

## Remembering World War I: Memory Influences and Impact on Intentions to Visit War Heritage Sites

E. Wanda George\* and Mallika Das

Department of Business and Tourism, Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada

### Abstract

This paper presents partial results of a large-scale multi-lingual (English, French, German, and Dutch) international study conducted in 2012, resulting in responses from over 60 countries (n=2490). This paper provides analyses of data obtained from respondents in nine countries (Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States), which were involved in and impacted by the First World War (WWI). Eight factors influencing respondents' memories of WWI (school lessons, TV news and documentaries, Internet, literature/arts, visits to WWI sites, story-telling, inheritance of memorabilia, and WWI movies), and impact of five demographic variables (country-of-origin, age, gender, education, and emotional proximity to WWI) on these factors are analyzed. Also examined is if how the way memories of WWI are formed relates to one's intentions to visit a WWI heritage site in the near future and how it impacts support for granting UNESCO's World Heritage Site (WHS) status to WWI battle fields. Results indicate that the way memories of WWI are formed vary by all five demographic factors and indicate that both intentions to visit a WWI heritage site in the near future and support for granting WHS status to WWI battlefields are related to how memories of WWI are formed. Implications for development and marketing of WWI heritage sites as tourism attractions are also discussed.

**Keywords:** WWI battlefields; International survey; War tourism; War heritage; Remembrance

### Introduction

To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary (2014-2018) of the First World War (WWI), national and regional governments and organizations world-wide have prepared and initiated numerous commemorative events and projects based upon the heritage of those nations who took part, many remembering particular war campaigns that specifically affected a nation. For instance, Canada has planned a special remembrance of Vimy Ridge in 2017, to commemorate the Battle of Vimy Ridge, where it sacrificed so many men. Australia held a special commemoration program in Gallipoli in 2015, to remember the Battle of Gallipoli in Turkey in 1915 where it too lost many lives. WWI profoundly affected many countries around the globe. The heritage of WWI (i.e. 'Great War') performs an important role in helping many communities of the world to reflect upon and remember the tragedy of war. Since there are no veterans of WWI alive today, first-hand recollections and accounts of the 'Great War' are no longer available to be recorded and passed down through successive generations. We now rely on historians and public memory to keep the memories of this event alive.

Much has been written about WWI, an event that happened one hundred years ago that unquestionably reshaped world history-geographically, politically, economically and socially [1]. Since the last witnesses of the 'Great War' have passed on, there has been a fundamental shift from memories about individual sacrifices and family stories of sufferings to a more collective memory of the war [2]. The Centenary has brought WWI back to the forefront of public attention through the social construction of collective remembering. There has been extensive media coverage since the onset of 2014, recalling and reproducing the narratives of WWI (i.e. documentaries, TV series, Websites, new books) and through these dynamics, the Centenary has awakened interest in somewhat forgotten past. Further, there appears to be an increasing interest in WWI heritage sites as reflected in intensified visitation to the actual battlefields in Europe and other war-related sites [3]. Some argue these war heritage landscapes (battlefields)

have global significance, with outstanding universal values, and should be awarded UNESCO World Heritage designation, a project that has been spearheaded in Europe.

Inspired by interest and the hype surrounding the Centennial of WWI, a research team from the World Heritage Tourism Research Network (WHTRN), in collaboration with the Flemish government, Belgium, conducted a global online survey in 2012. The aim was to explore the opinions and perspectives of 21<sup>st</sup> century society regarding the heritage of WWI. One of the objectives was to determine support for a UNESCO World Heritage Site nomination of WWI heritage landscapes in Belgium and France.

This paper presents only selected results from the larger WHTRN 2012 survey (n=2490) [4]. Of particular interest was to gain an understanding about how people know about and remember WWI -what influenced their memories- since none of the respondents were there at the time. To do this, we consider the following questions: 1) what factors helped form their memories of WWI? 2) Do these factors vary between the different countries that were involved? 3) Do these factors vary by demographics? 4) Will how one's memories have been shaped impact his/her intentions to visit a WWI site? and, 5) Will how memories have been shaped impact one's opinion as to whether or not WWI battlefields deserve World Heritage Site and, (WHS) status? To address these questions, we examine the responses coming from nine

\*Corresponding author: E Wanda George, Department of Business and Tourism, Mount Saint Vincent University, Canada, Tel: 902 582-7848; E-mail: [wanda.george@msvu.ca](mailto:wanda.george@msvu.ca)

Received March 06, 2017; Accepted March 18, 2017; Published March 24, 2017

Citation: E Wanda George, Das M (2017) Remembering World War I: Memory Influences and Impact on Intentions to Visit War Heritage Sites. J Tourism Hospit 6: 273. doi: 10.4172/2167-0269.1000273

Copyright: © 2017 E Wanda George, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

selected countries – Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK and the US (n=2098).

To set the context for this paper, we first provide brief overviews on the role of and impacts on nine selected countries that were involved in the First World War. To help inform our analyses, we review selected previous scholarly works on remembrance, concepts of memory and memory formation, as well as recent research that discuss tourism to battlefields/war heritage sites (battlefield tourism).

### Overviews of nine selected countries involved in WWI<sup>1</sup>

In 1914, Australia was a British colony but was considered a self-governing territory referred to as a Dominion of Britain. Its population at the time was just under 5 million. Because of its strong ties (e.g. export/trade) and personal connections to Britain, when war was declared on Germany, the Australians were loyal to its mother country. From an enlistment of 416,809 men, 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner [5].

From a population of only 8 million at the time, more than 600,000 Canadians served in WWI and around 61,000 Canadians lost their lives; another estimated 172,000 were wounded [6]. The war had a major political impact on Canada, then also a Dominion colony of Britain; many claim it as a defining moment as the birth of Canada as a nation and player on the international stage [7]. The war united most Canadians in a common cause even though the enormity of national effort nearly split the country apart (French-English divide). Few had expected such a long struggle or heavy death toll.

