

LOOKING THROUGH RUIN: CANADIAN PHOTOGRAPHY

AT YPRES AND THE ARCHIVE OF WAR

by

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B.A., University of British Columbia, 2000

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF GRADUATE REQUIREMENTS
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS in THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory)

We accept this thesis as conforming
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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

October 2003

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Vancouver, Canada

Date October 7, 2003

Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between the photographic archive of the First World War and Canadian war memory through an analysis of the production of photographs depicting the ruins of Ypres, Belgium and their postwar appropriation. Taken by official photographers in the employment of the Canadian War Records Office, the photographs were intended to act as both historical documents and, paradoxically, as publicity and propaganda images. Both functions of the photographs work to construct a unified image of the war and are similarly characterized by a repressive structure. Ypres, almost entirely destroyed during the war, was both the site of Canada's first battle and major victory as well as a contentious site connoting military mismanagement and wasteful loss of life. Resultantly, representations of the city's ruins are suggestive of a corresponding shift from a mythic to a horrific war in First World War historiography that took place in the decades proceeding it. Images of Ypres' ruins were filtered through both material censorship enforced by the military to elicit high morale and psychic censorship. Photographers made mechanized war conform to their visual expectations. However, the repressive structure literally contains that which it represses as an uncanny double and invariably allows for the possibility of its return. I argue that the anodyne and conventionalized image generated by official photographs of ruins also contains and signifies the destructive violence of modern warfare. Finally, I examine the construction of these conflicting narratives as they develop around the simultaneous processes of archivization and circulation ever-widening circles of mnemonic constructs such as postcards and tourist brochures at the same time that they were being archived. I argue that rather than contaminating and damaging the archival meaning of the photographs, the archive is an accumulative institution capable of incorporating a variety of conflicting narratives without ruining its authority.

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Acknowledgments

This thesis charts the paths I have followed during my Masters degree and is a product of both its time and environs. For this, I wish to thank the faculty, students and staff of the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory at the University of British Columbia for having provided a supportive and academically rigorous environment. I wish, however, to thank, in particular, my advisors, Dr. John O'Brian and Dr. Rose Marie San Juan, who, in addition to their patience, encouragement and ideas, have served as models for the kind of academic to which I may aspire in both their scholarly work and professional demeanor. I also thank Paloma Campbell and Jasmina Karabeg, without whose conversations, exchanges and friendship, the production of this work would have been a much darker experience. Finally, I give special thanks to Sandra Alexandre and George Alexandre, my parents, for always sympathetically listening to my concerns and ideas and assuaging many of my fears, anxieties and doubts.

Introduction:

In this study, I discuss photographs depicting the ruins of Ypres and their circulation within war and post war contexts. However, I wait in order to begin with a few words regarding the implementation and organizing principles of the institution, the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO), which largely oversaw the documentation of Canada's role in the First World War and about the work of the archive in general. Instituted in 1915 through the assistance of a \$25,000 grant from the federal government and the industrious organization of Max Aitken, soon to be Lord Beaverbrook, the CWRO oversaw the documentation of Canada's role in the First World War, amassing a collection of personnel files, war diaries, films and photographs.¹ The collected materials, which eventually came to reside in Canada's National Archives, include about 4,700 images taken by official military photographers.² Although photography formed only a portion of the CWRO's activities, it alone shares the contradiction inherent to Aitken's stated objectives for the organization. Aitken saw the function of the fledgling institution as the "collection, analysis, and collation of all the material required to secure complete historical records."³ However, Jane Carmichael, Keeper of Photographs at the Imperial War Museum, argues that Aitken collected archival material "without any clear appreciation of the possible distinction between publicity and record work."⁴ On one hand, then, Aitken appeared to cherish the transparency and historical value of photography: "[p]hotography... once regarded as the most instantaneous of all arts...has also proved to be one of the most permanent recorders. The events and the men may pass, but the photographic plates remain for years as an indelible record."⁵ On the other hand, photography was frequently employed as a mode of publicity and propaganda.⁶

Canadian War Records Office photographs appeared in a variety of formats throughout the war; photographs were included in the Canadian and British press (including Aitken's paper, *The Daily Express*), photographic journals such as the four volume *Canadian War Pictorial* or the British weekly, *The Illustrated War News*, were blown-up and sold in travelling exhibitions of official photographs,⁷ and used to illustrate short publications⁸ (fig.1) describing Canadian participation in particular battles.⁹ The CWRO photographs, which are at once disposable news images and readymade archival material, thus begin from a disjunctive temporal principle conflating publicity and history and consequently, present and past.

In theoretical terms, this temporal simultaneity is characteristic of all photographs.¹⁰ In consequence, photography's implicit claim to the transparent representation of reality has been critiqued to demonstrate its discursive and ideological biases. Photographic theorist John Tagg argues that photographic realism and the use of photographs as evidence arose as a discursive formation and dismisses both phenomenological and purely semiotic analyses of photography.¹¹ Realism, for Tagg, is an effect of ideology and power serving to maintain hegemonic power structures rather than a phenomenological characteristic of photographs.¹² Within the context of Canadian First World War photographs, Tagg's insights are reminders that Aitken's simultaneously historicizing and publicizing medium is itself historically and institutionally bound. The potentially infinite reproduction and ubiquitous public presence of photographs during the Great War magnify the importance of photography as a mode of knowledge. Rather than conflictual, then, the seemingly contradictory documentary and ideological imperatives which mark the War Records Office photographs historical and

propagandistic efforts are mutually constitutive within the discursive construction of the war.

However, the deconstruction of this archive is not the primary focus of this thesis. Although Tagg's crucial contributions to the theory of photography are an integral part of the subtext of my analysis of war photographs, they are partially lacking within the specific context of First World War photographs. Although discursive formations and ideology are of crucial importance, I am primarily concerned here with the development and contamination of photographic meaning that occurs in the production and reception of the images, as well as in the seemingly oppositional postwar processes of archivization and continued circulation. How are the propagandistic narratives of WWI press photos indexed within the archive and does this contextual shadow ever disappear from a historical document? How does meaning change within the archive, and in the aftermath of the event that it remembers or documents?

While one view of archives may be seen as centripetal in their accumulation of a limited set of material dealing with the past, the dispersion of this same material acts as a centrifuge seeming to offer limitless possibilities of meaning. The opposition is not only one between archives and circulation, but also in varied conceptions of the archive.

Pierre Nora's connection between modern memory and the archive is central amongst those positing stasis as inherent to the archive. He writes that "[t]he less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs – hence the obsession with the archive that marks our age, attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past."¹³ Although Nora acknowledges the continual collection of material, it only ever

records the representation of the past as opposed to what he considers true memory which “remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations....”¹⁴ Although Nora’s distinction between history-as-representation and the timelessness of memory is useful for considering different methods of organizing and living with the past, it is also ultimately too stark. The absolute divide between memory and history suggests that the non-representational experience of memory can be apprehended through its modern absence and representational replacement. On the other hand, Jacques Derrida demonstrates that archives are invariably open and closed, porous and totalized. He discusses the dilemma of archives as a function of the Freudian death drive that he argues necessitates the archive in the first place:

There would indeed be no archive desire without the radical finitude, without the possibility of a forgetfulness which does not limit itself to repression. Above all...beyond or within this simple limit called finiteness or finitude, there is no archive fever without the threat of this death drive, this aggression and destruction drive. This threat is in-finite, it sweeps away the logic of finitude and the simple factual limits, the transcendental aesthetics, one might say, the spatio-temporal conditions of conservation. Let us rather say that it abuses them. Such an abuse opens the ethico-political dimension of the problem. There is not one archive fever, one limit or one suffering of memory among others: enlisting the in-finite, archive fever verges on radical evil.¹⁵

Derrida suggests here not only that the archive begins with its limitations and the desire to preserve and produce in the face of an irresistible oblivion, but also that this process is continual. Although the archive circumscribes and defines what it contains, this originary archive ultimately resists historical totalization. Subject to the incessant destruction of the death drive, new additions add to and destroy the originary archive thereby altering it.

The question of the archivization of the meaning of the First World War is further complicated by conditions specific to it. In Allan Sekula’s examination of archival

photographs, he argues that “archives establish a relation of abstract visual equivalence between pictures,” thereby effacing the power relations upon which they are founded in addition to enforcing the semiotic structures in which such relations are founded such as the universal language of photography.¹⁶ For Sekula, photography is marked by class-based power relations and reinforced the rise of the bourgeoisie. However, class does not appear to have been the dominant constituent in First World War photographs.¹⁷

Although certain forms were geared towards evoking certain reactions from particular groups, it is not a certainty that the images found a homogenous reception even within a given class or national group.¹⁸ The intra-class heterogeneity of these war photographs suggests that these images did more than bolster the myth of the war which Jonathon Vance argues attempted to reassert dominant social codes.¹⁹ Rather and in spite of the careful manufacture of a controlled image of the war by Aitken and Ernst Chambers, the Canadian Chief Press Censor,²⁰ WWI photographs also provided a site for debate invoking instability and anxiety within the social. This anxiety induced by the fluctuating meaning of the war becomes all the more pronounced in view of the shift in popular representation and memory of the war that took place during the late 1920s. While the idea of an absolute cleavage is obviously artificial, there nonetheless remains an apparent polarity between the nationalistic narratives of valour and sacrifice with which the war was recorded and later expressions of anti-war sentiment. The war book boom, which saw the publication of a series of critically and popularly received novels such as Erich Maria Remarque’s *All Quiet on the Western Front* which focused on the horrors and senselessness of the war after 1928, is frequently argued to mark the beginning of this shift.²¹

The fluidity of war memory poses, as I have suggested, some tensions for any mode of knowledge which views the war as a historically closed event. As Eduardo Cadava has argued, historiography, like ruins and photography is invariably viewed from the distance of the present and addresses the question of how this past is to be considered in the future.²² Cadava writes that “when we respond to a photograph by trying to establish only the historical contexts in which it was produced, we risk forgetting the disappearance of context – the essential decontextualization – that is staged by every photograph. The moment in the image appears suspended and torn from any particular historical moment – past, present, or future.”²³ While Cadava notes the irreparable divide between the past and its representation, his further insight is that the reading of these signs must, like the archival death drive, destroy old meanings in the production of new ones. Further, Cadava’s insights insist on the self-reflexive positioning of this thesis and my own intervention into this already layered photo archive whose polyvalence and contemporary signification is amongst my central subjects. The question thus becomes one not only of photographic ambivalence, but also one involving the relationship between the fluctuations and movement of social memory and the stasis incurred by affixing the past to totalizing historical narratives.

The numerous photographs of ruins taken during the First World War provide a unique vantage point from which to consider the convergence of temporal indeterminacy, mnemonic mutability and archivization. As Cadava has argued, the ruin bears the same structure to the past as the photograph.²⁴ Irrevocably ruptured from the trajectory of time, they belong to neither the past as a trace nor the present as a representation of the past. Ruins, like the aporetic structure of archives discussed by Derrida (archive drive/death

drive), present the past materially, but deny the closure of historical completion. Ruins images were also disjunctive in connotation as they were sanctioned by the war censor as inducing good morale, but also found a place in later antiwar tracts such as Ernst Friedrich's *War Against War!* which dedicated an entire section to photographs of destroyed cities, towns and villages.²⁵ The two faced representation of destruction simultaneously presents and effaces its violent origins.

An official Canadian War Records Office photograph, published in the January 9, 1918 issue of *The Illustrated War News* (fig. 2) explicates the relationship between cultural memory, archives and Canadian nationalism which are the other central concerns of this thesis. The retouched photograph depicts a silhouetted Canadian soldier surveying the damage to the ruined St. Martin's Cathedral through a gaping shell hole, in Ypres' famed Cloth Hall.²⁶ The caption begins: "SYMBOLIC: A CANADIAN REGARDS YPRES CATHEDRAL THROUGH A SHELL-HOLE IN THE CLOTH HALL."²⁷ The caption continues by locating the photograph's symbolism in its depiction of "a man from the New World...standing amid the ruins of the Old, pondering...on the catastrophe of European civilization, and wondering what new order of things time may evolve out of the wreckage of the present."²⁸ However, the photograph goes further than this simple symbolism. The Canadian soldier does indeed become a synecdoche for the Canadian nation meditating upon its relationship to England and Europe as well as upon Canada's role in the war, but his meditation specifically upon ruins is also significant. For the soldier viewing the ruins and for the presumed audience for whom he becomes a point of symbolic identification of the experience of war, the ruin becomes the site of an imaginative investment. With the photograph and the soldier as guarantors of the scene's

historical objectivity, the ruin assumes significance in the production of the meaning of the war for individuals. Simultaneously, the photograph draws on the aesthetics of Romanticism found in paintings by Caspar David Friedrich (fig.3) or Roger Fenton's photo series of English ruins (fig.4.) and drawing on the trope's signifying structure as a site of meditation on mortality.²⁹ Ruins, like photographs are privileged signifiers of the historical as material traces of a moment irreparably severed from the present. However, in their vestigial presence, ruins and photography also belong to practices of archeology, particularly the synecdochial promise of an originary totality.³⁰ The ruin is thus an ambiguous rhetorical figure that allows for a series of seemingly unrelated investments: emotional, commemorative, national/cultural, aesthetic, mnemonic and historical. In this process of investment, the perception of disaster is allayed and the ruin becomes instead a site for the investment of meaning of the war's violence. Death, ruination and catastrophe, the anti-representational products of war, are transformed into cultural representations – the nation, history, memorials and archives.

However, the structure of investment inherent to ruins encouraged their appropriation and alteration within the varied forms of circulation and entered the new debates about the justice of the war. That is, they entered the realm of collective memory. While the historical imperative of recording significant battles and events of Aitken's CWRO is antithetical to many notions of collective memory such as Pierre Nora or Maurice Halbwach,³¹ the concurrent publicity function of CWRO photographs, as I have said, saw wide distribution and entered into public debate. In this way, ruins images became not only sites for memorial investments, but also potential sites for debates about the meaning of the war. Although Halbwach, like Nora, argues that collective memory

belongs to the group engagement with the past, he importantly argues that memory does not conclude with the closure of a specific past. He notes that death “does not abruptly halt the current of thoughts unfolding in the social circles of the person whose body has been buried. For some time after, he will be considered as still alive and remain a part of daily life, as we imagine what he would have said or done in various situations.”³² In the case of ruin photography and its imaginative activations, the possibility of the war totalized by history is denied. Photography became part of the experience and memory of the war for civilians – a source of information, a site through which to imagine the well being of their loved ones and part of the cultural patrimony of the war. Their continued circulation after the war suggests that the end of the war did not necessarily mean that history simply closed off the war. The meaning and memory of the war continued to take shape around its continually circulating artifacts.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I examine the production of photographs of the ruins of Ypres as a function of Canadian memory, myth and history. I further question how repression is the dominant mode of First World War representations as a result of military and psychic censorship, and as an effect of the limits of vision and language. Ruins imagery, employing a romanticist trope provides a means of representing the modern war in conventionalized terms. Finally, I hint that the repressed content of these images – death, the dead, the catastrophic – threaten to return from these images and destroy the myth of the war and its ability to communicate. In the second chapter, I begin with photographs of Ypres’ ruins that are directly involved in postwar memorial practices such as those found in postcards and tourist guides which encouraged travel to the battlefields as a pilgrimage and act of mourning. In light of the often painful mourning

process, I ask how the historical meaning of photographic content is re-shaped. As objects of mourning, the photographs destabilize the conventional viewing patterns on which they are founded and provoke an unsettling encounter with death and with the unfathomable horror of the war. However, the transformation of this experience into a secondary narrative underscoring the horrors of war is inevitably incorporated into the archive and its potentially destabilizing subversion is institutionally recoded.

