bodies. IWGC sites were expressive and emotive locations confronting and articulating this instability; they significantly impacted the relationships between the living and the dead by acting as intersections between national and imperial identities, where these manifested, overlapped, and were negotiated on both individual and collective levels through material culture.

In answer to this thesis' research question, "for South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia, what was the relationship between the material culture of commemoration for their First World War dead and the expression and negotiation of their identities in the interwar period? And why did it, and does it, matter?", this work has demonstrated, through extensive engagement with both archival sources and the objects in question themselves, that the battlefield memorials and cemeteries representing India and the Dominions were not merely backdrops against which identities were performed. They also performed identities themselves, by tangibly manifesting negotiations made by actors representing imperial, national, and individual interests. This mattered because the interwar battlefield landscape created a world stage for the interplay of identity in performance. Within their mutual membership of the IWGC, South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia jostled to define themselves not only in relation to the metropole but also to each other. It took as its case

studies four national memorials (Delville Wood, Neuve Chapelle, Vimy, and Villers-Bretonneux) and the empire memorial Menin Gate, while also scrutinising the development of IWGC cemeteries in northern France and Belgium commemorating the imperial dead. The four memorials are national in character, whereas the cemeteries and Menin Gate are deliberately not segregated by nationality, and are instead groupings of the dead based on geographic proximity to site of death. The inherent tension in this difference, which this thesis identified and explored, highlights the ways in which other dimensions of identity – most notably race and religion – were at times more powerful factors in the collecting of the dead into commemorative cohorts.

The individualism of the dead in commemoration is a hallmark of the memorials and cemeteries in question, yet the role of living individuals is also critical to the range of material culture negotiations examined in this thesis. They sought to create and maintain connections with these sites and their dead through a variety of tangible methods, including photographs, flora, replicas, publications, visitation, and insisting on input into the design decision-making processes. The transnational and intrinsically comparative structure of this project has allowed for greater precision in examining the spectrum of these connections and how they varied between countries. The role of the living and the connections they created throughout material culture has significant implications for our understandings of contemporary First World War memory, and thus for the relevance of this thesis past its ostensible 1938 end date. The dead are still dead, but now there are new generations of the living who perpetuate forms of these material culture engagements with commemoration; these cannot be properly understood without critical examination, as this thesis has provided, of the origins, purposes, and manifestations of these forms of connection.

The ‘material culture of remembrance’ is increasingly at the heart of First World War memory. As living memory of the conflict has faded, it is the tangible remains – artefacts,

memorials, and cemeteries – that we ask to tell us stories about our countries, our predecessors, and ourselves. This was also true, fulfilling both similar and different purposes, in the 1920s-30s when these sites were being constructed. As such, the material culture of remembrance is not simply about remembrance, it is also the material culture of *identity*, playing an active rather than passive role in how identity was, and is, understood, represented, shaped, and performed both historically and in the present. This thesis has examined the formative period of 1918-1938, when the memorials and cemeteries it examined were being created, yet is being submitted in 2019, near the end of the centenary; a time in which their contemporary relevance has arguably never been more overtly recognised in the public consciousness and mainstream media.

Crucially, relationships are at the heart of this project: between stone and flesh, living and dead, nation and empire, individual and collective, site and object, absence and presence. Each of this thesis' three core chapters interrogated the relationships between place, object, people, and distance in different ways. Chapter II, Hallowed Ground, demonstrated how memorials, cemeteries, and their landscapes were linked conceptually as well as spatially by the dead. The boundary between 'missing' and 'buried' was not a static dichotomy in the 1920s-30s, as new bodies were found, mistakes were discovered, and commemorative decisions were made. The meanings of these sites were thus doubly informed by their locations, due to the relationships between site and body, and site and battle. Proposals to commemorate the missing with empty graves, and the handling of contradicting religious beliefs of the Indian dead, further complicated the three intertwined elements of memorial, cemetery, and landscape. Complications in finding and naming individual combatants meant that their place of commemoration was not always stable; memorials and cemeteries informed each other deeply in an evolving dialogue. Existing studies of First World War material culture predominantly examine either memorials or cemeteries, yet during their

construction, they were not considered separate entities by official stakeholders. This chapter – supported by the whole thesis more broadly – argues that a more holistic consideration, examining how they intersect with each other and with landscape, is necessary in order to explicate the multifaceted messages institutional authorities sought to convey about the national and imperial memberships of the dead. Thus, *Hallowed Ground* articulated and analysed the wider contexts of these memorials and cemeteries as components within landscapes, focusing on the role of landscape and ‘place’ in meaning-making for these locations, the significance and creation of these sites as ‘hallowed ground’, and how the spatial and conceptual links between landscape, material culture, and the dead resulted in reciprocally conferred meanings for each of these elements.