Belgium was a neutral country during WWI. Its population at the time was approximately 7.5 million. When Germany invaded neutral Belgium, it triggered the declaration of war by Britain. Over a quarter million Belgians fled to England. In its struggle to remain neutral and to protect itself, 250,000 Belgium troops were mobilized. Belgium became the combat zone for many of the major battles as Germany attempted to occupy France. According to statistics, during the war period, approximately 14,000 Belgians were killed; 45,000 were wounded and another 35,000 taken prisoner or were missing [8].

France was the main target of the German invasion. Its population in 1914, was approximately 40 million. In WWI, it had a mobilized force of over 8 million. Approximately 1,500,000 were killed with total casualties of about 6,200,000 [9]. France was a major combat zone. History has placed Germany as the instigator of WWI. In 1914, its population was around 67 million [10]. Its war aim was to occupy France by route of neutral Belgium. It had a mobilized force of 11,000,000. According to Bessel [10], approximately 2,000,000 Germans were killed with close to 5,000,000 wounded and nearly 15,000,000 servicemen registered as having illness.

The Netherlands remained neutral during WWI. Its population at the time was about 6 million. The country suffered internal stresses, having been affected by the war in different ways: it received a flood of refugees (1 million), had restrictions placed on the press, and suffered food and other shortages. The small country mobilized about 200,000 men to protect its borders from possible invasion. It hosted both refugee camps and internment camps (for both British and German soldiers). There were some casualties; most Dutch war victims were seaman and fisherman [11].

Switzerland declared neutrality in WWI. While it was a highly

<sup>1</sup>Statistical accounts of the casualties of WWI tend to vary but, generally, the numbers are consistent among the reports. Because of these variations, we have used approximate estimates rather than absolute numbers.

industrialized country in 1914, it was nevertheless impacted by the war. Geographically, the country was landlocked, surrounded by warring countries. Its population at the time was close to 4 million, a mixture of French and German speaking people. Like the Netherlands, the country suffered food shortages and restriction on the press and on other public events [12].

In 1914, Britain's (UK) longstanding status as the dominant world power was weakening, threatened by the rise of Germany as a competitive power. From well-known accounts, not discussed here, Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914; it was a major combatant in WWI, geographically located close to the battlegrounds of Belgium and France. While various statistical accounts tend to differ slightly, the UK National Archives [13] reports there were 886,000 British fatalities in the First World War. Nearly another two million were permanently disabled [14]. WWI brought about major positive social changes in Britain [1] but the human and financial cost to the country was great [15].

The USA entered WWI on the side of the Allies in 1917. During the first three years of the war, it remained neutral. According to Zeiger [16], however, the American contribution to WWI was significant. It provided the Allies with critical resources i.e. munitions, food, equipment and financial support. When the USA joined the war effort in 1917, it supplied a military contingent of over 1 million; some report a mobilized force of over 4 million [17]. Bringing in fresh recruitments after years of heavy fighting, USA's involvement was instrumental in ending the war. About 116,000 Americans lost their lives in WWI; another 204,000 were wounded [17].

To summarize, the countries differed in the number of people they lost to the war (though all experienced significant human costs) and in the side that they fought on. They also differed in their connection to the war – whether they were actual battlegrounds or not – and in their stage of independence/nationhood. For example, Canada and Australia fought as dominions of Britain; the US was a relatively new nation which was rising fast on the world stage. Given these differences, we expect to find significant differences between respondents from these countries on the key variables of interest.

### WWI, Battlefield tourism, collective memory and cultural memory

Scholars have produced a myriad of literature about the First World War (WWI), covering a wide range of multidisciplinary perspectives, since the war ended in 1918 [1]. Many have attempted to explain and interpret the origins of the war [18-21], the economics of the war [22,23]; how it reshaped history [24,25]; the material culture of WWI [26,27], women's role in WWI [28,29], as well the importance of how we connect the present and past through collective memory [30,31] and social memory [32-37]. Literature on the debate between history and memory in how we remember the past continues [38-42].

War heritage landscapes around the world have become popular tourist destinations e. g. Gettysburg, Viet Nam, Hiroshima, Flanders, etc. Studies on battlefield/war tourism have also seen a recent surge in recent years. Visitation to war sites is often referred to as 'battlefield tourism' and has become a specific niche in the tourism industry. Some refer to it as a type of 'dark tourism' or 'thanatourism' [43]. Much has been written about this tourism niche [44-48]. Several authors have written specifically on battlefield tourism related to WWI sites [27-37,49-52]. Previous research, generally, has concentrated on what motivates people to visit former war sites. Motivations vary ranging

from those interested in pure entertainment to cultural education [53] to military enthusiasts and family historians, [50] to those interested in learning and commemoration [53]. To others, visiting battlefields is a 'socially feasible way of expressing interest in death and disaster' and 'assuage a sense of guilt' (51:134). Prideaux [46] looks at a more emotional side of motivation –to remember comrades and to rekindle memories of loved ones who fell in war, to glorify victory or lament over defeat.

To better understand how a society knows and remembers past events, having not experienced them personally, we can consider notions of collective memory and other conduits of memory formation (i.e. social memory and cultural memory). Researchers are still attempting to define the term 'collective memory' ever since Halbwachs [30] first coined the term decades ago; his work is seminal to the study of memory. Rigney (41:365) writes, "Memory...refers in the first instance to ways in which individuals recall their own experience, and as such it cannot be automatically transferred to the social domain." Social memory consists of "those acts of transfer that make remembering [memories] in common possible" (32:39). When these memories are socially accepted and shared, constructed and reconstructed, in the wider society, they become collective memories.