Chapter One – Repressing the Image of War

Origins and Absences: Canadians and the Battles of Ypres, 1916 and 1917

The protection of Belgium was amongst Britain's motivations for entering the First World War.³³ However, the German army had swept quickly through Belgium and the only Belgian territory the British Expeditionary force was able to control was a bulging salient around Ypres. Open to German assault on three sides, the city saw some of the war's bloodiest fighting and the near total destruction of the city. Military possession of the city was thus an almost singularly symbolic act and led to the foolhardy maintenance of the position resulting in horrific human losses. For the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), Ypres was the site of its first battle, the Second Battle of Ypres (or Second Ypres), a celebrated if costly victory in 1915 in which soldiers and civilians still held some of the initial excitement and enthusiasm with which the war began.³⁴ In 1917, the city was the site of a more controversial victory, officially known as the Third Battle of Ypres, but commonly referred to as Passchendaele, the name of the village where the most intense fighting occurred. British generals/strategists ordered CEF soldiers to attack in spite of unfavourable (environmental) conditions and the feeble, unheeded warning from Canadian General Arthur Currie regarding the probability of high casualties.³⁵ Thus, within Canadian histories of the war, Ypres represents a historiographic tension. On one hand, Ypres signifies the resilience and determination of Canadian soldiers to achieve victory against the odds, a connotation that helped to buoy the emergence of a national identity distinct from Britain. On the other hand, this nationalizing myth is marred by the shocking waste of the human life occurring during the two battles, a result

of new technologies of destruction, inept military planning and the city's insignificant, if not detrimental, strategic value.

During the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915, which saw the German use of asphyxiating gas as a weapon for the first time (a practice immediately and universally denounced but soon repeated by England, France and their allies), Canadian soldiers repelled a German attack along a front which the French army had been unable to hold. For Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, who recorded the early stages of CEF engagements in his capacity as Canadian Eye-Witness, the achievement of the unlikely victory and the contemptible but thrilling use of gas enabled the construction of a dynamic narrative which, in turn, loaned symbolic weight to the representation of Ypres. In 1916 Aitken wrote and published the first volume of the three-volume set of *Canada in Flanders*, setting out an account of the encounters of the Canadian Expeditionary Force.³⁶

Dedicating its first chapters to the battle and the weeks leading into it, the well-received book helped to construct a pervasive myth about the capacity and abilities of Canadian fighting spirit through colourfully inflated prose and lurid descriptions of battle.³⁷ The success of the book in both Canada and Britain suggests the oddly conflicted tension of a notion of an emergent Canadian identity still requiring colonial validation for its narratives yet also distinguishing itself through this presentation. The surprising Canadian successes at Third Ypres supplemented the construction of the abilities of its soldiers but confounded the burgeoning sense of nationhood due to the reluctance, but ultimately filial compliance with which the Canadian military received British orders. Further, the so-called victory is complicated by the fact that Canadian casualties numbered about 16,000 and a total of 250,000 human beings were slaughtered during the

five months of senseless battle at Passchendaele.³⁸ While military history may separate the Second and Third Battles of Ypres, they were far from delineated in popular representation and memory partially due to the use of a common proper name and to the reiteration of the city's symbolic importance.³⁹

Thus, unlike the battle at Vimy Ridge whose unprecedented gains endowed it with the greatest celebrity in Canadian histories of the war, Ypres represents a historiographic difficulty.⁴⁰ While Second Ypres fits the mythic narrative of official and national history, the appalling number of deaths caused by the administrative snafus of the later battle has provoked a rethinking of this narrative and its reliance on a notion of sacrifice. However, due to the war censor's suppression of information, this tension was largely repressed in official records and photographs published during the war.⁴¹ The more troubling images of war, of corpses and the horribly wounded for example, were either effaced or converted into (nationalistic) propaganda such as the tale spun in Aitken's description of the death of Lieutenant-Colonel Birchall. He writes:

[t]he 4th Canadian Battalion at one moment came under a particularly withering fire. For a moment – not more – it wavered. Its most gallant Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel Birchall, carrying, after an old fashion, a light cane, coolly and cheerfully rallied his men, and at the very moment when his example had infected them, fell dead at the head of his Battalion. With a hoarse cry of anger they sprang forward (for, indeed, they loved him) as if to avenge his death. The astonishing attack which followed, pushed home in the face of direct frontal fire, made in broad daylight by battalions whose names should live for ever in the memories of soldiers, was carried to the first line of the German trenches. After a hand-to-hand struggle, the last German who resisted was bayoneted, and the trench was won.⁴²

The sacrifice of the officer provides the impetus and inspiration for a Canadian triumph.

At a later historiographic moment, First World War commentators not only acknowledge

but also emphasize tensions such as that represented by Ypres and in many instances point to the exemplary futility of the war.⁴³

This is not simply a tautology stating that revisionist historians continually revise the meaning of the war. What concerns me here is the idea that repression and visual restriction were founding mechanisms for the archivization of the war but also, frequently, a material mark within it. Both material repression through censorship and psychic repression guiding the war's documentarians mark the collected materials of the official Canadian archive albeit as absence and effacement. In this section, I wish to examine if and how this repressed material is indexed when its vestiges do not overtly present themselves. In part, this question is derived from Freud's notion of screen memories which Freud defines as a memory that "owes its value as a memory not to its own content but to the relation existing between that content and some other, that has been suppressed."⁴⁴ By examining the factors contributing to the aesthetic appearance, uses and valences of the numerous photographs taken at Ypres whose ruins were amongst the most commonly photographed subjects of the war,⁴⁵ I will examine the repressive structure of the archive in this chapter. Although wartime repression produced the persuasive coherence of totalizing, official narratives, the structure of repression simultaneously implies the possibility of the return of what has been repressed in various ways.

For Canada, the founding act of archival repression occurred in March 1915, one month before Second Ypres began. The issue of Routine Order no.189 by the British military ordering the removal of all cameras from the front effectively prohibited the construction of a visual record.⁴⁶ Not until April 1916 when the Order was partially

rescinded did Aitken, now heading the War Records Office, receive permission to enlist his first of five official war photographers, Captain H.E. Knobel.⁴⁷ Aitken instructed Knobel to document “all towns, and buildings, and positions, and trenches...occupied by Canadian troops in the past.”⁴⁸ Presumably, this imperative sought to rectify the lacking visual record of Canada’s entrance into the conflict, particularly at Second Ypres. Thus, amongst the 650 photographs taken by Knobel, during his short tenure as official photographer, were 65 photographs of the city of Ypres.⁴⁹ The material effects of the battle on a geographic site, the ruins of Ypres, come to substitute for a record of the battle itself. It is for this reason that I focus only on photographs featuring Ypres’ ruins in addition to the structural similarity ruins share with history in dealing with the past as Cadava has argued.⁵⁰ Never simply descriptive or benign histories of the happenings of war (if such a thing could exist), the appearance of the archival collection of Canadian photographs, now housed in the National Archives of Canada, was produced through intentional and unintentional repression, censorship and limitations.

Limitations: Vision and Technological Warfare

I wish to begin this analysis of representational limits by returning to the suggestive, if romanticizing Canadian War Records photograph that I examined in my introduction (fig.2). The image depicts a silhouetted Canadian soldier standing amidst detritus and crumbling masonry, dwarfed by a shell hole in the wall of Ypres’ famed Cloth Hall. While all images require an aesthetic framing in their selection of subject matter, the shell hole in this photo provides a window through which to view the effects of war and acts as a secondary frame. Gazing outwards from the threshold of the shell hole, the silhouetted Canadian compels the viewer to look upon the shattered remains of St. Martin’s

Cathedral.⁵¹ The ruin-framed ruin is a conventions common to numerous First World War photographs (fig.5 and fig.6) but also draws on the aesthetics of Romanticism found in paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and Roger Fenton's photographs (fig.3 and fig.4). Like its aesthetic precedents, the framing arch serves to delimit the field of vision and to insist upon the imagined significance of the ruined Cathedral as metonymic of a particular history. The trope of ruin-as-history suggests that the past is both knowable as material/visual trace through archeological examination,⁵² and unknowable through the violent decontextualization which characterizes ruin and history.⁵³ War both physically destroys and effaces its negating actions through an aesthetic, historical or allegorical reframing of its effects. As physical remnants, ruins enable a kind of visibility in relation to the war which is at once highly evocative but utterly fragmented and incomplete. This is to say that the frame of the Canadian War Records photo does not provide a window onto the reality of war, but rather functions as a filtering lens or screen through which the First World War could be seen, known and recorded.

The concept of the screen in psychoanalytic film theory provides a place from which to push this relationship between history and vision by calling up issues of the production and mediation of (photographic) images. In Kaja Silverman's analysis of Lacan's model of vision and specular subjectivity, the screen is the mediating third term between what she terms the look, the embodied position of viewership constitutive of subjectivity, and the disembodied gaze which constitutes the possibilities of visibility.⁵⁴ While I will be minimally concerned with the ramifications on subjectivity which are central in Silverman's analysis, her conception of the screen provides insight into issues of permitted visibility and the sociality of vision – issues of key importance to memory and

the archive in this thesis. In describing the screen as located between the impossible-to-apprehend gaze and the embodied look, Silverman argues that the screen is the site of normative vision as well as being predetermined and socially productive.⁵⁵ She argues that this perception of the world is photographic as it selects what to frame and how to bring it into signification. She writes that "literal photographs [do not] block our access to objects and landscapes, but [rather] that when we look at those things it is more often than not through an imaginary viewfinder. This viewfinder organizes what we see in relation to the range and formal logic of culturally available photographic representations."⁵⁶ Further, Silverman insists that this screen is opaque and thereby assumes the appearance of an uncoded objectivity. The screen's opacity implies an unbridgeable, if conceptual gap between screen and gaze, or representation and reality whereby the visually communicable is necessarily representational.⁵⁷ The screen, in this sense, acts as a substitution or site of projection. However, in Freud's discussion of screen memories, the screen can both act as both a psychically safe projection but also has the ability to mask and efface less pleasant memories. Silverman implies that the screen is also a site of psychic censorship through which the trauma and excess of the Real is made acceptable and eventually brought into signification.⁵⁸ This is to say that the screen must be considered as something that masks and effaces, as well as a metaphorical site of projection.

I wish here to examine the screen as a figure for the inscription of the social into the visual realm and to analyze the ruin as this kind of screen. While all photographs in some sense belong to the screen (in addition, as Silverman argues, to providing a figure through which to consider it), I wish to pursue to some degree this concept's specific relation to

war photographs and ruins. Silverman's concept of the screen is relevant to my discussion as it denotes a visual site of social inscription which simultaneously predetermines reception, selects what can be seen and provides the semblance of objective reality. Like Silverman's notion of the screen, ruins impose semiotic limits on the knowable and signifiable – one can know neither the originary disaster (the violence of ruination) nor an absolute context of the past as history. As Silverman notes of the screen, the figure of ruin is socially productive and constructive, but paradoxically connotes here the very things it simultaneously limits: the disaster and the historical.⁵⁹

The paradoxical inscription rendered by the ruin projects and gives meaning to what necessarily can not have full linguistic expression. While photographs provide Silverman with a model to envision the function of the screen, I wish to literalize this concept to some extent (more so than Silverman) in relation to ruin photographs in order to examine the production and reception of an image of the war. Ruins straddle the knowable and the unknown, act as an traditional aesthetic convention employed with modern technology in a modern context, and in their act of signifying these things project a normalized image of war employed to repressive, totalizing ends. In this, they mimic the institutional authority which Allan Sekula argues characterizes all photo archives.⁶⁰ If the central effect of the use of aesthetic conventions in documentary photographs is to construct the normative, what then, is the effect the fluidity of memory? In their requirement for continual imaginary investment, do photographs of ruins maintain something outside the symbolic allowing for these transformations? Defined in advance by censorship, semiotic limitations and visual expectations of what the war should look like, the photo archive appears bound by the use of visual conventions to act as

statements of a repressive institutional authority, but also hints at the possibility of the return of repressed or censored content and the potential rupture of this authority.

Conventions of War: the rhetoric of the modern and traditional

The issue of representational conventions was of crucial importance during the First World War and was, Sue Malvern observes, a topic of discussion amongst artists and writers.⁶¹ Following the 1975 publication of Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*, the issue of representational conventions has become the focus of a substantial literature particularly in relation to memory, memorial, and history. Fussell's book remains of crucial importance to cultural histories of the First World War although it has been frequently criticized in recent years for making generalized cultural claims based on the analysis of a highly selective body of texts thereby overlooking the trends of mass culture.⁶² The book's general argument that modernist literature was a reaction to the cruel ironies and representational insufficiency of traditional war conventions when put to use during WWI raises a number of issues in relation to the Silverman' notion of the screen. Reconsidered through a psychoanalytic vocabulary, Fussell's argument that the failure of traditional representational systems to meaningfully represent the war suggests that the war denoted a rupture within the symbolic order and thus required new strategies for documenting, remembering and understanding. Taking Fussell's argument further, Eric Leed argues that the war not only invoked a necessity for modern modes of depicting the war, but also that the war created a liminal experience in the subjectivity of soldiers, the product, he argues, of having "lived through incommensurable social worlds – that of war and that of peace."⁶³ This is indeed an important consequence if one is to consider how the unexpected and socially uncoded experience of technological warfare –

this symbolic shift or representational failure – impacts the screen's function of negotiation between gaze and look and the anxiety unleashed in civilian populations when attempting to understand the war.

However, in the opinion of the numerous voices expressing criticism of Fussell's thesis, this rupture was neither complete nor total. Beyond taking issue with Fussell's elitist selection of literature, Jay Winter argues that conventionalized representation not only remained prevalent but were also of crucial importance in commemoration and making sense of the war.⁶⁴ Winter notes that spiritualist iconography, apocalyptic imagery and classicized memorials all drew on time honoured tropes and provided the war with meaning.⁶⁵ Approaching conventional war representation with a different tack, Matthew Farish has recently argued that in spite of their often conventional appearance, the composite character of war correspondence, which he describes as cubist, rendered it modern.⁶⁶ Although battlefield access and geographical mobility was limited, Farrish suggests that correspondents shared information to make spatio-temporal composite images of the war that were at once linear narratives as well as the acknowledgement of their limits.⁶⁷ This is to say that the war did not totally or irrevocably destroy the symbolic order in the way that it destroyed cities, territory and human bodies.

However, from here I wish to distance my discussion of ruin photographs from the modern/traditional dichotomy. Categorizing photographs of Ypres' ruins as an example of modern or traditional representational modes is largely undecidable and would not serve to effectively further this debate. Irrespective of their subject matter, World War I photographs are inevitably modern in their technological capacity to create indexical records and for enabling mass reproduction and archival accumulation. In addition, the

documentation of ruination is the record of the productivity of modern warfare. On the other hand, I have attempted to illustrate above, the imaging of ruins was socially predetermined and relied on conventionalized (or traditional) models of vision to image and imagine the war. Thus, rather than the absolute assertion of the modernity or traditionalism of particular images, I am instead concerned with their function. Regardless of the vocabularies they employ, regardless even of the alleged insufficiency and intentional misleading-ness of certain kinds images, photographs taken during the war served to produce meaning out of the war: propaganda, curiosity, myth and history all arise as signifiers in WWI/ruin photographs. Although the technological modernity which characterized the Great War presented unfamiliar conditions, the photographic record of the war suggests that these conditions did not necessarily diminish the human ability to record and represent. Indeed, although the war posed challenges for physical photography in some instances and saw the implementation of new representational strategies, photographs were instrumental to the production of the war's meaning for soldiers, photographers and civilians. The implication of this photographic production of the historical visibility of the First World War is that the potential rupture caused to the symbolic order by the dehumanizing aspects of technological warfare were quickly contained by both psychic and official censorship.