Chapter III, *Pouring Forth*, moved to a closer examination of the material culture itself. It argued that the memorials and cemeteries representing India and the Dominions were objects with agency, from their ability to convey and reinforce identities through their forms and functions, and that the national Western Front memorials of South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia are among the most demonstrative examples of this. This chapter showed how these memorials form useful windows through which to examine how identity and memory were expressed, distinguished, and elided along multiple axes. They were tangible manifestations of each country’s navigation between national and imperial identity; additionally, each had to arrive at a decision regarding the relationship between individual and collective commemoration, mainly through decisions regarding inscribing the names of their missing. These memorials, at Villers-Bretonneux (Australian), Vimy (Canadian), Delville Wood (South African), and Neuve Chapelle (Indian), thus allowed a comparative study of where these four countries located themselves along these continuums. The chapter examined both stone – memorial and headstone design – and words – the *language* of this material culture, namely inscriptions and epitaphs. It championed a dual focus throughout,

examining both the decision-making processes as well as the final results for both stone and words at these sites.

Chapter IV, *Keeping Touch*, moved from examinations of place and object to an analysis of the ways in which people formed connections with these across distance. It argued that connection, and specifically connection across distance, is a crucial third element to this equation with place and object that must be considered. Acknowledging the distance between these IWGC sites and many of the people they were meaningful to, this chapter questioned how those people created tangible and imagined bonds with these sites across the sea. It arrived at a three-pronged conclusion: that the conduits for these connections took predominantly the three forms of material items, involvement in decision-making (or attempts thereof), and visitation. Throughout the chapter, various subcategories of each of these three branches were explored, with particular focus on the ways in which categories of identity – most notably geography and experience – influenced how these manifested.

By transforming our understandings of how these sites constructed and perpetuated narratives of remembrance and identity, this research intends to provide a new approach to understanding what material culture can tell us about how identities were understood and expressed during the interwar period, why it mattered, and how this affects us today.

There are several exciting avenues through which to build upon the findings made by this thesis. One has already been alluded to earlier in this chapter: a more systematic and critical inquiry into what happened to these monuments between 1938 and the present. Other directions which this thesis raises and encourages include broadening the transnational and comparative framework of this thesis further. In terms of ‘transnational’, further research to include New Zealand, Newfoundland, Ireland, and/or the British colonies (most notably the British West Indies and the Caribbean) in the approach taken here would be beneficial, as would an expansion beyond the Western Front to memorials and cemeteries of the British

empire in other theatres. Even further encompassment, moving beyond the British imperial system to incorporate comparison of the material culture of Belgian, German, French, Russian, Portuguese, Italian, and Ottoman remembrance and identity in a single work, is also long overdue, though perhaps nearly impossible.



Image 5.3a. French First World War military cemetery Notre Dame de Lorette, France, 2016.



Image 5.3b. German First World War military cemetery Langemarck, Belgium, 2017.

The ‘comparative’ scope of this thesis also offers manifold opportunities for further work: for example, a project which addresses domestic and battlefield material culture of remembrance as two sides of the same coin; further research on the role of replicas and proxies in interwar mourning, in every connotation; and theoretical work on the projected futures of these places and the ethical ramifications of each choice available regarding their preservation.

In closing, we should all be thinking about identity when we look at or think about Imperial War Graves Commission memorials and cemeteries, particularly those commemorating the dead of South Africa, India, Canada, and Australia. These places and their creation reveal significant information about who the dead and the living were and what they valued, both as individuals and collectives. Yes, the dead were and are absent, in a variety of ways – but in focusing on the *presence* of emotional relationships these sites were part of, spanning distance and time, we can come to a greater understanding of how they performed and reinforced messages about identity in the past and how they continue to do so today.