Collective memory is defined by Schuman and Scott, [54,55], as "a widely shared knowledge of past social events that may not have been personally experienced but are collectively constructed through communicative social functions" [56:105]. In his speech, Jackson [57] refers to collective memory as:

*...the shared narratives (stories) contained in the histories, literature, memorial practices, artifacts, symbols, traditions, images, art, music and cultural products that function to bind members of a collective group together. These stories are regularly re-told or re-enacted and passed down to successive generations in order to reinforce a sense of belonging to a group.*

In the context of past wars, collective memory is the socially constructed stories about events that occurred years, or even centuries ago, a story that has been held and passed down the generations by a society, a story often constructed from a political stance intended to build and strengthen a country's national identity. Regarding the latter, we might refer to collective memory as 'national memory.' Through the processes of constructing collective memory, social representations of the past are elaborated, transmitted and observed in both interpersonal, (informal and popular) and institutional (formal) communications [56]. Communication processes at the formal level comprise official histories and educational texts as well as national commemorations, monuments and rituals (Figure 1).

At the popular level, collective memory is disseminated through magazines, newspapers, movies, television and films. At more informal levels, collective memory is relayed through conversations, oral stories, letters, diaries, postcards, etc. [58,59]. Often, the terms 'collective memory' and 'social memory' are used interchangeably. However, Rigney [41] suggests that 'cultural memory' is a more usable concept, because it "is better able to account for the variety of memorial forms and for the transformations of experience which all forms of remembrance entail". She suggests there are slight distinctions between collective memory, social memory and cultural memory.

Concepts of cultural memory [60,61] shift away from the idea that memory is the spontaneous recall of past experiences as passed on intact or unchanged from one generation to the next; instead, cultural memory considers the multiple ways in which the past is



Source: Photos courtesy of George, EW. (2012).

**Figure 1:** Constructing Collective Memory. Top left: A daily ritual in Belgium: The Last Post at Menin Gate; Top right: Tyne Cot Memorial Cemetery; Bottom left: Laying poppies in remembrance of WWI; Bottom right: Canadian War Memorial at Vimy Ridge.

communicated and shared among members of a community through public acts of remembrance by various modes of media. These modes of communication and transfer of memories not only include the official histories, literature and rituals but those produced by new technologies and social networks, e.g. Internet. Unquestionably, cultural memory is always vicarious; it involves memories of other people's lives, from a different time and place; memories that have been mediated by text and images [41].

Texts, or literary works, clearly inform our cultural memory. According to Rigney [41], they are portable monuments – not fixed in a particular site like stone monuments; they may be recycled among various groups of readers, far and wide, and in different historical periods. Rigney (41:368) contends, "...memories are dependent on their being recalled in various media by later generations who find them meaningful for the nonce [present time], who may even find it their duty to keep the alive...". New technologies have become important and are key in shaping cultural memory in the future. Ekaterina Haskins [62] alerts us to the rising popularity of the Internet as a vehicle of memory transfer and supplement to older forms of commemoration. She states, "Although even 'permanent' memorials and museums are now being built with an eye to stimulating public engagement, their capacity to share memory work with ordinary people pales in comparison with 'digital memorials and archives'" (62:405).

Undoubtedly, visitation to war heritage sites influences one's memory. In the tourism industry, whatever one's travel motivation may be, a tourist is defined as anyone who travels a specified distance from their home residence for a specified time period to visit a site is classified as a tourist (i.e.100 kms/one overnight at destination is a common measure). Regardless of what it is called (e.g. heritage tourism, battlefield tourism, thanatourism, etc.), discussed above, tourism to war heritage sites tends to be increasing, and depending on how it is developed and managed, tourism, as a medium, may be an integral part in keeping the memories of WWI alive into the future.

While previous research has examined notions of memory influences and travel motivation more broadly, there is no apparent research that specifically examines the issues and questions in this paper related to WWI: 1) What factors help form memories of WWI?

2) Do these factors vary between the selected countries? 3) Do these factors vary by demographics? 4) Will how memories have been shaped impact one’s intentions to visit a WWI site? and, 5) Will how memories have been shaped impact one’s opinion as to whether or not WWI battlefields deserve World Heritage Site (WHS) status?

## Methodology

The overall goal of the project was to obtain input about perspectives and remembrance of WWI of respondents from all the various countries that were involved somehow in WWI. New Internet technologies provided the opportunity to do this. A questionnaire was designed for web-based delivery using Fluid Survey, a Canadian-based online survey software program; the survey was hosted at Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU), Halifax, Canada. Specific questions and content were developed in consultation with selected scholars from various countries who had relevant expertise (Canada, Belgium, Australia and France), and as well, representatives of the Flemish government, who had a particular objective in obtaining information regarding nomination of the WWI battlefields for World Heritage designation. The resulting survey questionnaire was multi-lingual, available in English, French, Dutch and German.

The initial target group for the survey comprised international academics and tourism educators, a group that was most accessible to the researchers through their global contacts and networks. A secondary group consisted of veteran’s associations, war heritage-related organizations and special interest groups/individuals. Using modern communication and media tools (e-mails, network list servers, Facebook, other social media, etc.), as well as making announcements and promoting the survey website link at other outlets (international conferences and other relevant events), the questionnaire was electronically distributed to recipients around the world. The first round of recipients was asked to distribute the invitation to their own contacts, who in turn were asked to do the same, etc. –initiating a snowball approach. Certainly, using this approach resulted in limitations to this study; the sample was not random and most respondents were educators or people who had a particular interest in the WWI.

Data were collected between February and mid-August 2012. Responses came from over 60 countries. Following a filtering process, the researchers determined a final valid response of 2,490 to be considered for analysis. This paper presents partial results from the global survey; only data from countries with over 100 respondents were selected for analysis. Nine countries meeting this criterion were: Australia (105), Belgium (615), Canada (194), France (244), Germany (132), Netherlands (109), Switzerland (258), United Kingdom (184), and the US (257). Selected open-ended questions in the different languages were translated into English. SPSS and MAXQDA were used to analyze the findings.

To address the question as to what factors have influenced one’s

memories of WWI, eight possible influencing factors were identified and presented using a 5 pt. Likert Scale to indicate level of importance ranging from ‘Not at all important’ to ‘Very Important’ (Table 1). In addition, an option for ‘Other’ response was included as an open-ended question but is not used in the analysis for this paper. Table 2 provides details of the demographic makeup of the respondents. As shown in the table, chi-square tests indicate that there were significant differences in the demographics of the respondents from the nine countries. Table 3a provides details of mean scores on each of the eight factors influencing respondents’ memories of WWI. To examine the influence of country of residence (COR) of respondents on factors shaping their memories of WWI, we conducted one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) with COR as the independent variable (Table 3b).