Direct discussions of photography in the context of the First World War emphasize the conventionality of vision during the war and demonstrate that rather than an absolute rupture between modernist and traditional representations, both sought to render the war as a series of significant moments. That is, while frequently different in appearance, style or structure, the function of both modernist and traditional aesthetics was the same.

Photographs and photographers found different strategies for imaging and providing meaning to the war. Australian official photographer Frank Hurley discusses the tension and difference between seeing and representing the war and would seem to imply the representational limits of human vision and of photography and alludes to the need for a different kind of representation. He writes,

None but those who have endeavoured can realize the insurmountable difficulties of portraying a modern battle by camera. To include the event on a single negative, I have tried and tried, but the results are hopeless. Everything is on such a vast scale. Figures are scattered – the atmosphere is dense with haze and smoke – shells will not burst where required – yet the whole elements are there could they but be brought together and condensed. The battle is in full swing, the men are just going over the top – and I snap! A fleet of bombing planes is flying low, and a barrage burst all around. On developing my plate there is a disappointment! All I find is a record of a few figures advancing from the trenches – and a background of haze. Nothing could be more unlike a battle. It might be a rehearsal in a paddock. Now if negatives are taken of all the separate incidents in the action and combined, some idea may be gained of what a modern battle looks like.⁶⁸

Unlike Farish's interpretation of conventionalized representations as indicators of the insufficiency of human perceptual ability, Hurley's statement does not indicate difficulty in cognition but rather, a representational problem. The mechanical eye of the camera is unable to capture the look of modern battle, although Hurley's visual capacity is unhindered. His use of composite photographs, to which he alludes in the last line of the quote, piece together different spaces and times appears to be a representational strategy adapted to the dehumanized conditions of mechanical warfare (fig.7). However, the explosions and airplanes added to two images of the same soldiers climbing from the trenches appear contrived and betray its technique.⁶⁹ While the multi-temporal/multi-spatial aspect of the photograph might be argued to be an abstract representational strategy as its technical manipulation was in fact noted on exhibition labels, its composite

character conforms to Hurley's conventional vision of the war. Compositionally, the busy image bears some resemblance to Richard Jack's popular and traditional battle scene from 1917, *The Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April to 25 May 1915* (fig.8), as both rely on the simultaneous activation of a number of significant moments in order to convey their visual impression. The point that I am making here is that whether considered abstract or traditional, the function of the composite photograph is to confirm Hurley's socially and visually (pre)determined image of the war and that the war, at least initially, did not threaten the symbolic order. A Canadian example of faked photographs further emphasizes the way in which the specific look of things became generalized. A famous image by the second official Canadian photographer, Ivor Castle, allegedly depicting the Battle of Vimy Ridge and exhibited at London's Grafton Gallery in the second CWRO photo exhibition, was likely taken near a practice area near St. Pol, France (fig.9).⁷⁰

Expressing a similar relationship between photography, vision and perception, Canadian ambulance driver William Boyd expresses a desire to see Ypres' ruination after encountering some British photographs taken from at the First Battle of Ypres in 1914. Boyd writes: "I was looking at some wonderful photographs of Ypres taken in the middle of November, 1914 – the Cloth Hall in flames, the Cathedral in ruins. I don't know how it is, but ever since I landed in France my one ambition has been to see Ypres. Somehow there is no place that appeals to the imagination to anything like the same extent."⁷¹ In a curious reversal of the formulation articulated by Hurley, Boyd does not question the efficacy of photographic representation, but desires physical confirmation. However, he ultimately states that those who come later will not hear the awful silence of the ruined

city in its milieu of exploding bombs and suggests that an experiential quality is antithetical to its representation.⁷² It is this sensory or non-representational experience in addition to what is effaced (the repressed) which concern me in terms of the mutation of the memory of the war. Thus, for this analysis, a greater emphasis between the signifying and non-signifying content of the photograph appears to be of greater importance than the distinction between modern and traditional modes of representation.

Rhetoric, Convention and Propaganda

However, this is neither to argue that repressed content is simply accessible to those who look carefully nor even to veterans with an experience relevant in reading the screen image's secondary content. Indeed, the signifying strictures of aesthetic precedent, military censorship and framing by the press played a crucial role in determining the meaning of the publicly circulated image of the First World War with an equal importance to the construction of its memory. The propagandistic use of ruin imagery appears somewhat obvious, but must be established to some extent in order to consider how a somewhat banal aesthetic convention develops rhetorically to become the transitional historiographic signifier that I have suggested. Ruins as propaganda follows at least two different modes and provides meaning beyond the historical documentation of the war. While captioning press photographs was the most overt and common form of propaganda, pictorialism and the employment of aesthetic conventions were also used as a mode of propaganda. A double photograph published in the Jan.2, 1918 *Illustrated War News* depicts a panoramic view of the devastated city of Ypres (fig.10).⁷³ At first appearing as topographic descriptions of arbitrarily chosen sections of the destroyed city, the compositional center within the sweep of the two photographs in fact focuses on

Ypres' symbolic center, the 13th century Cloth Hall and St. Martin's Cathedral in the Grande Place. The frequent depiction of destroyed cathedrals, churches and other cultural monuments in war photographs fulfills a number of roles. The numerous images of cathedral and church ruins throughout France and Belgium indirectly references a type of Christian symbolism that became popular during the war as a means of allaying the tragedy of loss.⁷⁴ Most commonly, however, ruins were framed as pictorial sights and/or captioned to emphasize German cultural barbarism. For example, the caption to the *Imperial War News* photographs reads:

Ypres once the Pride of Flanders, as it is today. German guns have reduced the glorious architecture of Ypres to mere stumps of crumbling masonry rising here and there amid heaps of rubbish. To-day it is the mere corpse of a murdered city. In a few months the modern Vandals have caused there greater ruin than nearly twenty centuries, with their vicissitudes of war and change, have wrought upon the ancient monuments of Athens or of Rome....'In all this country round Ypres, still the capital of the battlefields, holding in its poor stricken bones the soul of all this tragedy, and still shelled by an enemy who even now will not let its dust alone, there is nothing but destruction and the engines of destruction.'⁷⁵

While the caption emphasizes the tragedy and destruction befalling the city personifying it as the skeletal remains and ashes of a murdered body, the focus remains firmly upon attributing cultural atrocities as acts of German Kultur and thereby deflects attention away from the numerous human deaths that had occurred during the only recently ended Third Ypres. Photographs of destroyed churches and cathedrals are, in fact, so common in the contemporary press, that one might suspect that they, rather than enemy positions, were amongst the central targets of German artillery.⁷⁶ By constructing a historical narrative insisting that the stakes of the war's outcome was civilization itself, the deaths of a quarter of a million men are given meaning and put to ideological ends.

I will later turn explicitly to the difficulties inherent to the representation of death and destruction caused by modern warfare – never belonging solely to propaganda and censorship which can only deflect, divert and efface/repress – and of the further consequences of the correlation between city and body made by the *Illustrated War News* caption.⁷⁷ However, I first wish to call further attention to the pictorial character in many photographs of Ypres as, like captioning, it serves to both politicize and make the image coherent. Both photographers and soldiers discussed the ruins of Ypres in terms of aesthetics in spite of, or perhaps, because of their destruction. In his diary, Australian photographer Frank Hurley describes locating a favorable vantage point by climbing to the top story of Ypres Post Office and connects aesthetics and destruction, a connection made surprisingly, if disturbingly, frequently:⁷⁸ “we had a transcending view of the ruined city. Not a building stands intact; most are just brick heaps and unrecognizable dumps of debris....It is a weird, awful and terrible sight, yet somehow wildly beautiful. For my part, Ypres as it now is, has a curious fascination and aesthetically is far more interesting than the Ypres that was.”⁷⁹ Like the panoramic photograph which puts an impossible vista into a single frame of vision, Hurley’s view from above the city affords a perspective of the unique sight of a destroyed city from a distance countering the violence of the ruins and affording an aesthetically pleasurable encounter.

However, it is not only the unique and unusual vista which prompted curiosity about Ypres’ ruins. Many photographs depicted particular buildings with their familiar characteristics eroded, or in some instances, entirely effaced. A photo-postcard⁸⁰ depicts before-and-after images of the nave and apse of St. Martin’s Cathedral (fig.11). The before photograph utilizes a view showing the high arches of a colonnaded nave

culminating at the cathedral's apse. The convention is familiar to many architectural drawings and photographs of cathedrals. Like Fenton's cathedral ruins mentioned earlier, the after photograph in the postcard uses this same convention, providing the wreckage with a sense of visual normalcy. By centering both photographs on the sculpted horse and rider (presumably St. Martin), the photographs allow comparison between the fragmented remains and its former totality as a kind of visual play or curiosity. Unable to register the irony which, for Paul Fussell, subverts traditional modes of representation in the aftermath of World War I, these postcard ruins only become a site of aesthetic interest. Using the prescribed visual conventions for architectural representation, the ruined Cathedral appears normalized with its violent origins effaced and the fate of its former parishioners beyond consideration as they are also missing from the original photograph. It is the normalization of this destructive fragmentation which elicits a sense of curiosity in the viewer who attempts to mentally restore the fragment or to narrate its coming into being. Drawing on aesthetic and architectural conventions, the ruin defines in advance for the viewer how it should be viewed.⁸¹

It may also be worth noting the nostalgia frequently invoked by pictorialism. Drawing on the time-tested theme of the ruin as evocative of a desirable past (such as Friedrich) and the documentation of the rapidly disappearing traces of the past, war photographs featuring pictorial ruins invariably suggest more than cultural destruction. Caroline Brothers argues that photographs of ruins appear as "modifications to the language of the city."⁸² She argues that the photographs are incapable of commentary and that instead, they are only able to work as an inverted conception of an idealized city.⁸³ Further, in addition to the cultural ideal fostered through the image of ruins, the

rhetoric of pictorialism discussed by John Taylor is also relevant.⁸⁴ Taylor suggests that the popularity of English pictorial photographs was caused not only by ordinances outlawing outdoor photography at the homefront, but also worked as a mode of constructing a sense of English-ness for whose preservation the war was being fought.⁸⁵

Chapter Two: Return to the Sights of War

In the first chapter, I examined the relationship between photography, archives and the historicization of the war and argued that the Canadian WWI archive is marked by both political and psychic repression as well as by physical limitations imposed by the enormous spatio-temporal scope of the war. Official collection strategies attempted to convey an image of the war as just and necessary through the restrictions enforced by Aitken's CWRO and the press censor; the desires of photographers and civilians colluded with these restrictions effacing the harsher face of war and shaping the image of the war to conform to visual expectations. Although this repressive media presentation and archival record through which civilians experienced the war was antithetical to veterans experience of the war,⁸⁶ Tippetts notes that soldiers were amongst those who purchased photographs depicting Ypres' ruins from the Grafton Gallery exhibitions.⁸⁷ The value of these ruins as desirable mementos by both veterans and civilians indicate an apparent ambivalence and changeability in these photographs. As objects of mnemonic investment, ruins demarcate a screen through which various groups could project and efface the image of the war. In this simultaneous presentation and masking and in their use as historical documents and mnemonic constructs, war photographs assume the structure of Freudian screen memories whereby a troubling primary memory is masked by an often trivial secondary memory. However, this also potentially allows the repressed primary memory to return to consciousness.⁸⁸ While photographs of the ruins of Ypres act as a screen through which official memory/image is imposed, I have argued that the archive and photograph as social constructs bear a similar structure to this

Freudian model of repressed memory. Thus, the ruin as screen memory not only projects the official, or what Vance has termed dominant, memory of the war, but also threatens to reveal what the screen effaces – here, the ineffable horrors of war.⁸⁹

In this chapter, I begin with this notion of return and will analyze photographs of Ypres' ruins with attention to the afterlife of the archived event and the life of memory. The postwar period is marked foremost by rituals of mourning – official, national, or personal.⁹⁰ Within this context of pervasive mourning, the photographs of the Great War, still actively producing and defining the history of the war in books such as *A Pictorial History of the War*, become increasingly complex signifiers. Already conflating propaganda, history and aesthetics, photographs of Ypres' ruins are further contaminated through their use in rituals of memorial and commemoration invoking the dead and the trauma of negation. This contamination of the historical differs from Cadava's theory of ruin and history. The ruins of the First World War did not only signify the historically unrecoverable past, but also mnemonic mutability or the permeability of the historical. As such, this marks a tension between the absolute rupture marked by representation of the past as history – a totalizing encapsulation – and the continuous effect of the past on lived experience as memory and cultural memory. What sets of exchanges are enabled by this opposition? How are these already meaning-laden photographs appropriated by postwar practices of mourning – personal and collective, by veterans and civilians, tourists and pilgrims – and how does this affect the already troubled production of war memory? In turn, how does the totalizing collection of war photographs respond to the circulation, appropriation and reproduction of its materials and to the threat of the return of the repressed? The distribution of photographs as sites of mourning and the absences

upon which the archive is founded allows for the uncanny return of what was originally repressed from the archive – the dead, the disaster, the catastrophe. I wish to explore this issue of returning as it pertains not only to the fluidity of social memory, but also to the prosthetic memory of the archive. That is, this chapter seeks to examine how the temporal disjunction of the archive responds to, remembers and represents a secondary historical moment during which its materials are (re)appropriated. As such, it is a question of what lies outside the archive and when, or if, the archive is sealed and closed.

Linguistic Limits: Corpses and Corpselessness

The catastrophe of thirteen million soldiers and civilians killed during the course of the war are invariably what is repressed within representations of the war and are also the center of postwar memorial rituals. It is also death which most overtly stands outside representation, but was central to the experience of war. Eric Leed argues that the experience of combat during the Great War placed soldiers in the liminal position that anthropologist Victor Turner describes as structural death. For Leed, life in the trenches was a prolonged encounter with death defined as the slash between life/not-life rather than simply the cessation of life. Physical death was an omnipresent threat in this structural death, but corpses were also a gruesome part of daily life as living soldiers shared living space with the dead (fig.12).⁹¹ Death, in Leed's analysis, lies outside of representational expression as inexpressible experience. Yet death and the dead are also central to postwar memory and mourning while remaining necessarily outside of representation. Winter argues that rituals of mourning provided meaning to death in the aftermath of war and in doing so staved off symbolic collapse that "threatened all those who tried to understand the meaning of loss of life in the Great War."⁹² For Freud,

mourning is a process whereby the cathectic energy invested is withdrawn from the mourned object and placed elsewhere.⁹³ The inability to successfully divest this energy results, according to Freud, in the neurotic condition of melancholia.⁹⁴ While Winter may ultimately be correct in his assertion that postwar mourning rituals contained the threat death poses to the symbolic order, I wish to suggest that postwar rituals of mourning involving ruin photographs were somewhat more complex than this. Photographs of ruins in postwar rituals of mourning contain a subtext allowing for an unsettling encounter with death and the catastrophes of the war which challenges the mythic construction of the Great War.