## Bibliography

### Primary Materials

\* *Within lists for each folder, individual documents are ordered here by date (for those titled by date) and alphabetically by title (for those which have a non-date title).*

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- “Cross from Pozieres”

AWM 4 1 [853]

- *Information for visitors to Australian soldiers’ graves in France and Belgium, undated*

AWM 25 135/14

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- “[Untitled sketch attached to letter dated 27 December 1916]”

AWM 25 135/20

- “15 September 1915”

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- “26 January 1918”

AWM 38 3DRL 6673/371

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- [Undated Menin Gate photograph, likely 1940s]

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- “29 November 1938”

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- “2 August 1928”

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- “17 June 1926”
- “17 June 1926, by Fabian Ware”
- “19 June 1926”
- “[Director of Works to Vice Chairman], 10 August 1926”

Add 1/1/93

- “Canada’s Heroes,” *The Daily Telegraph* 4 July 1921

Add 1/1/99

- “7 October 1927”

SDC 43

- “29 June 1923”

WG 127 Pt 1

- “22 April 1931”

WG 219 Pt 1

- “4 March 1919”
- “12 March 1919”
- “11 October 1919”

- “May ,0 [sic] 1919”

WG 219 Pt 2

- “19 May 1920”
- “16 July 1920”
- “1 February 1922”
- “Extract from minutes of the Imperial War Graves Commission held on 15 April, 1919”

WG 219/1

- “Draft proceedings of the third meeting of the committee on memorials to the missing, 6 July 1921”

WG 219/2/1 Pt 1

- “7 February 1923”

WG 219/2/1 Pt 2

- “3 May 1924”
- “8 May 1924”
- “17 November 1926”
- “29 July 1927”

WG 219/8

- “17 March 1924”

WG 219/9

- “30 August 1922”
- “15 November 1923”

WG 219/10/1

- “13 July 1929”
- “9 September 1929”
- “14 February 1930”
- “17 March 1930”
- “22 April 1930”
- “30 April 1930”
- “16 May 1929”
- “19 May 1930”
- “24 May 1930”
- “6 August 1930”
- “18 August 1930”

WG 219/16 Pt 1

- “31 October 1925”
- “2 October 1929”

WG 219/16/1 (\*please note this *is* a different folder from WG 219/16 Pt 1 above)

- “29 October 1925”

- “9 November 1925”
- “13 November 1925”

WG 219/19 Pt 1

- “April 1923”

WG 360/3

- “14 September 1925”
- “24 September 1925”

WG 437/4/1

- “17 March 1926”

WG 546/9

- “Fourth report concerning the Franco-British Monument to be erected at Thiepval, 25 April 1931”

WG 857/3/2 Pt 1

- “30 August 1922”
- “17 May 1928”
- “21 May 1930”
- “21 July 1930”
- “December 1930”
- “Great Overseas Memorial”
- “National War Memorial”
- “National War Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, France: Architectural Competition: Conditions Regulating Submission of Designs [Commonwealth of Australia Department of Defense]”
- “Survey of Site for Proposed Australian War Memorial”
- “Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery”

WG 857/3/2 Pt 2

- “Letter to the editor: Australian National War Memorial, Villers Bretonneux,” 10 May 1932

WG 857/3/2 Pt 3

- “4 February 1938”
- “16 March 1938”
- “Australian War Memorial In France — To The Editor of the Herald,” William Lucas in *The Sydney Herald*, 21 April 1938

WG 861

- “31 January 1920”
- “6 September 1921”
- “26 March 1925”
- “Memorandum: site for Indian War Memorial in France”
- “Sketch of cross-roads at proposed site of Indian war memorial”

WG 861/2 Pt 1

- “4 October 1923”
- “9 November 1923”
- “17 December 1923”
- “27 December 1923”
- “28 December 1923”
- “1 January 1924”
- “5 January 1924”
- “11 February 1924”
- “26 March 1924”
- “Extract from letter... dated 5.11.25”
- “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle,” 27 October 1923
- “Indian Memorial At Neuve Chapelle,” 8 November 1923
- “Memorial to Indian Troops in France,” *The Times* 15 October 1926