Since chi-square tests had indicated that the samples from these countries also varied on other demographic variables, we examined the impact of gender, age, educational level, and emotional proximity on the factors shaping respondents’ memories of WWI (Table 4). Finally, we also examined (using t-tests/one-way ANOVA) whether a person’s intention to visit a WWI site in the near future was related to his/her opinion on whether WWI sites deserve UNESCO’s World Heritage Site (WHS) status (Table 5).

## Results and Discussion

In this section, we provide the tables and details about the results of the analyses. First, we examine the results related to the factors influencing respondents’ memories of WWI by their country of residence (COR). Then, we move on to the impact of demographic variables on factors influencing respondents’ memories of this historic event. Next, we look at whether the factors influencing memories of WWI have an impact on a person’s intention to visit a WWI site in the near future and finally, we will discuss whether this cross-national sample from the key nations involved in WWI is in favor of granting UNESCO’s World Heritage Site (WHS) to WWI sites.

Table 2 below shows details of the demographic characteristics of the sample in this study. Chi-square tests indicate that there were significant differences in the demographics of the respondents from the nine countries.

### COR and variables/factors influencing memories of WWI

Overall, for the entire sample, the most important influence on their memories of WWI was Literature and Arts (mean=2.04) and Television documentaries and news (mean=2.08); the least important ones were storytelling (mean=2.62) and movies (mean=2.51). For respondents from Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the most important influence were works of literature and arts; for those from Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, the most important influence was visiting WWI memorial sites; for Canadians, it was television (TV documentaries and news); and for those from Germany and

1.	Lessons of the history of WWI learned in school
2.	Movies about WWI
3.	TV documentaries or broadcasts about WWI or related commemorative events
4.	Literary, artistic and cultural representations of WWI
5.	Internet information about WWI
6.	Visits to WWI battlefield regions or commemorative events
7.	Story telling by family members or friends about WWI
8.	Personal inheritance of documents (e.g. diaries, letters, photos) and/or war souvenirs (e.g. medals)
9.	Other

Table 1: Factors influencing memories of WWI.

Country of Residence (COR)	Gender		Age		Education		Emotional Proximity	
	Female (n%)	Male (n%)	Under 50 (n%)	50+ (n%)	Undergrad or less (n%)	Grad (n%)	Yes (n%)	No (n%)
Australia	47 (47.9)	51 (53.1)	32 (32.9)	65 (67.1)	27 (27.8)	70 (72.2)	73 (70.9)	30 (29.1)
Belgium	221 (40)	331 (60)	288 (52.2)	265 (47.8)	182 (34.4)	347 (66.6)	278 (45.6)	331 (54.4)
Canada	60 (33.9)	117 (66.1)	64 (36.2)	113 (63.8)	65 (38.0)	106 (62.0)	95 (49.2)	98 (50.8)
France	75 (32.5)	156 (67.5)	119 (51.7)	111 (48.3)	76 (33.6)	150 (66.4)	200 (83.3)	40 (16.7)
Germany	50 (43.1)	66 (56.9)	94 (81.0)	22 (19.0)	15 (13.6)	95 (86.4)	90 (69.2)	40 (30.8)
Netherlands	23 (23.7)	74 (76.3)	48 (50.0)	48 (50.0)	31 (34.8)	58 (65.2)	22 (21.4)	81 (78.6)
Switzerland	129 (56.8)	98 (43.2)	217 (95.6)	10 (4.4)	164 (72.9)	61 (27.1)	79 (31.1)	175 (68.9)
U. K.	58 (25.5)	169 (74.4)	71 (43.3)	93 (56.7)	59 (37.3)	99 (62.7)	138 (76.7)	42 (23.3)
USA	56 (24.9)	169 (75.1)	80 (35.2)	147 (64.8)	69 (31.8)	148 (60.2)	125 (49.0)	130 (51.0)
Total	719 (38.1)	1168 (61.9)	1013 (53.7)	873 (46.3)	688 (37.8)	1134 (62.2)	1100 (53.2)	967 (46.8)
Chi-square	70.03		273.41		157.25		262.41	
d.f.	8		8		8		8	
p	<0.001		<0.001		<0.001		<0.001	

Table 2: Sample characteristics.

Country (COR)	Mean scores on Factors Influencing Memories of WWI (number) <sup>1</sup>							
	School lessons	Movies	TV Docs/News	Literature/Arts	Internet	Visits to WWI sites	Story telling	Inheritance
Australia	2.65 (104)	2.58 (104)	2.25 (104)	2.05 (104)	2.83 (100)	2.55 (104)	2.77 (103)	2.68 (103)
Belgium	1.91 (588)	2.49 (587)	1.94 (589)	2.11 (586)	2.39 (587)	1.81 (589)	2.25 (587)	2.59 (589)
Canada	2.24 (189)	2.36 (188)	1.95 (189)	2.08 (188)	2.69 (185)	2.36 (185)	2.78 (189)	2.86 (189)
France	2.29 (238)	2.06 (238)	2.25 (240)	1.82 (238)	2.48 (236)	1.80 (239)	2.06 (238)	2.05 (239)
Germany	2.03 (126)	2.70 (125)	2.29 (126)	2.04 (126)	2.70 (125)	2.84 (125)	2.95 (125)	2.86 (123)
Netherlands	2.13 (103)	2.54 (103)	1.83 (103)	2.15 (103)	2.06 (104)	1.78 (104)	2.81 (103)	2.46 (104)
Switzerland	1.54 (245)	2.90 (246)	2.31 (247)	2.29 (248)	2.59 (248)	3.45 (245)	3.26 (247)	3.61 (248)
UK	2.60 (178)	2.76 (175)	1.95 (177)	1.82 (177)	2.50 (176)	2.01 (177)	2.59 (174)	2.40 (176)
USA	2.47 (245)	2.43 (241)	2.07 (245)	1.89 (245)	2.38 (243)	2.75 (243)	3.04 (244)	3.18 (244)
Total	2.13 (2016)	2.51 (2007)	2.08 (2007)	2.04 (2015)	2.49 (2007)	2.29 (2011)	2.62 (2010)	2.75 (2013)

Note: <sup>1</sup>Lower the score, the higher the importance of the factor.