In her discussion of the creation of means to represent the palpable absences of war, Allyson Booth makes an important distinction in the experience of death during the war: "Soldiers inhabited a world of corpses; British civilians experienced the death of their soldiers as corpselessness. In Britain, then, World War I created two markedly different categories of experience, a discrepancy that complicated the gap that always separates language from experience."⁹⁵ The central consequence of this divide between soldier and civilian experience lies in the representation of death that distanced civilians from understanding the experience of the war itself.⁹⁶ For Booth, the civilian representation of corpselessness found two central categorizations. Many objects fall within what she describes as the official representation of the war – rolls of honour, letters and telegrams informing families of the death of a loved one – which she argues allow for the articulation of disembodied death, "protecting [civilians]," she writes "from gruesome physical facts by allowing them to verbalize a disembodied death."⁹⁷ She counters this with the modernist vocabularies found in postwar monuments and literature which

expressed corpselessness as absence, that is, as an expression of the very problem of representation.⁹⁸ While neither photographs nor ruins figure in Booth's discussion of corpselessness, I have shown that as objects of propaganda and history, they may be positioned on both sides of Booth's division.⁹⁹

However, due to the inherent ambivalence of such photographs, the ruins of Ypres simultaneously efface bodily death while allowing for the articulation of this loss. While the panoramic images described as the murdered city of Ypres (fig.10) makes a metaphorical connection between the body of the city and a murdered body it may also have potentially reminded viewers of the innumerable unacknowledged bodies interred in the mud of Flanders. However, both Aitken and Hurley make this connection between bodily death and ruins directly. In a footnote describing the shelling of the city during Second Ypres Aitken writes that "on the first day alone 15 children were killed as they were playing in the streets, while many other civilians perished in the ruined houses."¹⁰⁰ While the emphasis on the deaths of children may be presumed to be propaganda illustrating the German army's lack of conscience, Aitken's footnote more interestingly positions the ruins themselves as tombs. Likewise, Hurley reads death and catastrophe into a set of his recently developed photographs from Ypres:

There is a touch of pathos and sadness in these new ruins; little patches of clothing and domestic things; each speaks its own tale of suffering, of homes wrecked, of death and ruination. Many walls are blood-splashed and tell the most pitiful tragedy of peaceful folk swept into eternity during their sleeptime. Everything tells of the horrors of war, of unspeakable agonies and wanton murder.¹⁰¹

Hurley's quote, taken from his diary, is less likely intended as simple propaganda and hints at a shift in the meaning of ruins. Indeed, such a shift is present in Hurley's somewhat jarringly juxtaposed terms and phrases; the romantic associations of "pathos,"

“sadness” and “peaceful folk swept into eternity” are contaminated by the “horrors,” “unspeakable agonies,” and the terrible image of blood stained walls with clothing-strewn floors. Neither simply the product of German militarism, nor sad, but aestheticized reminders of mortality, the destroyed city begins to assume a frightful quality. Unlike rituals of mourning seeking to provide meaning, these wartime expressions of absence at the site of ruins disrupt the romanticist trope which they nonetheless aesthetically employ.

Public mourning kept the image and idea of the war (and its consequences) in public view. However, postwar images of ruins carry a different emphasis than the propagandistic spin which they held during the war years. While such narratives continue to resonate (if not dominate), the circulation of images in the postwar years connote the processes of mourning and necessarily, even if partially, admit and embody the absences so carefully screened out by the officially administered image of war. Central to postwar imagery and to the process of mourning, places such as Ypres, Vimy Ridge and Amiens that had been mythicized by the official narratives of Canadian records were imbued with a symbolic significance at the end of the era and saw the creation of a tourist industry to the battlefields.¹⁰² Although travel from Canada was less common than in Britain due to the high cost and time investment involved, travel centered on visiting the numerous cemeteries, the remaining trenches and destroyed cities thereby linking landscape and city with the dead.¹⁰³ The tourist imaginary penetrated Canadian war memory through the distribution of travel guides, such as the well-illustrated *Ypres and the Battle of Ypres* published by the Michelin Tyre Company, and the unabated continuation of postcard circulation. In spite of the fact that a greater

selection of photographs appear to have been available in the postwar years, as evidenced by Ernst Friedrich's collection of horrifying images, *War Against War!*, ruins photographs not only remained in circulation, but appear to have become increasingly common.¹⁰⁴ In this way, although images of ruins continue to screen out the more troubling photographs (now available, but choked out by the numbers of other photographs), through their connection to the new sites and methods of mourning, they also demarcate a shift towards the return of their repressed content.

A photograph from the Michelin guide to Ypres depicts a British cemetery at the Hospice Notre-Dame consisting of dozens of makeshift wooden crosses and three prominent Celtic crosses inscribed with nearly legible nameplates (fig.13). In the background, the skeletal rooftops and jagged shards of a ruined section of Ypres hover above the crosses. The haphazard placement and apparent anonymity of the wooden crosses in combination with the ghostly buildings unsettle the expected commemorative function of cemeteries.¹⁰⁵ The seeming randomness of the makeshift gravemarkers is not suggestive of a peaceful, final resting spot or of the Christian promise of salvation that marked permanent cemeteries.¹⁰⁶ Rather, the image suggests the indecorousness of a mass grave – the body's final indignity.¹⁰⁷ Rather than the solace sought by mourners or tourists, the image has a sense of the unfamiliar, the uncanny, the menacing as a result of the irregular graves and the uninhabited skeletal town which not only reminds the viewer of the displaced citizens or the absent dead, but also takes on a bodily character of this absence. A quick comparison between the Michelin guide image and an image of a cemetery at Etaples taken by William Rider-Rider which shows tidy rows of crosses and a tree in the foreground providing the semblance of a restful park (fig.14) further

demonstrates the uncanny character of the former. Unlike the murdered city from the panoramic image discussed in my first chapter whose relation between body and city was hyperbolic in its depiction of the heinous deeds of a ruthless enemy, this photograph creates a literal link between the deserted, ruined city and the unsettled remains of the absent war dead. The Michelin guide also features images of picturesque and romantic ruins used during the war and frames them with narratives of German culpability and thus, the photograph does not necessarily suggest an absolute rupture within the myth of the Just War. It does, however, point towards discontinuity and porousness within the ruin topos as well as within the memory of the war.

In his book, *The Architectural Uncanny*, Anthony Vidler reformulates Freud's notion of the uncanny as a category of analysis. For Vidler, the uncanny is a doubling process whereby the familiar becomes unfamiliar.¹⁰⁸ As such, there are a series of uncanny effects within the photograph. The photograph conjures up the dead for its viewer through the association of the cemetery made strange as a result of its lacking the expected conventions not only of cemeteries, but also, more specifically for the funereal monuments of the heroes in the mythic version of the war. The ruins are also made uncanny. As I have suggested above in the first chapter, many of the photographs taken of Ypres focus on its gothic monuments and draw on the aesthetic trappings of romanticism which are also always doubled by the modernity of their violent origin. Vidler writes that "the 'uncanny' is not a property of space itself nor can it be provoked by any particular spatial conformation; it is, in its aesthetic dimension, a representation of a mental state of projection that precisely elides the boundaries of the real and the unreal in order to provoke a disturbing ambiguity, a slippage between waking and dreaming."¹⁰⁹

Regardless of whether the uncanny effect of these photographs is the result of the anxieties of war memory, the hint of horror found in Ypres' modern ruins or the unfamiliarity of the modernity of the war itself,¹¹⁰ it has the effect of unsettling the normative myth of the war and its narratives emphasizing the values of sacrifice, valour and honour as well as the notion of the just cause for which so many died.

Return to the Archive

Returning, then, to the questions with which I began, how does the archive and its institutionally repressive foundation respond to the fluidity of memory, to the processes of mourning and to its uncanny images? In light of the view that the First World War is now regarded in historical literature as a shocking waste of life, as an imperialistic war, and as the first full-scale mechanized modern war, the mythic construction of the war has been stubbornly persistent. While I have distanced myself from Vance's notion of the dominant memory of the war as I deem it to be too uniform and totalizing, his argument that the Myth of the Just War held sway throughout the interwar years is not as easy to refute.¹¹¹ Although I maintain that various antiwar counter-memories formed during this time, they do not appear to destroy or displace this official image of the war. While varying shifts and fluctuations have occurred, the general tenor of the mythic war remain in place even when placed in conjunction with memories, images or narratives attempting to unseat this foundation. In spite of the steady increase of oppositional voices and antiwar sentiment expressed by veterans, writers, and artists, and in spite of the necessity to work through the frightful character of mass death, the constitutive elements of the myth remain in place. In part, this may be, as Vance suggests, because the expression of negative sentiment about the war caused grief too great to bear in families who lost loved

ones.¹¹² Rather than displacing the mythic war, then, the critique of the First World War forms a secondary narrative running parallel to that of the notion of the Just War.

The opening of the British Imperial War Museum in London in 1920 relied on both the mythic and horrific images related to the war. On the one hand, Malvern notes that the Museum's opening ceremonies "constituted a funeral or laying-to-rest of the nation's trauma and loss."¹¹³ She argues that this ceremonial ritual institutionalized not the horrors of mass death, but gave form to an idealized national body, "an aristocracy of youth, and part of the wealth and health of the nation. Absent bodies were resurrected as a continuous presence in the national consciousness."¹¹⁴ On the other hand, the foundation of the Imperial War Museum began to emphasize the now clichéd commemoration of the war to end all wars.¹¹⁵ While this narrative can be interpreted as indicating the evils and horrors of war, it also emphasizes the justice of having fought the war in order to preserve peace. Malvern notes, however, that in the lead up to the Second World War, this narrative was no longer tenable.¹¹⁶

Although the archive appears rigid and inflexible in view of its delimited and historical concerns, it does in fact expand and incorporate any new materials and new interpretations with which it is pushed into engagement. The heterogeneous structure of the archive differs from the static narrative of history and allows for the inclusion of oppositional images, histories and memories. Although each engagement with the archive pushes something else out – Derrida's archive fever – the originary substrate remains. It is this feature of the archive which simultaneously permits critical accounts of the war, the horrors of war and uncanny images without threatening the meaning of the war itself. It is, in fact, the originary meaning of the war which allows for these later

engagements. The archive incorporates and agglomerates in a process which has no ending. Even those narratives, images and meanings whose sole intention is to criticize, question and unseat the authority of the archive become part of the archive for it is with the authority of the archive that these voices are permitted. However, this institutional enclosure which enables critique also potentially silences the criticism of ruins or renders the horror of war as a banal narrative or aesthetic trapping. In guarding against this totalization through acts of engagement, one simultaneously risks propping up such problematic devices as I fear, to a certain extent, that I have done in this thesis. However, it is only through such engagements and archival encounters through which memory and forgetting are activated, knowledges constructed, and hope for future justice maintained.

Epilogue: archiving ruins – past, present and future

The circulation of photographs depicting the ruins of Ypres largely dissipated with the advent of the Second World War and the even greater horrors, destruction and loss attendant to that conflict.¹¹⁷ However, while in the process of writing this thesis, the *National Post* fortuitously published an unaccredited photograph of Ypres' Cloth Hall and Cathedral on the front page of its 2002 Remembrance Day issue (fig.15).¹¹⁸ This moment of modern appropriation provides a site from which to make my concluding remarks and acknowledge the contemporary constructions, both discursive and self-reflexive, which underwrite all historical encounters. The photograph itself is not unusual in any way. It depicts a line of soldiers addressing the camera while marching past the ruined monuments and another group of troops attending to supply trucks parked in the Grande Place. The familiar image of the tower of the Cloth Hall dominates the image as a melancholic reminder of the power of war and as a visual focal point as it does in some of the other images examined in this thesis. *The National Post* activates the photograph in a complex way in relation to my central contentions in this analysis, through its framing as a "Remembrance Day Exclusive," and by the inclusion of a recently discovered letter written by John McCrae that makes reference to an image from his poem, *In Flanders Fields*.¹¹⁹

In an obvious way, the photograph iterates a specific Canadian-ness and returns to the originary symbolism of Remembrance Day at a moment dominated by memory of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States and the ensuing war in Afghanistan. No longer effacing the horrifying features of the Great War, the ruins of Ypres instead screen out the highly charged political debates taking place not only in memorial practices but

the nation as a whole.¹²⁰ The anxieties about the propriety of Canada's role in aiding the war in Afghanistan and the furor caused by the deaths of four Canadian soldiers killed by friendly fire during that conflict are displaced with the depiction of earlier Canadian soldiers at a site that inspired McCrae's famous poem that has become an integral part of annual memorial services. The WWI soldiers themselves are seemingly provided with a kind of innocence by their historical remove from the complexity of the current situation or the now historical anxieties invoked by military mismanagement at Ypres or the meritless causes for a war which killed so many. With past anxieties archived as belonging solely to the historical, the contemporary presentation of the First World War and marching Canadian troops invokes a troubling nostalgic innocence based on the familiar narratives of sacrifice and valour.¹²¹ Yet, a horrific repressed content remains in this contemporary appropriation as well. Returning to the mortifying function of photography discussed by Roland Barthes in which "the photograph tells...death in the future,"¹²² the image becomes an unsettling reminder that many of these soldiers depicted in the image may have died in the coming weeks of the war.¹²³ The ruins again become uncanny tombs for the still living and thus any modern war, a thing to be abhorred. However, even on the front page of *The National Post* this critique of war rings hollow and bitterly ironic. The archival appropriation denotes a promise, not of hope in the future as Derrida writes of the archive,¹²⁴ but of future death in the form of a headline "U.S. Prepares to Attack if Saddam Slips."

It was with this abhorrence and criticism of war as well as with a concern for the inevitable historical constructions that arise out of ruins with which this thesis began. It also began, as I implied above, in the shadow of the tragic destruction of the World Trade

Center towers on September 11, 2001 and the new era of political violence it announced. In part, I had hoped to think through these unreal images bombarding the media showing the jagged ruins at Ground Zero in Manhattan, and the images being sent back from Afghanistan, by turning to the ruins left in the wake of the first mechanized war. This is not to say that I sought to causatively link the two disparate events or to examine an overarching structure of ruination in photography. Rather, through the examination of World War I ruins imagery and the exposure of disjuncture within discursive formations, I had hoped to alleviate my own anxieties regarding these new images and the troubling history they appear to be constructing. That is to say that this thesis was primarily envisioned as a critical project which has encountered a failure both in terms of its own objectives but also the failure of criticism within the archive. Although able to point out the slippages in photographs taken at Ypres and the shifts in meaning they underwent in the years following the First World War, these points of ambiguity and disjuncture ultimately do not disturb their archival foundation. This is perhaps due to my insistence on examining the products of war – the dead and ruins – as central to the meaning of the war itself rather than part of its structure. It also implies that the criticism implicit within notions of the uncanny, the repressed or the inexpressible become representational in the critical project and are incorporated into the archive without fundamentally altering it. Thus, my criticism of the archive is itself also archived and subdued as will be the anxieties and debates of this troubled moment.¹²⁵

Fussell writes that “every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because it means are so melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed ends.”¹²⁶ Yet critical engagement with war is also ironic

as it necessitates its own inclusion within the archive of war and provides new meaning to the acts of destruction inherent to war. The question is how to approach the archive critically without contributing to or being incorporated into it. What questions unsettle the archive of modern war? In his conception of archive fever or *mal d'archive*, Derrida points towards the dilemma of archival inclusion:

to be *en mal d'archive* can mean something else than to suffer from a sickness, from a trouble or from what the noun *mal* might name. It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire to the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement. No desire, no passion, no drive, no compulsion, indeed no repetition compulsion, no "*mal-de*" can arise from a person who is not already, in one way or another, *en mal d'archive*.¹²⁷

However, Derrida resists the conclusiveness and inevitability of inclusiveness within the archive. Rather, for Derrida there is nothing inevitable about future appropriations of the past. Derrida's theory of the archive points to the way in which different questions might be productively asked. This entails a criticism which does not seek an answer, but instead continues to open itself to the future. Derrida's notion of archive fever directs us to consider an archive in which loss and production are inevitable but also one with no specific ending. The question of how to engage and analyze the archive without reproducing a totalizing view of the past or without totalizing contentions for the future must be the concern and tool for future critical engagements with war and its representations.