WG 861/2/3/11 Pt 1

- “Unveiling booklet”

WG 861/2/3/11 Pt 2

- “Extract from a letter dated 25 September 1929, from Sir Claud Jacob to Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood”

WG 861/2/4

- “8 January 1925”
- “7 April 1925”
- “16 April 1925”
- “8 July 1925”
- “8 December 1925”
- “30 December 1925”
- “19 February 1926”
- “25 [corrected to 15] February 1926”
- “8 December 1926”
- “19 November 1926”
- “23 February 1927”

WG 898/2 Pt 2

- “9 August 1927”

WG 909/5

- “7 September 1920”
- “17 September 1920”
- “24 February 1921”
- “11 April 19(21?)” (Hindu)
- “11 April 19(21?)” (Moslem)
- “2 August 1921”
- “27 August 1921”
- “31 August 1921”
- “17 December 1931”

WG 909/7

- “16 July 1920”
- “29 July 1920”
- “13 August 1920”
- “30 September 1920”
- “20 May 1921”
- “18 June 1921”
- “23 June 1921”
- “20 September 1921”
- “19 October 1921”
- “20 October 1921”
- “26 October 1921”
- “9 December 1921”
- “December 1921”
- “10 March 1922”
- “22 April 1922”
- “3 March 1924”
- “8 May 1925”
- “9 May 1925”
- “25 June 1925”
- “22 September 1927”
- “11 July 1928”
- “16 June 1931”
- “June 1931”
- “12 March 1952”
- “Horticulture: Treatment of Indian Graves” 17 August 1949
- “Suggestions for the identification of the remains of Punjabi and Gurkha soldiers in France and Belgium”
- “Undated memo signed by A.H. Bingley”

WG 1031

- “19 October 1922”
- “20 June 1923”
- “10 January 1924”
- “Headstone layout for isolated Hindu soldiers”
- “Headstone layout- unknown Mohammedan”

WG 1049/1 Pt 1

- “1 July 1921”
- “4 February 1922”
- “6 February 1922”
- “Decode of cablegram from the minister of defence to the high commissioner. Dispatched Pretoria 12 February 1920”
- “Copy cablegram to the minister of defence: Pretoria. From the High Commissioner: London. Dispatched 30 January 1920”
- “[report on IWGC decisions by R.A. Blankenburg, undated, likely 1920]”
- “The South African War Memorial Delville Wood”

WG 1049/1 Pt 2

- “23 March 1923”
- “23 October 1923”
- “8 November 1923”
- “29 April 1924”
- “16 May 1924”
- “17 May 1924”

WG 1049/1 Pt 4

- “10 May 1932”
- “10 July 1933”
- “17 July 1933”
- “26 July 1933”
- “28 July 1933”
- “31 July 1933”
- “8 August 1933”
- “15 August 1933”
- “24 October 1933”
- “6 January 1934”
- “11 January 1934”
- “5 February 1934”
- “Delville Wood Memorial in German Hands: Custodians’ Fortunate Escape,” press cutting from unidentified London newspaper, 8 June 1940
- “Reference no: FR/M/103”

WG 1294/3 Pt 1

- “[undated unsigned memo with seal, likely 1918]”

WG 1294/3 Pt 2

- “22 January 1920”
- “18 June 1920”

*Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, Canada*

MIKAN number 3224321, accessed March 2019.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vimy\\_Memorial\\_-\\_unveiling\\_\(aerial\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vimy_Memorial_-_unveiling_(aerial).jpg)

RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 1

- “11 February 1936”
- “24 June 1936”
- “6 August 1936”

RG 24 Vol 6298 folder H-Q-40-1-2 vol 3

- “Next of kin receive registers with names of missing in war,” *The Ottawa Journal* 15 October 1936

RG 25 A-2 Vol 322 folder W18/26 (3)

- “13 March 1918”
- “15 March 1918”
- “18 March 1918”
- “19 March 1918”
- “21 March 1918” (telegram)
- “21 March 1918 (letter)
- “2 April 1918”
- “4 April 1918”
- “5 April 1918”
- “18 April 1918”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 322 folder W18/26 (4)

- “[Letter from] Royal Gardens, Kew, 25 October 2016 [to Fabian Ware]”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (6)