Table 3a: COR and Factors Influencing Memories of WWI.

Switzerland, school lessons were the most important influence. Similarly, respondents also differed on the source of influence that was least important to them. For respondents from Australia, France, and the Netherlands, the least important influence was the Internet, while respondents from Canada, Germany, and the USA, it was storytelling by family and friends. Respondents from the United Kingdom and Belgium considered movies to be the least influential source of memories of WWI. Finally, respondents from Switzerland considered visits to WWI memorial sites to be the least influential source on their memories of WWI; this is not surprising as further analysis indicated that 89% of respondents from Switzerland had never visited a WWI memorial site in their country and 63% had never visited a WWI site in another country. Swiss respondents were also the least likely to say that they definitely planned to visit a WWI site in the near future.

Figure 2 illustrates works of literature most frequently noted by respondents as having influenced their memories. Erich Maria Remarque's 1929 novel, "All Quiet on the Western Front" was the most

noted piece of literature (also made into a 1930 American epic film).

The following table (Table 3a) provides further details of the country scores on the factors influencing memories. As can be seen from the table, all the possible influences scored less than three (for the entire sample) indicating that all of them had some influence on respondents.

One-way analysis of variance (Table 3b) indicated that there were significant differences between respondents based on their country of residence (COR) in how they viewed the sources of influence on their memories of WWI. All one-way analyses of variances had F values that were significant at  $p < .001$ .

### Other demographic variables and factors influencing memories of WWI

For this part of the analysis, respondents were classified into two groups based on age (under 50 and 50+), education (undergraduate

Factors influencing memories of WWI		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
School lessons	Between Groups	218.163	8	27.270	25.450	.000
	Within Groups	2150.583	2007	1.072		
	Total	2368.746	2015			
Movies	Between Groups	108.981	8	13.623	13.498	.000
	Within Groups	2016.470	1998	1.009		
	Total	2125.451	2006			
TV Documentaries/News	Between Groups	50.772	8	6.346	7.452	.000
	Within Groups	1712.639	2011	.852		
	Total	1763.411	2019			
Literature/Arts	Between Groups	45.749	8	5.719	6.429	.000
	Within Groups	1784.308	2006	.889		
	Total	1830.058	2014			
Internet	Between Groups	54.652	8	6.832	5.480	.000
	Within Groups	2490.721	1998	1.247		
	Total	2545.373	2006			
Visits to sites	Between Groups	658.885	8	82.361	65.661	.000
	Within Groups	2511.188	2002	1.254		
	Total	3170.074	2010			
Story-telling	Between Groups	324.290	8	40.536	23.035	.000
	Within Groups	3521.363	2001	1.760		
	Total	3845.654	2009			
Inheritance	Between Groups	393.351	8	49.169	24.993	.000
	Within Groups	3942.451	2004	1.967		
	Total	4335.801	2012			

Note: <sup>1</sup> Lower mean scores indicate that the respondents considered the factor to be more important.

**Table 3b:** Results of one-way ANOVA: Factors influencing Respondents' Memories of WWI with Country of Residence (COR).

*All Quiet On The Western Front*  
*Goodbye to All*  
*Rites of Spring*  
*Path of Glory*  
*The Gates of Memory*  
*The Good Soldier Svejk by Hasek*  
*Poetry by Rupert Brook;*  
*Works by Vera Deakin and Bernard Shaw*  
*Books by John Keegan and Niall Ferguson*  
*Movie, Joyeux Noel*  
*Opera Silent Night, by Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell*  
*English War Poetry*  
*Pat Barker's Testament of Youth*  
*Film, Oh What a Lovely War.*  
*Written works of historians e. g. The Donkeys.*

**Source:** Centennial of the First World War Survey, WHTRN (2012)

**Figure 2:** Works of Literature and Arts that Influence Memory of WWI.

degree or less vs. graduate degree or higher), and emotional proximity (yes vs. no). T-tests were conducted to see if these demographic variables and gender affected respondents' mean scores on the eight factors influencing their memories of WWI. While all four demographic variables (gender, age, educational level, and emotional proximity) do differentiate between respondents in what shapes their memories of WWI, age and emotional proximity seem to be more important than gender and educational level. As shown in Table 4, the mean scores on the factors shaping memories of WWI differed by age and emotional

proximity the most (i.e., had statistically significant results on more factors) than gender and educational level. Details of the differences are also provided in the Table 4.

### Intention to visit a WWI site in the near future

The researchers also asked respondents whether they planned to visit a WWI site in the next five years. Those who said 'definitely' or 'probably' were grouped together and those who were unsure or not likely to visit were grouped together. Results of t-tests (Table 5) indicate that except for school lessons, the mean scores of those planning a visit to a WWI site differed from those who were not on all other factors shaping memories of WWI. Interestingly, having visited a WWI site before was the most important factor in terms of a future visit as it had the lowest mean score (1.75) followed by literature and arts (1.88), and television (1.95). Thus it is clear that how respondents' memories of WWI are formed do play a critical role in their plans to visit a WWI site in the near future.

Finally, we also conducted a regression analysis (linear, step-wise) with the factors shaping memories of WWI as the independent variables and intention to visit a WWI site (dummy coded; 0=Yes, 1=No) as the dependent variable. Five of the eight factors shaping memories were included in the final regression function: visits to WWI sites (beta: 0.364), inheritance of memorabilia (beta: 0.098), Internet (beta: 0.089), school lessons (beta: -0.085), and literature/arts (beta: 0.068); the adjusted  $r^2$  was 0.217. As the beta values indicate, school lessons did not have a positive influence on the intention to visit a WWI site in the future. Visiting a WWI site, on the other hand, was the most important factor in predicting whether or not a person would actually plan a future visit.