¹ Robert McIntosh. "The Great War, Archives and Modern Memory," *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998): 4-14. The CWRO predominantly collected personnel files, war diaries, photographs, film, and paintings. Arthur Doughty, the Dominion Archivist of Canada, who had initially intended to take over Aitken's position as the head of the CWRO, supplemented areas of the archive that he felt were lacking. In particular, this included Doughty's organization of a War Records Survey which was to document Canadian activities at home as well as abroad and plans for the publication of a multi-volume history of the war. See also Peter Robertson. "Canadian Photojournalism during the First World War," *History of Photography* 2, no.1 (1978): 37-52 and Maria Tippet *Art at the Service of War: Canada, Art and the Great War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

² Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism," 48, notes that this number refers solely to Canadian Official photographs taken abroad. Other portfolios included naval, training grounds and homefront photographs. Official photography is distinguished from amateur and press photography largely in terms of function and access. Official photographers, employed by all British and Dominion nations, were given military rank, given access to the frontlines and expected to document the achievements of the nation's army. See Jane Carmichael, *First World War Photographers* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 1-2

³ Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism," 40.

⁴ Jane Carmichael, "Photographers at Passchendaele," *Imperial War Museum Review* 2 (June 1987): 5.

⁵ Max Aitken, quoted in Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism," 41. The rest of the quote provides a vital link between photographs, archives, nationalism and generational memory: "five, or 10, or 25 years from now, they will be shown to us and our sons, and will link the decades together in a way unimagined by our ancestors. The new generation will see the Battle of the Somme...as vivid to them in fact as any of the great events of history are to us in imagination."

⁶ The ambiguous function of War Records Office photography has led to frequent assertions of its primary role as either historical or publicity in recent literature. These assertions tend to emphasize Aitken's assertion of the historical value of photography or another statement in which he worried about the longevity of the photographic record. For example, Tippet, *Art at the Service of War*, 23, argues that the relatively short shelf life of wartime photography impelled Aitken into instituting the Canadian War Memorial Fund to commission paintings as more permanent visual records of the war.

⁷ Grafton Galleries, *Catalogue of the Canadian Official War Photographs, Second Exhibition: For the benefit of the Canadian War Memorials Fund; Under the direction of the Officer I/C Canadian War Records* (London: Geo. Pulman and Sons, 1917). This exhibition catalogue lists photographs shown at the second of three exhibitions held at London's Grafton Gallery. This exhibit focused on Canadian military activities at Vimy Ridge. The successful exhibitions raised \$170,000 for the Canadian War Memorials Fund, a second organization spearheaded by Aitken that oversaw the commission of paintings which would more permanently record and valorize the Canadian war effort. Amongst others, these exhibits traveled to New York and Ottawa after their London showing. See Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism," 50.

⁸ For example, Beckles Willson's *In the Ypres Salient* (London: William Clowes and Sons, Ltd., 1916) and William Boyd's *With a Field Ambulance at Ypres: Being Letters Written March 7-August 15, 1915* (Toronto: Musson Book Co, 1916) were both published in 1916 and contain photographs taken from various sources. Willson's book credits the *London Illustrated News* and postcard manufacturer Antony d'Ypres as sources. Boyd's book does not credit its illustrations. Numerous pictorial histories were also published in the immediate aftermath of the war. A Canadian example of this type of publication is the two book-single volume publication *Pictorial History of the Great War* by S.J. Duncan-Clark and W.R. Plewman and *Canada in the Great War* by W.S. Wallace. Toronto: John A. Hertel, Co, 1919. The book is "[i]llustrated with Colorgravures British, Canadian, American and French Official Photographs and Maps."

⁹ John Taylor, "Pictorial Photography and the First World War," *History of Photography* 6 (1982): 129, expands this list to include "lantern slides,...cigarette cards, picture-postcards, posters, [and] shop window exhibitions."

¹⁰ Photography's temporal paradox is made most memorably by Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980) who further complicates the time of photography with the addition of an implied future. In his discussion of a photograph of a condemned man awaiting his fate in a jail cell, Barthes writes: "I read at the same time: *This will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What pricks me is the discovery of this equivalence.... Whether or not the subject is already dead, every photograph is this catastrophe," 96.

¹¹ John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 1-5.

¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

¹³ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7-25, for example, argues that archives destroy lived memory in their tireless accumulation of material and opposes lived memory to modern memory whose figure is the archive: "Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image.... The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs – hence the obsession with the archive that marks our age, attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past," 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 19-20.

¹⁶ Allan Sekula, "Reading an Archive: photography between labour and capital," in *Visual Culture: the Reader*, ed. Stuart Hall and Jessica Evans (London: Sage, 1999), 184.

¹⁷ Jonathon Vance, *Death so Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 7, argues that class, religion, ethnicity, region were not factors in Canadian war memory. Such an argument clearly reinforces Vance's argument that a dominant memory of the war was nearly universally subscribed to. However, this is, no doubt, an oversimplification of the complex interactions taking place within these conventional interest groups. Debates occurred within groups as well as across groups meaning that class, religion, ethnicity and region

were played a role in the debates but were not absolute determinants or guarantors of a unified position in relation to the social memory of the war.

¹⁸ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1997; reprint, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1989), argues that photographs in newspapers have been viewed in terms of cultural elitism: "Photographs were seen as a way of giving information to people who do not take easily to reading. *The Daily News* still calls itself 'New York's Picture Newspaper,' its bid for populist identity. At the opposite end of the scale, *Le Monde*, a newspaper designed for skilled, well-informed readers, runs no photographs at all." With the cost of CWRO photographs sold at the Grafton Gallery reaching as high as £80, and the description of patrons lined up around the block indicate both popular and elite appeal. However, Sue Malvern, "Art and War: Truth or Fiction?" *Art History* 19 (June 1996): 309, notes that "in Britain in wartime, the regulation of cinema and photography was more repressive, as well as more covert, than that of fine art, because anxieties about the loyalties of the mainly working class audience drawn to the cinema."

¹⁹ Jonathon Vance, *Death so Noble*, 261, writes that "[i]nstead of creating a less class-conscious society in Canada after the war, which would have been a more faithful rendition of the CEF experience, the myth would have created a society in which class divisions were reinforced but everyone was happy about it. The imagined community that the myth would forge was not a new Canada at all, but a Canada in which the old power structures were bolstered."

²⁰ Jeffrey Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship During Canada's Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 75-84, discusses the role played by Ernst Chambers, head of the Canadian Chief Press Censor's Office, in further reducing the definition of permissible imagery. In addition to deciding what kind of imagery and reportage were appropriate for Canadian citizens, Chambers also imposed paternalistic and xenophobic restrictions on the press banning foreign language newspapers, pacifist publications and threatening newspapers that did conform to his notion of acceptable copy.

²¹ However, the relevance of the war book boom has been contentious to a number of authors who dismiss the idea that the decade after the war was marked by a transition which came to a head in 1928 with the publication of Remarque's book in addition to a variety of other novels such as Charles Yale Harrison's *Generals Die in Bed*. Vance, *Death so Noble*, 187, argues that this perception is overstated and flawed. He suggests that these books were not indicative of waning support for the older myth of the war but, conversely, bolstered it: "[c]ertainly *All Quiet on the Western Front* was deemed popular enough to be serialized in a number of daily newspapers, and Remarque and other antiwar authors garnered many favourable reviews in Canada. However, at least one critic questioned the real popularity of bestsellers, arguing that the public 'read to order like automata,' and press comments point to the existence of a sizable body of opposition to these books. Indeed, the canon of antiwar literature became a battleground, rallying the defenders of Canada's war myth."

²² Eduardo Cadava, "Lapsus Imaginis: The Image in Ruins," *October* 96 (Spring 2001): 39.

²³ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35-6. "We might say that the image of ruin tells us what is true of every image: that it bears witness to the enigmatic relation between death and survival, loss and life, destruction and preservation, mourning and memory.... It announces the inability of the

image to tell a story: the story of ruin, for example. It is because of this silence in the face of loss and catastrophe – even when the ruin remains undeclared – that the image is always at the same time an image of ruin.”

²⁵ Ernst Friedrich, *Krieg dem Krieg!* (Berlin: Freie Jugend, 1925), 180-192.

²⁶ The photograph is published in the January 19, 1918 issue of the *Illustrated War News*, but no date for the photograph itself and, as the city of Ypres was largely destroyed in the First battle of Ypres (as it has come to be known), could be as old as that.

²⁷ Ibid. The rest of the caption: “There is something symbolic as well as tragic in this photograph. ‘An experience,’ as Tennyson makes Ulysses say, ‘is an arch wher thro’ Gleams that untravell’d world.’ The significant scene here recorded by the camera suggests many reflections. Here is a man from the New World – the world of the future – standing amid the ruins of the Old, pondering, it may be, on the catastrophe of European civilization, and wondering what new order of things time may evolve out of the wreckage of the present. In the building of that new order Canada is destined to play her part. Has she not just decided not to ‘lie down’ but to go on fighting the forces of Prussian destructiveness? This helmeted soldier typifies her purpose.”

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Roth, Michael S. “Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed,” in *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed*, eds. Michael S. Roth, with Claire Lyons and Charles Merewether, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997), 5.

³⁰ Merewether, Charles: “Traces of Loss,” in *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed*, eds. Michael S. Roth, with Claire Lyons and Charles Merewether, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1997), 25-26.

³¹ Maurice Halbwach, *The Collective Memory* (1950; reprint, New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 80. Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” writes: “[m]emory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name...remain[ing] open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past,” 8.

³² Halbwach, 72.

³³ John Keegan, *The First World War* (London: Hutchinson, 1998), 69. This is clearly an oversimplification of the reasoning behind Britain’s entrance into the war. Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: the Great War and Modern Memory* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989), 116-120, discusses some of the systemic power relations which factored into Britain’s entrance into the war particularly in regard to the fluctuations of political and economic power in Europe.

³⁴ Carmichael, *First World War Photographers*, 74.

³⁵ Dean Oliver, “The Canadians at Passchendaele,” in *Passchendaele in Perspective: The Third Battle of Ypres*, ed. Peter H. Liddle (London: Leo Cooper, 1997), 256, notes that despite the Canadian successes at Third Ypres, the maneuver was roundly criticized. He writes: “the casualty rolls tainted the victory and brought stern reproaches to Currie from hostile Canadian politicians and newspaper editors...Currie was accused of wasting lives and for acquiescing all too readily in the designs of Britain’s apparently luckless, if not incompetent, generals. However impressive the victory from a technical and tactical

standpoint, it had not changed the strategic balance on the Western Front, and the heavy losses had aggravated the manpower crisis... That [Currie] could scarcely have refused to participate in Haig's floundering offensive was largely irrelevant to such critics; that he had wrangled numerous concessions from a desperate GHQ was not known; that he had accomplished the well-nigh impossible was utterly beside the point."

The critique of the follies at the battles of Ypres is not only modern nor aimed solely at Third Ypres. Aitken's assistant with the CWRO, Beckles Willson, *In the Ypres Salient*, 12-3, felt compelled to address anonymous dissenting voices in his history of Ypres: "It is said that Ypres and the Salient are chiefly retained for sentimental reasons. This is true, in the sense that this whole War was avowedly waged, in the first instance, for sentimental reasons... If we have pledged our honour to Belgium, we are pledged to the hilt to guard the soil of Ypres inviolate from the heel of the living enemy. It is only a heap of ruins, but it is an eternal memorial of British valour. It is only a shell-swept graveyard, but the graves are those of our heroic dead. It is a terrible responsibility to stand steadfast, but every soldier who has died in the Ypres Salient has yielded his life to protect his country's honour. Vulnerable the Salient may be, but our troops are invulnerable." The abstract, romanticist rhetoric of such a passage written from the comfortable distance of privilege has, of course, only enflamed the critique of WWI military strategy.

³⁶ Aitken, Max: *Canada in Flanders: The Official Story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (vol. 1, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916).

³⁷ Typical of Aitken's overstated, myth-making prose is his description of the CEF at the Front: "[the trenches were an] almost endless succession of warren-like lines where scores of thousands of men stand to arms by night and day, and where the Canadian troops have already fought with a gallantry and a dash, and yet a tenacity, which have seldom, if ever, been equaled in military history," *Canada in Flanders*, 23.

³⁸ Oliver, "Canadians at Passchendaele," 255-6.

³⁹ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975; reprint, New York: Oxford UP, 2000), 9, notes the role played by terminology and names in providing continuity and "rational causality." He writes "[t]o call these things battles is to imply an understandable continuity with earlier British history and to imply that the war makes sense in a traditional way. As Esmé Wingfield-Stratford points out, 'A vast literature has been produced in the attempt to bring [the Great War] into line with other wars by highlighting its so-called battles by such impressive names as Loos, Verdun, the Somme, and Passchendaele....' This is to try to suggest that these events parallel Blenheim and Waterloo not only in glory but in structure and meaning."

⁴⁰ While also the site of the horrors of modern war, the mythic character of Vimy Ridge is firmly entrenched in the cultural memory of this battle. It is possible that the official Canadian war memorial to the Missing, designed by Walter Allward, was constructed at Vimy Ridge to draw on this less problematic memory.

⁴¹ Although the press lobbied for and won the right to send their own correspondents and photographers to report on the battle, the military largely refused access to the front and maintained control over the image of war that it wanted presented. Press correspondents could report on little beyond what they were given access to and most newspapers remained reliant on official photographs to document the war. See Carmichael, *First World War Photographers*, 2.

⁴² Aitken, *Canada in Flanders*, 58.

⁴³ Ernst Friedrich's *War Against War!* published in 1925 is amongst the earliest examples of such revision.

⁴⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Screen Memories," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (vol. III (1893-1899), edited and translated by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 1964,) 320.

⁴⁵ Modris Eksteins, "War, Memory, and the Modern: Pilgrimage and Tourism to the Western Front," in *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity*, ed. Douglas Mackaman and Michael Mays (Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 2000), 158. Eksteins quotes H.A. Taylor: "the Cloth Hall of Ypres must rank close to Niagara as one of the world's most-photographed sights." Although Eksteins cites the quote to demonstrate the disdain for which some felt for the commodification of the battlefields, it nonetheless also demonstrates that Ypres and the Cloth Hall were identified early as visually important sites.

⁴⁶ The order read: "'Withdrawal of Cameras. As cases are constantly occurring which tend to show that the provisions of General Routine Orders which prohibit the taking of photographs and the sending of drawings and photographs to the Press are being ignored, under instructions from General Headquarters all cameras are to be sent home, each camera being examined by the censor before the parcel is passed by him, to ensure that there is no film in it. The Officer Commanding every unit is also to render a certificate to Divisional Headquarters by 9 a.m. Wednesday 24th March that he is satisfied that there are no cameras in the possession of officers or men or of his units... Similar certificates will be rendered on the 1st day of each month in future... to ensure that the provisions of this Order are complied with by newcomers,'" quoted in Peter Robertson's "Canadian Photojournalism," 38. However, these repressive measures did not result in an absence of imagery as many news agencies obtained accounts and imagery of the war from other sources, French, for example, in order to bypass the bland copy administered from official sources.

⁴⁷ While possibly simply a matter of convenience, all of the CWRO photographers were British suggesting both/either that Aitken did not consider a specifically Canadian vantage point necessary and makes an assumption of photography's technological objectivity or that Canadian and British interests were inseparable. In comparison, Australia's official photographers, Frank Hurley and Hubert Wilkins were both Australian. See Martyn Jolly, "Australian First World War Photography: Frank Hurley and Charles Bean. *History of Photography* 23, no.2 (1999): 141-148.