- “Statement by the Director of Kew Gardens, 30 December 1918”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 323 folder W18/26 (7)

- “23 June 1919”
- “24 June 1919”
- “10 September 1919”
- “Copy: Petition to his Majesty’s Government [1919]”
- “Copy of petition from Lady Florence Cecil to HRH The Prince of Wales [1919]”
- “Memorandum re Headstones for the Graves of Canadian Soldiers, 5 September 1919”
- “RE: Tender for headstones for Canadian memorials, 30 August 1919”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (11)

- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 15 June 1920”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 325 folder W18/26 (12)

- “9 December 1919”
- “8 January 1920”
- “13 January 1920”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 326 folder W18/26 (14)

- “1 May 1920”
- “3 May 1920”
- “Minutes of the Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 April 1920”
- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18 May 1920”
- “War Graves: Statement of Reasons in Support of the Proposal of the Imperial War Graves Commission,” submission to the House of Commons, 24 April 1920
- “Wooden Crosses, Soldiers’ Graves”
- “Wooden Crosses: Next of Kin May Have Them By Making Application,” *Hamilton Herald* 1 June 1920

RG 25 A-2 Vol 327 folder W18/26 (18)

- “10 December 1920 memo ‘Return of Wooden Crosses to Next of Kin’”
- “13 January 1921”
- “Minutes of the Proceedings of the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 December 1920”
- “Resolution: British War Graves Association Central Branch, 15 November 1920”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 330 folder W18/26 (26),

- “DRAFT Minutes of Proceedings of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 February 1922”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (41)

- “Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission: Conditions of Competition in Design for Eight Memorial Monuments to be Erected in France and Belgium, Issued 20 December 1920”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W18/26 (42)

- “26 April 1918”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 335 folder W 18/26 (43)

- “17 December 1921”
- “14 February 1922”
- “2 March 1922”
- “22 May 1922”
- “9 June 1922”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 Folder W 18/26 (44)

- “2 April 1921”
- “5 May 1921”
- “11 July 1921”
- “3 Sept 1921”
- “21 September 1923”
- “Photographs of Canadian Graves in France and Flanders,” 15 April 1921

RG 25 A-2 Vol 336 folder W 18/26 (46)

- “30 June 1925”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 66

- “15 June 1921”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 67

- “23 May 1921”
- “23 November 1921”
- “Pte HAY, James Birrell”

RG 25 A-2 Vol 343 War Graves Special 68

- “18 March 1921”

RG 25 Volume 1778 folder 184 Pt 1

- “Editorial Note: Vimy,” *Le Devoir* 30 May 1936

- “Telegram from Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, to Canadian High Commissioner, London, 26 February 1936”
- “Vimy memorial outstanding questions discussed with Mr. King, 8 May 1936”

RG 25 Volume 1778 folder 184 Pt 2

- “4 July 1936”

RG 25 Vol 1778 folder 184 Pt 3

- “King Edward VIII and M. Albert LeBrun Inaugurate the Monument At Vimy,” *Exposition Paris 1937* magazine, issue #4, August 1936
- “Vimy Broadcast Announcements”

RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (1)

- “10 February 1922”
- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 9th Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, December 1923”

RG 38 Vol 419 folder Canadian Battlefields Committee (2)

- “17 February 1926”
- “10 November 1927”
- “11 November 1927”
- “Memorandum: Canadian Memorial, Vimy Ridge,” 8 November 1927
- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Canadian Battlefields Memorials Commission, 21 December 1927”

RG 38 475 “Grave Sites 1920”

- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 21 September 1920”

RG 38 475 “Covering Letters”

- “2 March 1920”

*National Archives of Australia (NAA), Canberra, Australia*

A457 M404/7

- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 18 January 1921”
- “Minutes of Proceedings of the 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 20 September 1921”

A458 M337/6

- “Memorandum for the Department of Defense, 22 March 1920”

A458 P337/6 Attachment 3

- “Confidential Draft: Minutes of Proceedings of the 139<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the IWGC, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1931”

A461 E337/1/9 Pt 1

- “Extracts from report made to Fabian Ware: Australian War Graves Pilgrimage”