### WHS status for WWI sites?

As noted earlier, one of the objectives of the survey was to determine whether or not respondents were in favor of granting UNESCO's

Factors influencing respondents' memories of WWI <sup>1</sup>								
Demographic Variable	School Lessons	Movies	TV Docs /News	Lit/Arts	Internet	Visits to WWI sites	Story telling	Inherited memorabilia
Gender								
F mean	1.88	2.46	2.09	2	2.59	2.45	2.58	2.85
Male mean	2.22	2.54	2.07	2.05	2.42	2.18	2.65	2.67
t-value	-4.62	-1.8	0.455	-1.005	3.138	4.374	-1.131	2.57
d.f.	1516	1861	1801	1870	1448.2	1405.81	1865	1867
p	<0.001	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	<0.01	<0.001	n.s.	<0.01
Age								
<50 mean	1.95	2.54	2.12	2.08	2.54	2.49	2.8	2.96
50+ mean	2.34	2.48	2.03	1.97	2.42	2.04	2.42	2.48
t-value	-7.847	1.145	2.061	2.608	2.199	7.867	5.949	7.031
d.f.	1753.88	1861	1874	1857.24	1861	1802.49	1849.94	1845.21
p	<0.001	n.s.	n.s.	<0.01	<0.05	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Education								
<U.grad/less	1.98	2.55	2	2.06	2.22	2.3	2.5	2.57
Grad degree+	2.21	2.47	2.12	2.02	2.66	2.37	2.71	2.86
t-value	-4.463	1.209	-2.595	0.927	-8.369	0.568	-3.183	-3.984
d.f.	1477.57	1799	1470.09	1804	1543.26	1804	1802	1803
p	<0.001	n.s.	<0.01	n.s.	<0.001	n.s.	<0.001	<0.001
Emotional Proximity								
Yes								
No	2.25	2.51	2.06	1.95	2.42	2.12	2.23	2.28
t-value	1.99	2.52	2.09	2.14	2.57	2.5	3.08	3.3
d.f.	5.385	-0.206	-0.784	-4.502	-2.792	-6.664	-14.304	-16.433
p	1996.52	1994	2006	1906.76	1993	1852.33	1816.84	1912.45
	<0.001	n.s.	n.s.	<0.001	<0.01	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

Note: <sup>1</sup>t-values and d.f. provided are based on the results of Levene's tests of equality of means; when the degrees of freedom are not whole numbers, it indicates that the Levene's test indicated that equality of means did not exist.

**Table 4:** Results of t-tests: Demographic variables with factors influencing respondents' memories.

Factors influencing respondents' memories of WWI <sup>1</sup>								
Variable	School Lessons	Movies	TV Docs / News	Lit/Arts	Internet	Visits to WWI sites	Story telling	Inherited memorabilia
Future visit?								
(T-test)								
No	2.11	2.63	2.23	2.22	2.77	2.9	2.94	3.21
Yes	2.16	2.41	1.95	1.88	2.25	1.79	2.35	2.35
t-value	-1.042	4.702	6.839	7.915	10.328	21.115	9.643	13.381
d.f.	1945	1936	1837.77	1780	1836.39	1637.72	1839.31	1854.21
p	n.s.	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Deserve WHS status? (ANOVA)								
S. Agree								
Agree	1.96	2.25	1.77	1.83	2.1	1.71	2.14	2.17
Neutral or	2.09	2.5	2.1	2.06	2.49	2.26	2.65	2.76
Disagree	2.3	2.73	2.27	2.17	2.79	2.75	2.96	3.17
F-value								
p	14.882	32.29	43.255	18.778	56.209	108.398	52.453	70.443
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

Note: <sup>1</sup>t-values and d.f. provided are based on the results of Levene's tests of equality of means; when the degrees of freedom are not whole numbers, it indicates that the Levene's test indicated that equality of means did not exist.

**Table 5:** Results of t-tests/one-way ANOVA: Future Visits, WHS status with Factors influencing Respondents' Memories of WWI.

World Heritage Site status to WWI sites. We also examined if how a person's memories of WWI was shaped affected their responses to this particular question. Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement to the statement, "WWI sites deserve WHS status" on a five-point Likert scales (1=Strongly agree to 5=Strongly disagree). Results are shown in Table 5. Since most people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, we collapsed the categories into three: strongly

agree, agree, and neutral to strongly disagree. As can be seen from the table, those who strongly agreed that WWI sites deserve WHS status had lower mean scores on all eight factors shaping their memories of WWI, indicating that these factors played a higher role in shaping their memories than those of people other respondents. These respondents had mean scores of less than two (indicating greater role for each factor in shaping their memories) on four of the eight factors: visits (1.71),

TV documentaries (1.77), literature and arts (1.83), and school lessons (1.96).

To summarize, for respondents from the battleground nations of Belgium and France, and likewise for those from the neighbouring country of Netherlands, because of their geographic proximity, visits to WWI memorial sites are easy to do and also a part of everyday life activities (to honor their family members); hence, understandably, visits to WWI sites are the most important influences that have shaped their memories of WWI. For respondents from the far-away nations of Australia, Canada, the USA, and United Kingdom, memories of WWI are shaped by their exposure to literary works and/or to television documentaries. This aligns well with Halbwachs' notion about the importance of literary works as key to keeping memories passed on. It is interesting that for respondents from Germany (the only nation on the Entente side of WWI with over 100 respondents in this survey) and Switzerland (neutral during WWI), lessons from school are the critical factor influencing their memories. It is also interesting, and somewhat puzzling, to see that 63% had never visited a WWI site in another country, in spite of their close proximity to these war sites. Swiss respondents were also the least likely to say that they definitely planned to visit a WWI site in the near future. It should perhaps be pointed out that a significant proportion of the respondents from Switzerland were younger (i.e., under 29) and many traced their ancestral heritage to Germany.