⁴⁸ Aitken, quoted in Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism," 41.

⁴⁹ Ypres was clearly an important site in Aitken's version of the war. The Second Battle of Ypres figures prominently in the first issue of the four volume *Canadian War Pictorial* journal issued by the CWRO. While later issues focused on Canadian participation at the Battles of the Somme (no.2) and Vimy Ridge (no.3) and almost solely featured depictions of military life, the story of this first and photographically absent battle was illustrated accompanied by two ruin photographs. Aitken further demonstrates the emphasis he placed on Ypres when amongst the earliest paintings commissioned by the Canadian War Memorials Fund was Richard Jack's *Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April to 25 May 1915* (1917) (fig. 8). See Tippet, *Art at the Service of War*, 26.

⁵⁰ Cadava, "Lapsus Imaginus," 38-9.

⁵¹ A fascinating aspect of this photograph which does not fit within the confines of this analysis of ruins imagery in the Canadian archive lies in its simultaneous visual push and pull. As I suggested, the framing mechanism of the shell hole, in addition to the viewer-substituting figure of the soldier, insists that the romanticized cathedral is the significant subject of the photograph. However, the rubble which litters the foreground of the photograph and beyond which the soldier is standing pushes the viewer from the scene and insists on the separation of viewer and the soldier. This distinction is one which emphasizes the experiential abyss between Western Front and home front which caused the alienation of returning soldiers who could not communicate their experiences to friends and family who had only experienced anodyne imagery.

⁵² Merewether, "Traces of Loss," 25.

⁵³ Cadava, "Lapsus Imaginus," 41.

⁵⁴ Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 168, explains Lacan's concept of the gaze as a "function of seeingness." She continues: "this 'function' precedes any individual act of looking, and is that out of which the look somehow emerges. Much as a language might be said to preexist the subject and provide him or her with his or her signifying resources. The gaze is, in this respect, the manifestation of the symbolic within the field of vision."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 134.

⁵⁸ Silverman, 159. She writes "these memory traces are far from providing a registration of the 'real.' As perceptions flow across the psyche, prior to arriving at consciousness, they are worked over in all kinds of ways by censorship and fantasy, and this process is a continuing one at the level of memory."

⁵⁹ Freud's screen memory is also a relevant concept to this psychic process. Freud, "Screen Memories," 307, writes: "[w]hat is recorded as a mnemonic image is not the relevant experience itself – in this respect the resistance gets its way; what is recorded is another psychical element closely associated with the objectionable one – and in this respect the first principle shows its strength, the principle which endeavours to fix important impressions by establishing reproducible mnemonic images. The result of the conflict is therefore that, instead of the mnemonic image which would have been justified by the original event, another is produced which has been to some degree associatively displaced from the former one." What is repressed is, in fact, constitutive of the benign replacement. In the ruin photograph, the destructiveness of war is productive of the effacing screen memory which is, in this case, the ruin itself made benign through the rehearsal of aesthetic conventions. However, the ruin remains a direct product of the catastrophe of mechanized warfare that cognitively, rather than aesthetically, threatens to reveal itself.

⁶⁰ Sekula, "Reading an Archive," 184-186.

⁶¹ Malvern, Sue. "Art and War," 311.

⁶² Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995) perhaps poses the most formidable critique of Fussell's position in his examination of the prevalence of traditional modes of representation in the aftermath of the First World War. Leonard V Smith, "Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory*: Twenty-Five Years Later," *History and Theory* 40 (May 2001): 241-260

examines Fussell's book's impact upon its 2000 re-publication of the book. Smith observes that the book's overall thesis did not anticipate trends in First World War scholarship but also argues that the book itself has become a *lieux de memoire* within many cultural analyses of the war. Vance, *Death so Noble*, 5-6, is less generous in his reception of *The Great War and Modern Memory* although his charge that Fussell's analysis is too selective.

⁶³ Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), 25. Leed also argues here that the liminal subjectivity created by war was described by soldiers not only as a marginalizing and unrepresentable experience but also as liberating from social constraints.

⁶⁴ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 5. See also Vance, *Death so Noble*, 89-95

⁶⁵ An odd paradox in the apparently contradictory theses of Winter and Fussell arises as a question of nomenclature. Both describe the reformulation of traditional aesthetic imagery in the context of the First World War but come to different poles in what to label the results. While Fussell argues that such works are invariably modern, Winter emphasizes both the necessary semiotic structure that traditional imagery provides as well as the renewed currency they are given through contemporary reworkings.

⁶⁶ Matthew Farrish, "Modern Witnesses: Foreign Correspondents, geopolitical vision and the First World War," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, no.3 (2001): 277.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶⁸ Frank Hurley, quoted in Daniel O'Keefe, *Hurley at War: The Photography and Diaries of Frank Hurley in Two World Wars* (Sydney: Fairfax Library in association with Daniel O'Keefe, 1986), 6.

⁶⁹ Jolly, "Australian First World War Photography," 144, writes that "the foreground is constructed from the final two images of a rapid sequence of three photographs he shot of a group of soldiers going over the top. In the composite, these sequential images of the same soldiers become spatialized two lines of advancing troops, and planes, shrapnel and smoke have been added into the background."

⁷⁰ The impact of these faked scenes is incontestable. Castle's photograph was exhibited in England, Canada and the United States. One press report distributed in the United States provided a narrative explaining how all of the soldiers in the photograph had been killed by German machine gun fire moments after the photograph was snapped. See Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism," 43-44. Similarly, the British propaganda film, *The Battle of the Somme*, contains a staged scene in which a soldier is seen to slide down the trench embankment during an attack representing his death for horrified audiences. See Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space between Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), 22.

⁷¹ Boyd, 47-8.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 86-87: "Ypres is a place that one never tires of, draws one back again and again. Hosts of tourists and globe-trotters will come to see it in future years, but it will never mean the same to them as to those who have seen it in its utter ruin and have listened to its awful silence and to the shells bursting in its midst. And they, and only they, can ever only truly know Ypres the beautiful, Ypres the desolate."

⁷³ *Illustrated War News* (London) 2 January 1918, p.10-11. Although this photograph was published shortly after the conclusion of Third Ypres, there is no indication that the photograph is contemporary.

⁷⁴ This connection was made especially through making a connection between the sacrifices of dead soldiers and the sacrifice of Christ. Both sides of the war produced and distributed this type of popular imagery which frequently depicted Christ on the battlefield comforting the dead and dying or a ghostly scene of crucifixion near an eternally slumbering soldier (invariably looking quite comfortable and peaceful). See Vance, *Death so Noble*, 32-72, on the Canadian use of this imagery and George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 70-80.

⁷⁵ *Illustrated War News* (London) 2 January 1918, p. 10-11.

⁷⁶ In her discussion of the shelling of Rheims Cathedral, Nichola Lambourne, "Production versus Destruction: Art, World War I and art history." (*Art History* 22 (September 1999): 349-350, 359-360, notes the postwar extension of this rhetoric regarding responsibility for damage to cultural monuments into Art Historical literature examining debates over the origins of architectural styles.

⁷⁷ This connection was, in fact, quite common. In addition to the IWN caption, ruined cities were described as bodies by Red Cross official George Ford, *Out of the Ruins* (New York: The Century Co., 1919) who described civilians returning to their war-ravaged homes finding nothing but the "bleaching bones of the town and the...martyred cathedral," 20. Henri Barbusse, *Under Fire* (London: Dent, 1917), 2, also links bodies and ruins in his novel: "Houses are eviscerated like human beings and towns like houses. Villages appear in crumpled whiteness as though fallen from heaven to earth. The very shape of the plain is changed by the frightful heaps of wounded and slain."

⁷⁸ For example, Ford, *Out of the Ruins*, states that Ypres is "more beautiful in its mutilation," 19-20.

⁷⁹ Hurley, quoted in O'Keefe, *Hurley at War*, 18. Hurley also describes photographing the ruins of Albert in these pictorial terms: "Wilkins and I pottered around various ruins in the vicinity of the Church ruins (Albert) to fossic (sic) out unique standpoints from which to take photographs. We found no scarcity of vantage points, as the entire surroundings dominated by the fine spire and famous leaning Madonna, compose one vast picture from any outlook," 40.

⁸⁰ The date of the postcard is difficult to ascertain. Although postcards were common throughout the war, photo-postcards were uncommon. The book of postcards in which this image was published, however, reads "approved by censor," suggesting their circulation during the war. See Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 128.

⁸¹ Joan Schwartz, "The Geography Lesson: Photographs and the Construction of Imaginative Geographies." *Journal of Historical Geography* 22 (January 1996): 29-33, discusses a similar idea as a photographic pre-text. She argues that the experience of photographs for travelers defines in advance what they will deem advantageous viewing positions and what they will want to see of a particular place or city.

⁸² Caroline Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History*. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 111.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 115-120

⁸⁴ Taylor, John. *War Photography: Realism and the British Press*. (New York: London, 1991), 24-27.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Also see Merewether, "Traces of Loss," 28. Merewether discusses French photographer, Désiré Charnay's photographs of Mexican ruins in which he argues that the nostalgic innocence of the pictorial images masks an imperialist agenda.

⁸⁶ Leed, *No Man's Land*, 25.

⁸⁷ Tippet, *Art at the Service of War*, 79.

⁸⁸ For example, Freud, "Screen Memories," 317-22, describes the case history of a patient, likely Freud himself, who has replaced the memory of painful romantic desires and fantasies of his teenage years with a psychically less troubling memory of childhood in which he and a male cousin took yellow flowers from a female cousin and thus de-flowering her, as it were.

⁸⁹ Vance, *Death so Noble*, 9: "[t]he dominant memory emerges after a struggle between conflicting interpretations of historical events and comes to act as a bulwark for the establishment. The past becomes an excuse for the present, justifying the social or political order on the grounds that it was ordained by history. The dominant memory claims that the status quo exists because the past wills it. In doing so, it sets out what should be remembered...and what should be forgotten. Individuals who do not subscribe to the dominant memory, who refuse to forget or remember what it prescribes, become subversives. Their private memories are driven underground, to exist as a potentially threatening undercurrent to the social order."

⁹⁰ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 5-7.

⁹¹ Leed, *No Man's Land*, 21-24. See also Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space between Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), 21.

⁹² Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 226, draws on the work of Julia Kristeva in this formulation of the resistance that tradition poses to symbolic collapse.

⁹³ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. V.XIV (1914-1916). Trans. James Strachey. (London: Hogarth Press, 1964), 244-5.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 21.

⁹⁶ There are numerous accounts of soldiers feeling alienated upon their return to the homefront, shocked by the censored version of the war, and unable to communicate their experience of the war. See Leed, *No Man's Land*, 33.

⁹⁷ Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 33.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ While outside of the scope of this thesis, photographs of corpses would seem to be of some importance to these questions of death, representation and corpselessness as well. It is frequently stated that few photographs of the dead circulated during the war as they were deemed a threat to public morale. However, examples can be found in popular journals such as the *Canadian War Pictorial* and the *Illustrated War News*. Although such images almost always represent the bodies of enemy soldiers, photographs depicting the Australian dead appear in Australia as early as 1923. See Charles Bean, *Photographic Record of the War: Reproductions of Pictures taken by the Australian Official Photographers*, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1923). However, the meaning

of such images has been dealt with summarily. Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches*, 56, for example, addresses these images with few words suggesting that they were only seen in the postwar years and were invariably trivialized through the presence of glib captions. Akin perhaps to the way in which Holbein's *Christ in the Tomb* shows Christ's physical body without the conventional promise of transcendence, images of corpses pose a threat to notions of valiant and noble deaths exemplified by Aitken's narrative of Lieutenant-General Birchall which I cited earlier. However, I have located no commentary on the reception of these specific images and it is thus difficult to speculate on their contemporary reception. For an overview on the question of morality of photographic practices focusing on death and destruction, see Susan Sontag, "Looking at War: Photography's view of devastation and death," *The New Yorker*, 9 Dec 2002, 82-98.

¹⁰⁰ Aitken, *Canada at War*, 49 n.1.

¹⁰¹ Hurley, qtd. in O'Keefe, *Hurley at War*, 18.

¹⁰² See David Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism* (New York: Berg, 1998), Modris Eksteins, "War, Memory, and the Modern: Pilgrimage and Tourism to the Western Front," in *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity*, (eds. Douglas Mackaman and Michael Mays. Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 2000) and Sue Malvern, "War Tourisms: 'Englishness,' Art, and the First World War," *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no.4 (2001): 45-66. George Mosse and Jonathan Vance also broach the subject of postwar tourism to varying degrees.

¹⁰³ Malvern, "War Tourisms," 56, writes about the relationship between interred bodies and landscapes by Paul Nash and Muirhead Bone.

¹⁰⁴ Friedrich, *Krieg dem Krieg!*, 180-192.

¹⁰⁵ Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 82-7, both discuss the cultivation of cemetery aesthetics. War cemeteries were to appear as parks. While conveying sobriety, they were not to provoke but to quell the more disquieting emotions and reactions. The early photograph showing what would be only temporary markers for fallen soldiers do conjure up this sense of the uncanny.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., *Fallen Soldiers*, 84, on the nineteenth century convention of cemetery parks.

¹⁰⁷ Although the graves of dead soldiers were demarcated and recorded, anxiety existed as a result of the imprecision of this work and resisted by the aestheticization of cemeteries. See Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 85.

¹⁰⁸ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1992), 34-5.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹¹¹ Vance, *Death so Noble*, 11.

¹¹² Ibid., 93. "[A]nyone who had lost a loved one to the war must have wondered if the war could be criticized without casting shadows on the memory of the fallen."

¹¹³ Sue Malvern, "War, Memory and Museums: Art and Artefact in the Imperial War Museum." *History Workshop Journal* 49 (Spring 2000): 185.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 193.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism*, 86-7, notes that all forms of First World War commemoration continued until 1939 in England when war disrupted recognition of

Armistice Day until 1945. When continued, the memorials no longer carried the same resonance. While no statistics exist for the circulation of postcards or tourist guides, it is reasonably safe to presume that photography as commemoration ran parallel to these other forms.

¹¹⁸ "The letter that presaged In Flanders Fields," *National Post* (Toronto) 11 November 2002, A1.

¹¹⁹ The letter makes no reference to the city, but rather to the image of songbirds oblivious to the violent noise of shellfire: "Throughout three nights they shelled us continuously and the firing never ceased one consecutive minute, night or day, and yet the birds kept singing in the trees – what trees were not cut down by shells," John McCrae, "The Letter," *The National Post*, 11 November 2002, A1.

¹²⁰ This is admittedly somewhat selective. In later pages of the issue, the contemporary conflicts are mentioned in relation to Remembrance Day services. Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson makes direct reference to these modern conflicts ("Nations pay tribute to war dead," *National Post* 11 November 2002, A6) and another article by Chris Wattie, "We can look them in the eye," (*National Post* 11 November 2002, A6) suggests that modern conflict enhances understanding of the former conflicts and thereby constructs a problematic static history. However, I maintain that even these references attempt to diminish these debates and anxieties by burying them in the middle of the newspaper.

¹²¹ The notion of innocence also marked discussions of the First World War. Fussell, *The Great War*, 18-9, notes that the war was seen as a dividing line between Victorian innocence and modern corruption. The theme of modernity corrupting innocence also characterizes earlier literature such as William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

¹²² Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 96.

¹²³ Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 15, observes this feature in Abel Gance's film *J'Accuse* (1918-9) which used wounded soldiers for a scene in which the war dead return in a prophetic vision to remind the living to not forget or take advantage of their deaths. He writes that "many of the soldiers in earlier scenes of Gance's film had returned to the front in the last months of the war and had been killed. Gance himself noted that some of those playing the dead in his film soon became the dead. Representation and reality had become one," 15.