A461 H370/1/15 Pt 1

- “The Villers Bretonneux Memorial, Australia’s Main Overseas Monument — Competition Opens Today”

A461 H370/1/15 Pt 2

- “Message from Prime Minister [1937]”

A461 H370/1/15 Pt 3

- “11 February 1938, ‘Distribution of ashes on graves’”
- “18 February 1938”
- “Decode of cablegram from Prime Minister of New Zealand, 4 July 1938”
- “Statement by Australian Prime Minister J.A. Lyons, 15 June 1938”

A663 0100/1/102 Attachment B

- “28 April 1938”
- “To the Prime Minister, 14 March 1938”

A2909 AGS6/1/18 Pt 5

- “24 December 1936”

A2909 AGS6/1/18/7

- “18 May 1938”
- “19 May 1938”
- “1 June 1938”
- “22 March 1939”

A11849 2350/2

- “Letter from Royal Gardens to Fabian Ware, 25 October 1916”

*National Archives of South Africa (NASA), Pretoria, South Africa*

BLO 64 111/11

- “22 February 1934”
- “2 May 1934”
- “21 May 1940”
- “7 June 1940”

BLO 263 PS12/10/19

- “Report on the work of the Imperial War Graves Commission, 1917–1937. Secret — Official Use Only [Prepared for the 1937 Imperial Conference]”

GG 875 27/502

- “18 November 1922”

GG 1168 27/570

- “Delville Wood,” *The Natal Mercury* 9 April 1926

- “[Unveiling speech, Delville Wood Memorial] The Reply of General the Honourable JBM Hertzog”

GG 1169 27/607

- “15 February 1929”
- “Free translation from *Die Burger* of 25 February 1929: ‘A further attack warded off’”

GG 2238 1/232

- “30 May 1922”
- “Delville Wood: To the memory of all South Africans who gave their lives in every theatre of the war 1914–1918”
- “The remains of Delville Wood, July, 1916”

GG 2274 2/233

- “[Undated untitled speech, presumably late September 1928]”

MPA 3/3/579

- “26 August 1926”
- “British Kindred Societies Joint Committee, 4 August 1926”
- “Cruse application, 2 September 1926”
- “Delville Wood War Memorial: Name, regiment, length of service, remarks [1926]”
- “Memorial service at Delville Wood, 1918”
- “Richardson application, received 28 August 1926”
- “South African National Memorial [loose flyer]”
- “Wakeford application [undated]”

PWD 422 898A

- “Delville Wood Memorial Report for the Month Ending 28 February 1934”
- “Delville Wood Memorial report for the month ending 31 July 1936”

PWD 423 2/898 Pt 1

- “Delville Memorial at Pretoria: Bronze unveiled yesterday; Sir P. Fitzpatrick’s speech; Completion of ten years’ task,” *Star* 22 July 1929

PWD 423 2/898 Pt 3

- “28 December 1923”
- “9 January 1924”
- “28 February 1924”
- “Report — South African Memorial — To the Director of Works, c/o Deputy Director of Works, Cairo, Egypt”

PWD 423 2/898 Pt 2

- “11 October 1926”

PWD 423 2/898A

- “Replica of Memorial Presented to Nation,” *Rand Daily Mail* 22 July 1929

PWD 423 3/898 Pt 1

- “28 April 1927”
- “4 January 1928”
- “11 January 1928”
- “1 March 1928”
- “2 June 1928”
- “Another War Memorial For Cape Town,” *The Cape Argus* 17 April 1928
- “extracts from correspondence between Sir Herbert Baker and Mr. O.W. Staten, Secretary for Public Works”
- “Undated letter from Herbert Baker, likely March 1928”

PWD 423 3/898 Pt 2

- “19 July 1928”
- “Delville Wood Memorial: Cape Town objection to memorial site,” *Star* 1 March 1928.

PWD 1248 15/3294

- “12 ? 1924”
- “17 September 1926”
- “‘Military Crosses’, 21 October 1927 memo from S.A. Agency Imperial War Graves Commission”

TES 1385 F6/39X

- “Report of the Chairman of the South African National Memorial (Delville Wood) Committee [1926]”

TES 1385 F6/397

- “26 August 1920”
- “Minute #148: 22 February 1921”

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