In terms of age, respondents under 40 years of age learned most about WWI through lessons at school; this is not surprising as these respondents are likely to have no direct connections (as in parental or grandparental) to WWI. So, covering WWI in school lessons is an important way to keep the memories of WWI alive in the minds of future generations. Several respondents commented that not enough was being done in the current school systems to ensure students will know more about WWI and 'remember.' Since the literature and arts were important influencers for older respondents' memories of WWI, more than other variables, continuing to sponsor literary/artistic works related to WWI would help us reach these age groups. In addition, literature and arts were also the second most influences on those under 40 indicating that this medium is a significant influencer for all people. It is also worth noting that the mean score for literature and arts was the lowest (2.03) for the entire sample indicating that this is a key influencer of WWI memories.

TV documentaries and news can also play a significant role in keeping the memories of WWI alive, as these were the second most important influencers with a mean score of 2.08; moreover, for those above 40 years of age, these were the second most significant influences on their memories of WWI. Thus, focusing on covering WWI in more detail in schools and ensuring increased coverage of WWI on television (through documentaries and news programs) and sponsoring literary/artistic works based on WWI would enable us to keep the memories of WWI alive.

It was also surprising to learn that visits to the war sites were not so important as an influence on their memories of WWI for the older (i.e., 40+) age groups; cross-tabulations had indicated that 65-77% percent of those in the 40+ age category had visited WWI sites in their home country and 64-72% had visited a WWI site abroad. Moreover, over 68%, or 2/3 of these respondents, were planning a visit to a WWI site in the future. Yet, visits were the only the third important influencer for those under 60 years of age (for those 60+, it was a close second at 2.00). This perhaps is an indicator that WWI sites administrators have to do

more to make the sites relevant to visitors, and to increase marketing and promotion efforts (tourism).

As noted earlier, previous research identifies varying motivations for travel to war sites, ranging from those interested in pure entertainment to cultural education [53] to military enthusiasts and family historians, [50] to those interested in learning and commemoration [53]. Results from this study indicate intentions to visit by military enthusiasts and by those who had family connections to those involved or lost in the war. While not discussed in this paper, sustainable tourism to WWI heritage sites is identified as a key concern for many respondents. While tourism has proven to be an economic generator and tool for preservation in many instances, it can be a double-edged sword if not planned and managed properly. Tourism can have detrimental impacts on a war heritage landscape if visitation exceeds a site's carrying capacity.

Finally, it was surprising that the age groups did not differ in how they viewed the Internet in this context; this might be due to a lag in adopting Internet technology to obtain information on WWI or, more worrisome, the lack of adequate and interesting content available on WWI on the Internet. However, with the rapidly increasing use of Internet technology, this is expected to change. In fact, since the onset of the Centenary in 2014, we are observing an increase in the content related to WWI now available through the Internet. The Internet and other new technologies, as alluded to by Haskins [62], have enormous capacity to keep the memories of WWI alive for future generations.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, while the findings of the survey cannot be generalized due to limitations of the study, they show some interesting differences between the nine countries of residence and the ages of respondents in regards to what has influenced their memories of WWI. In general, this information will be useful to support efforts for the preservation of the heritage landscapes and memories of WWI. If the current trends continue, school lessons about WWI will be an important factor in transmitting knowledge about WWI to the next generation. But more importantly, the rapid advance of new technologies globally must be considered. The Internet technologies, and social networks, are anticipated to be key factors in the future, not only as tools to gather information, generally, but also as tools for educators and students, in relaying memories and to reach a wider audience – new means of perpetuating collective memory. While visits to sites was considered the third most important influence for younger groups (under 60), there is a strong indication that many people intend to visit in the near future – some repeat visitors, some new – particularly during the Centenary of WWI (2014-2018).

The research indicated that present day societies have formed their collective memories of WWI from official histories and school textbooks, literary works, both fiction and nonfiction (e.g. *All Quiet on the Western Front*) and the arts, documentaries/news about WWI and movies (e.g. *Warhorse*, *Passchendaele*) and more recently, from the Internet and new social networks (e.g. WWI blogs). Those who have an emotional proximity to WWI (relatives who were killed in the war; relatives who lived or are living in the war zones) may have garnered their memories from stories passed on by family members, or some might have inherited war memorabilia e.g. diaries, family photos, postcards, letters, etc. Memories have been created and instilled in others who have been able to visit (i.e. pilgrimage/war tourism) the now quiet battlefields and former war zones. Since living memory of the original experience, in this case, WWI, has a definitive life span, (i.e.



the veterans have all passed on), its survival, according to Halbwachs (30:130) as quoted in Rigney (42:12), is dependent on being written down,

*When the memory of a series of events is no longer sustained by the group involved and affected by them, who witnessed them or heard about them from the actual participants; when a memory has become a matter only for disparate individuals immersed in new social settings where the events have no relevance and seem foreign, then the only way to save such memories is to fix them in writing and in a sustained narrative; whereas words and thoughts die out, writings remain.*

Most importantly, tourism, depending on how it is managed, may be an appropriate and instrumental vehicle in helping to preserve the memories of WWI. Respondents indicated their intentions to attend and/or to follow documentaries and news about WWI commemorative events. The Centenary presents an opportunity to market and promote the heritage sites and memories of WWI, to make people aware of the significance of this world event and to educate the next generation about its significance in our global history. Collectively, these efforts may invoke interest and aspirations to help ensure the preservation of the war heritage landscapes and memories of WWI for future generations to come.