¹²⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 36. "It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow. The archive: if we want to know what that will have meant, we will only know in times to come. Perhaps. Not tomorrow, but in times to come, later on or perhaps never."

¹²⁵ Ibid., 68. Derrida writes that "the archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out of the future."

¹²⁶ Fussell, *The Great War*, 9.

¹²⁷ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 91.

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WITH A FIELD AMBULANCE AT YPRES

BEING LETTERS WRITTEN
MARCH 7—AUGUST 15, 1915

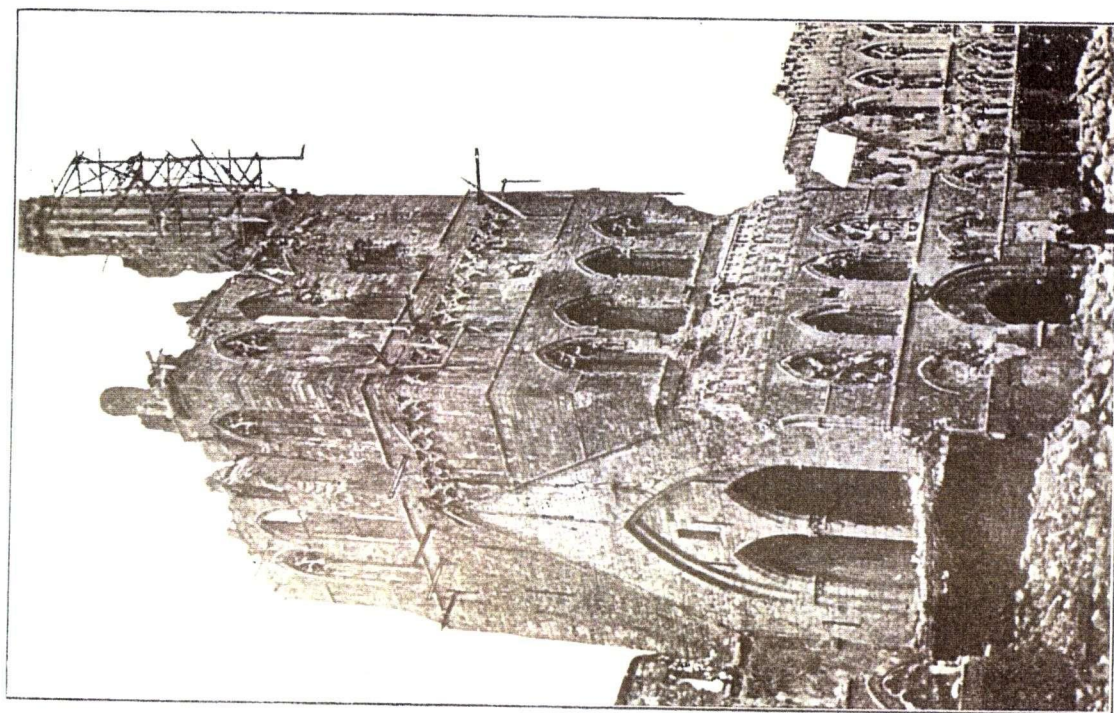
BY

William Boyd

PROFESSOR OF PATHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF
MANITOBA

ILLUSTRATED

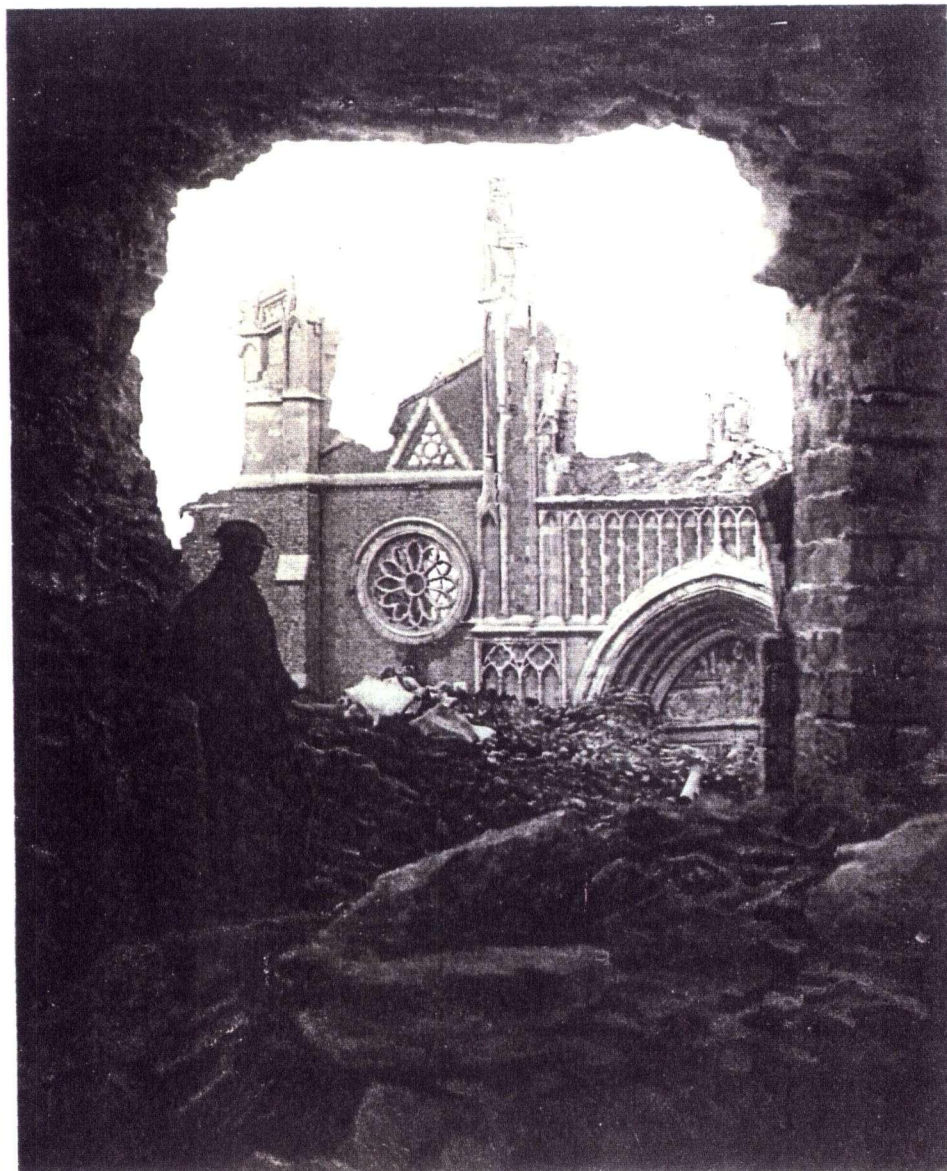
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THE CLOTH HALL, YPRES

Figure 1. The Cloth Hall at Ypres – frontispiece to William Boyd, *With a Field Ambulance at Ypres* (Toronto: Musson, 1916).

An Arch of Tragic Experience at Ypres.



SYMBOLIC : A CANADIAN REGARDS YPRES CATHEDRAL THROUGH A SHELL-HOLE IN THE CLOTH HALL.

There is something symbolic as well as tragic in this photograph. "An experience," as Tennyson makes Ulysses say, "is an arch wher thro' Gleams that untravell'd world." The significant scene here recorded by the camera suggests many reflections. Here is a man from the New World—the world of the future—standing amid the ruins of the Old, pondering, it may be, on the catastrophe of

European civilisation, and wondering what new order of things time may evolve out of the wreckage of the present. In the building of that new order Canada is destined to play her part. Has she not just decided not to "lie down" but to go on fighting the forces of Prussian destructiveness? This helmeted soldier typifies her purpose.—[Photograph—Canadian War Records.]

Figure 2. Viewing St.Martin's Cathedral through a shell hole in the Cloth Hall – Official Canadian photograph (*Illustrated War News* (London) 9 January 1918).

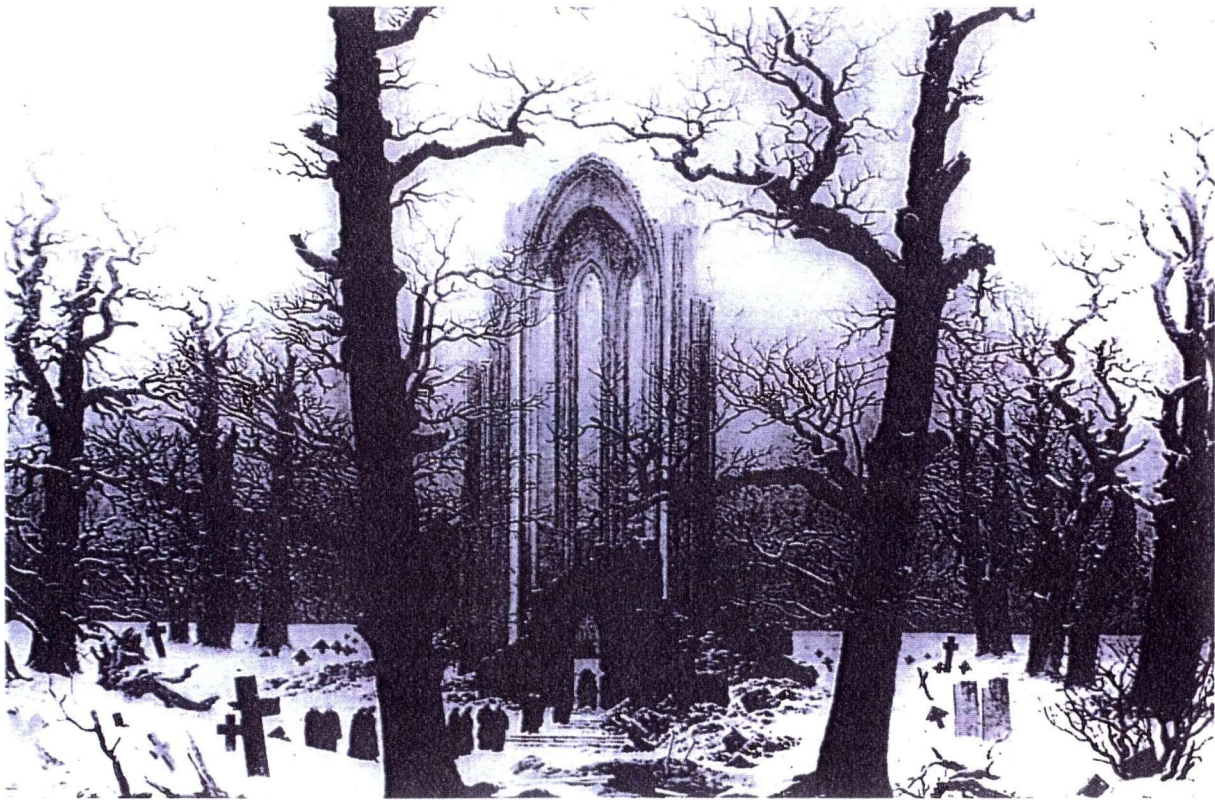


Figure 3. *Cloister Cemetery in the Snow* (1817-19) by Caspar David Friedrich
(Destroyed 1945, formerly in the National Gallery, Berlin).



Figure 4. The Ruins of Fountains Abbey (1854) by Roger Fenton (Royal Photographic Society, Bath No. 3049)

The Illustrated War News



AT ROYE: LOOKING THROUGH A DOOR OF THE CATHEDRAL.
Canadian War Records.

Figure 5. Official Canadian photograph – examining the ruins of Roye's cathedral (*Illustrated War News* (London) 9 January 1918).



Figure 6. Official Australian photograph (now accredited to Frank Hurley) showing the gallery of the Cloth Hall imaged from the tower (Australian War Memorial No.E1230).

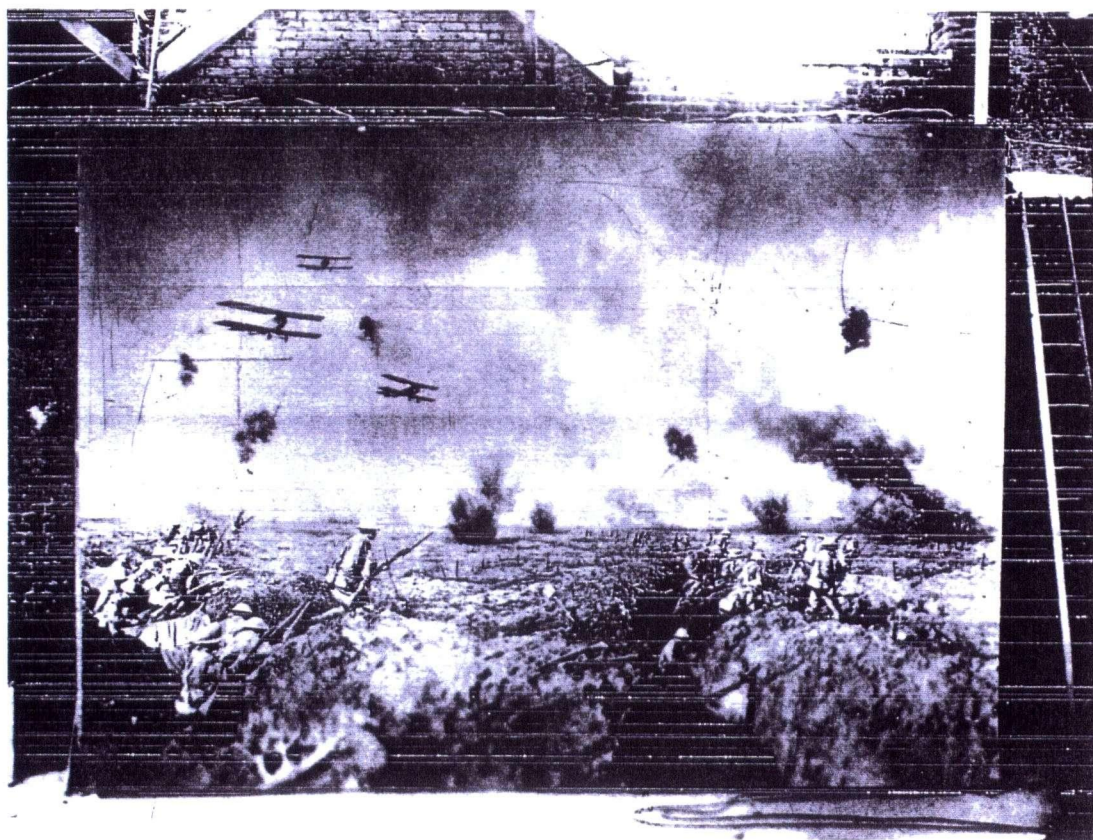


Figure 7. Composite photograph by Frank Hurley (1917-9) (Australian War Memorial no. P01438.001).