## References

- Kovacs JF, Osborne BS (2012) A Bibliography: The Great War (1914–1918). Halifax, NS: World Heritage Tourism Research Network, Mount Saint Vincent University.
- Jansen-Verbeke M, George EW (2015) Memoryscapes of the Great War (1914-1918): A paradigm shift in tourism research on war heritage.
- Veteran's Affairs Canada (2016) Evaluation Findings: Effectiveness and Success. Section Promotion: a) European Operations.
- George EW, Jansen-Verbeke M, Das M, Osborne BS (2012) The Centennial of the First World War (2014-2018). An online survey. Halifax, NS: World Heritage Tourism Research Network, Mount Saint Vincent University.
- The Returned and Services League of Australia New South Wales Branch (2016) First World War 1914-18.
- Canadian War Museum (2016) Canada and the First World War.
- Barris T (2007) Victory at Vimy. Canada comes of age: April 9-12, 1917. Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers.
- Simkin J (2016) Belgium Statistics Information.
- Audoin-Rouzeau S, Becker A, Smith LV, Beik W (2002) France and the Great War. British General Staff, ed. Handbook of the French Army, 1914. Nashville: Battery Press.
- Bessel R (1993) Germany after the First World War. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- EersteWereldoorlog.nu. (2016) The First World War in the Netherlands.
- Stephens T (2016) 1914: How war changed Swiss life.
- U.K. National Archives (2016) Deaths in the First and Second World Wars.
- Historic England (2016) The impact of the First World War.
- Marwick A (1968) The impact of the First World War on British society. Journal of Contemporary History 3: 51-63.
- Zeiger R (2001) America's Great War: World War I and the American experience. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.]
- PBS (2016) US WWI Casualty and Death Tables.
- Barnes HE (1926) The genesis of the World War. New York: Knopf.
- Fussell P (1975) The Great War and modern memory. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Henig R (2002) The origins of the First World War. London: Routledge.
- Joll J, Martel G (2006) The origins of the First World War. (3rd revised edition), Harlow: Longman.
- Broadberry S, Harrison M (2005) The economics of World War I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strachan H (1998) World War I: A History. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Braybon G (2003) Evidence, history and the Great War: Historians and the Impact of 1914-18. Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books.
- Winter J (2010) 1918: The road to victory. In: Ekins A (eds) 1918 Year of Victory: The end of the Great War and the shaping of history. Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 29-44.
- Saunders NJ (2000) Bodies of metal, shells of memory, 'trench art', and the Great War re-cycled. Journal of Material Culture 5: 43-67.
- Saunders NJ (2004) Matters of conflict: Material culture, memory and the First World War. New York: Routledge.
- Goldamn D (1993) Women and World War I: The Written Response. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Grayzel S (2002) Women and the First World War. London: Longman.
- Halbwachs M (1997) The collective memory. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Halbwachs M (1992) On collective memory. Edited and translated by L. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Olick JK (2007) The politics of regret: On collective memory and historical responsibility. London: Routledge.
- Burke P (1989) History as social memory. In: Butler t (ed.) Memory: History, Culture and the Mind. New York: Blackwell, 97-113.
- Connerton P (1989) How societies remember. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fentress J, Wickham C (1992) Social memory. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Crumley C (2002) Exploring venues of social memory. In: Cattell MG, Climo JJ (Eds) Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Winter C (2009) Tourism, social memory and the Great War. Annals of Tourism Research 36: 607-626.
- White H (1973) Metahistory: The historical Imagination in nineteenth-century Europe. Baltimore: John Hopkins.
- Lowenthal D (1997) History and memory. The Public Historian 19:30-39.
- Novick P (1988) That noble dream: The objectivity question and the American historical profession. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Rigney A (2004) Portable monuments: Literature, cultural memory and the case of Jeanie Deans. Poetics Today 25: 361-396.
- Rigney (2005) Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory. Journal of European Studies 35: 011-028.
- Stone P, Sharpley R (2008) Consuming dark tourism: A thanatological perspective. Annals of Tourism Research 35: 574-595.
- Ryan C (2007) Battlefield tourism: History, place and interpretation. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Dunkley R, Morgan N, Westwood S (2011) Visiting the trenches: Exploring meanings and motivations in battlefield tourism. Tourism Management 32: 860-868.
- Prideaux B (2007) Echoes of war: Battlefield tourism. In: Ryan C (Eds) Battlefield Tourism: History, Place and Interpretation. New York, NY: Elsevier, pp. 17-27.
- Baldwin F, Sharpley R (2009) Battlefield Tourism: bringing organised violence back to life. In: Sharpley R, Stone PR (Eds) The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism. Bristol: Channel View, pp.186-207.
- Basarin VJ, Hall J (2008) The business of battlefield tourism. Deakin Business Review 1:45-55.

49. Lloyd DW (1998) Battlefield tourism: Pilgrimage and the commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919-1939. Oxford: Berg.
50. Iles J (2008) Encounters in the fields: Tourism to the battlefields of the Western Front. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 6:138-154.
51. Seaton AV (1999) War and thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914. *Annals of Tourism Research* 26:130-58.
52. Winter C (2011) Battlefield tourism and Australian national identity: Gallipoli and the Western Front. In: Frew EF, White L (Eds) *Tourism and National Identities: An International Perspective*. Routledge: London, pp.176-189.
53. Leopold T (2007) A proposed code of conduct for war heritage sites. In: Ryan C (Eds) *Battlefield Tourism: History, Place and Interpretation*. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 49-58.
54. Panakera C (2007) World War II and tourism development in the Solomon Islands. In: Ryan C (Eds) *Battlefield Tourism: History, Place, and Interpretation*. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 125-141.
55. Schuman H, Scott J (1989) Generations and collective memories. *American Sociological Review*: 54:359-381.
56. Páez D, Liu JH (2010) Collective memory of conflict. In: Bar-Tal D (Eds) *Intergroup Conflicts and their Resolution: A social Psychological perspective*. Psychology Press: Frontiers of Social Psychology Series.
57. Jackson R (2015) War, remembrance and the pacifist alternative. Speech: War Remembrance and Reconciliation Study Day, Auckland, New Zealand.
58. Olick JK, Robbins J (1998) Social memory studies: From 'collective memory' to the historical sociology of mnemonic practices. *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:105-140.
59. Vansina J (1985) *Oral tradition as history*. London: Academic Press.
60. Assmann A (1999) *Memories: Forms and transformations of cultural memory*. Bookmark and Share.
61. Assmann J (1997) *Memories: Forms and transformations of cultural memory*. Bookmark and Share.
62. Haskins E (2007) Between archive and participation: Public memory in a digital age. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37: 401-422.