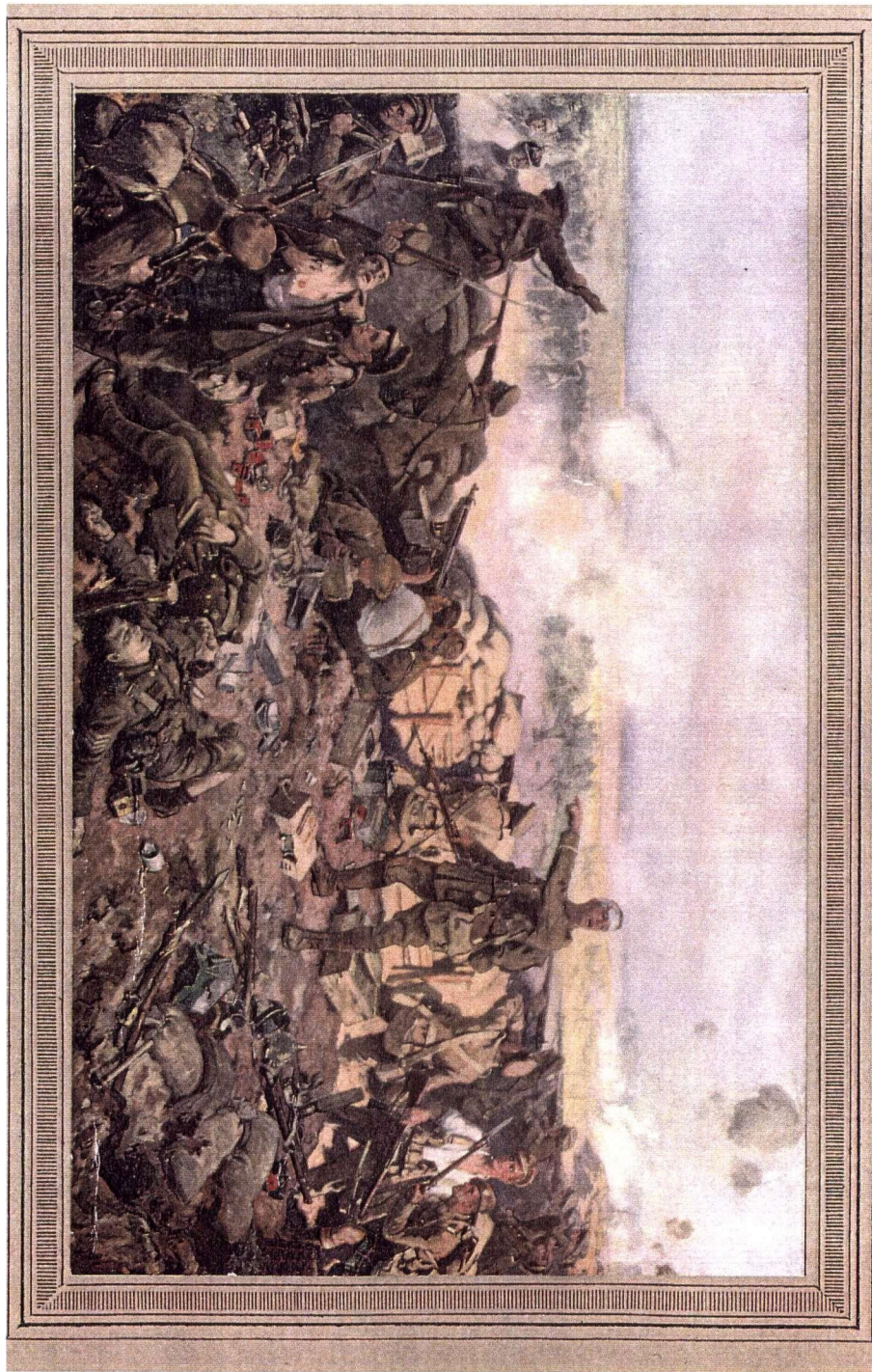
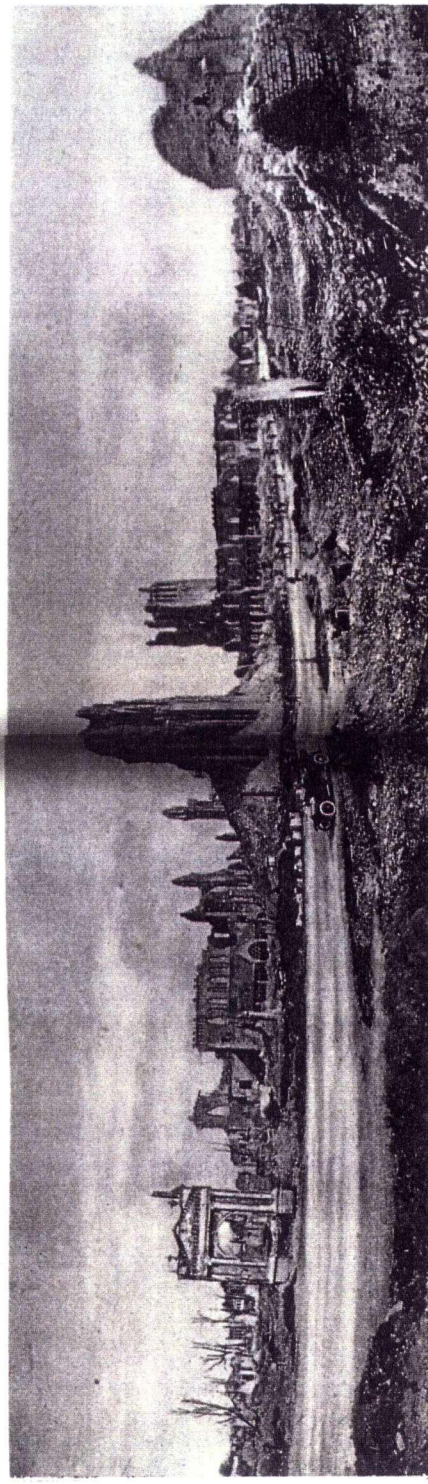
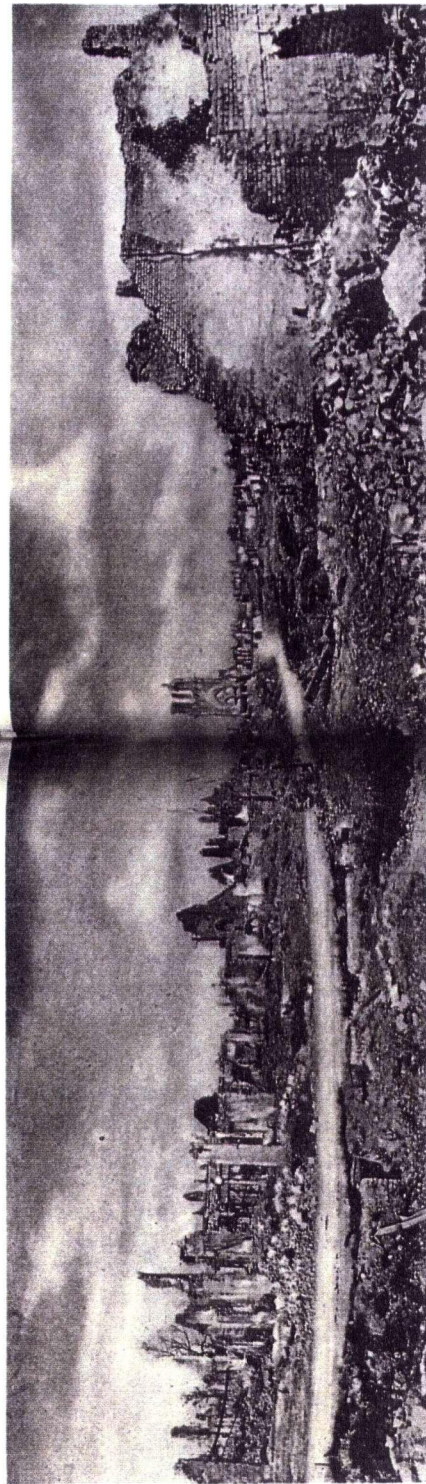


Figure 8. *The Second Battle of Ypres, 22 April to 25 May 1915* (1917) by Richard Jack (Canadian War Museum 8179).



Figure 9. Official Canadian Photograph: one of the so-called “Over the Top” photographs (1916) allegedly depicting the Battle of the Somme but taken at training facility near St.Pol, France by Captain Ivor Castle, second Official Canadian Photographer (National Archives of Canada PA-000648).

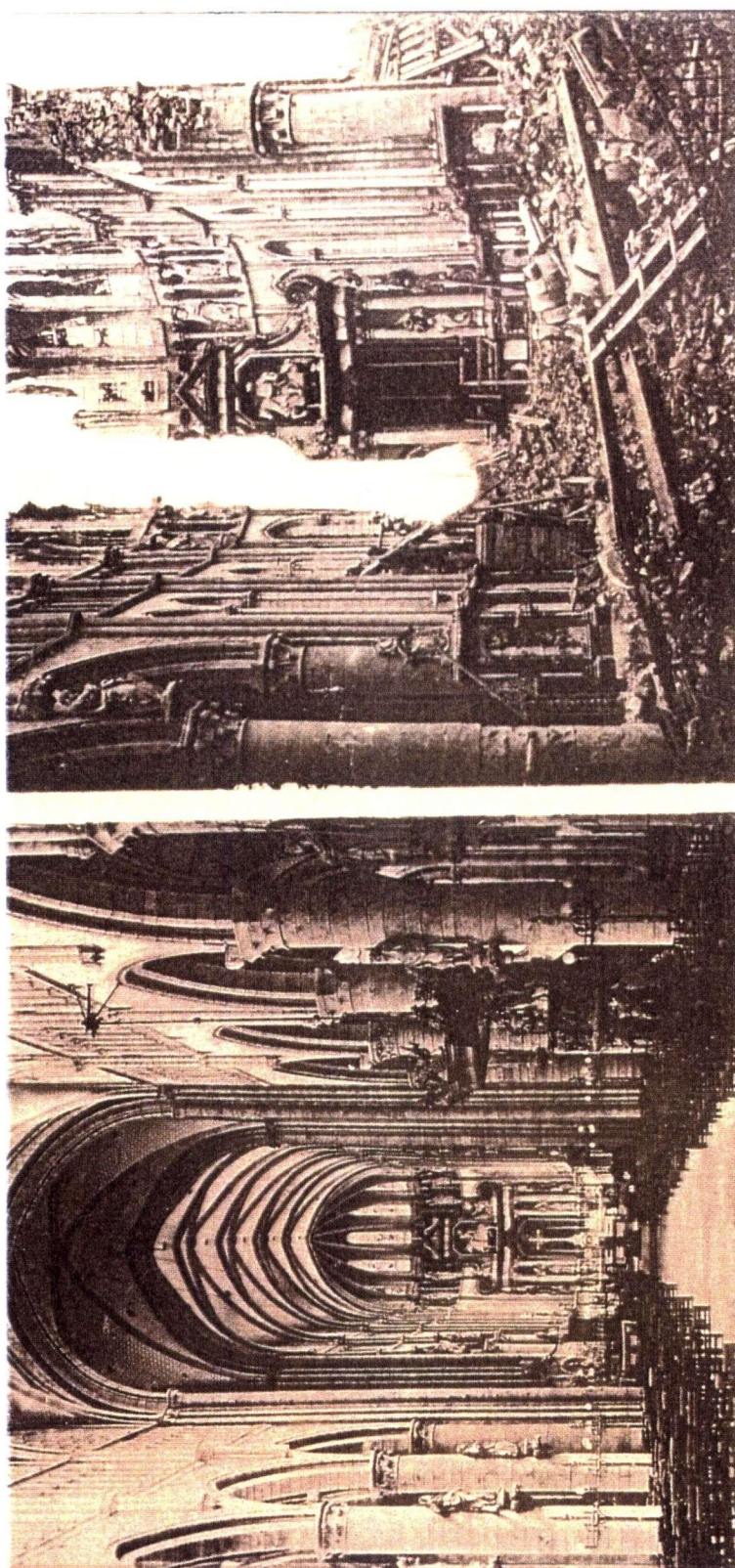
Ruin Greater than Centuries have Wrought on Ancient Rome or Athens: The Murdered City of Ypres.



"STILL THE CAPITAL OF THE BATTLEFIELDS, HOLDING IN ITS POOR STRICKEN BOWS THE
Greatest ruins have reduced the glorious architecture of Ypres to mere stumps of crumbling masonry rising here and there
amid heaps of rubbish. To-day it is the mere corpse of a murdered city. In a few months the modern Vandals
caused there greater ruin than nearly twenty centuries, with their vicissitudes of war and change, have wrought upon the

"OF ALL THIS TRAGEDY... YPRES, ONCE THE PRIDE OF FLANDERS, AS IT IS TO-DAY.
Ancient monuments of Athens and Rome, in the despatches of November 7, from Mr. Philip Gibbs, we read: "In all this country
around Ypres, still the capital of the battlefields, holden to the enemy who even now will not let its dust alone, there is nothing but destruction and the engines of destruction."—[Official Photo]

Figure 10. Panoramic View of the ruins of Ypres (*Illustrated War News* 2 January 1918).



Visé Paris N° 970615-14

YPRES. — La Cathédrale Saint-Martin avant et après le Bombardement.
The Cathedral Saint-Martin's before the Bombardment and after.

110514-1

Figure 11. Postcard: Before and After views of nave and aisle of St.Martin's Cathedral (Antony d'Ypres, N.D.).

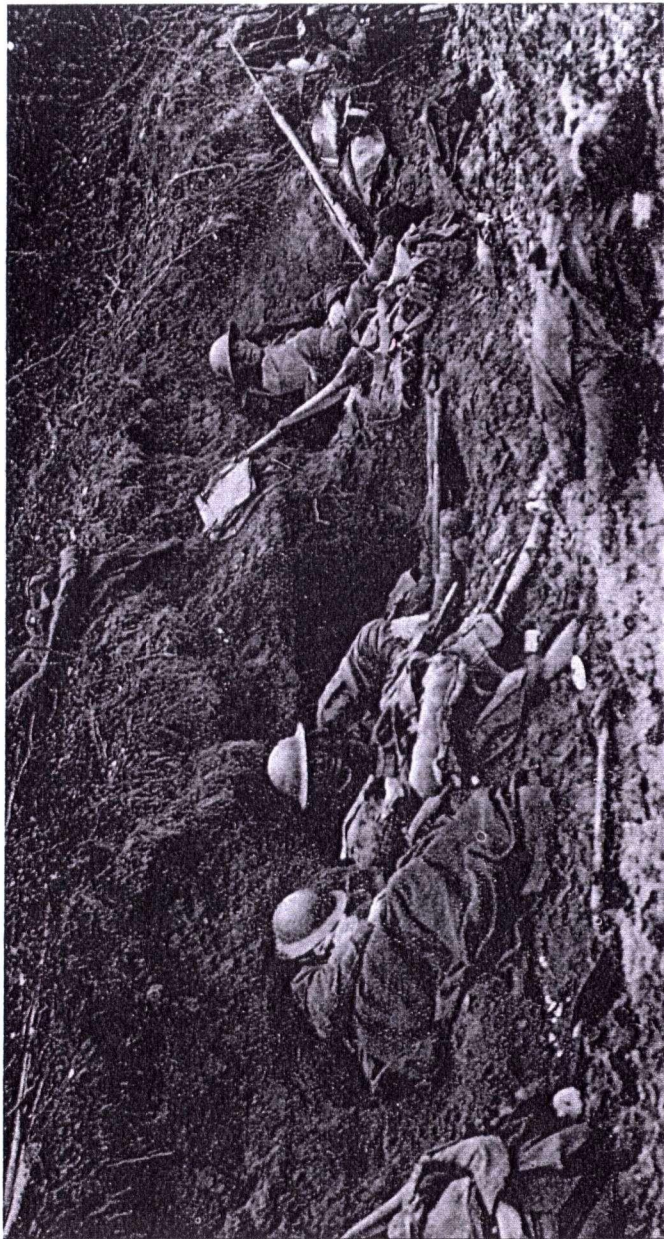


Figure 12. Australian official photograph: the dead and wounded near Passchendaele (1917) (Australian War Memorial no.E3864).



Figure 13. Cemetery at the Hospice Notre-Dame outside Ypres (reproduction from Michelin Guide *Ypres and the Battle of Ypres* Clermont-Ferrand, France: Michelin & Cie, 1919)).



Figure 14. William Rider-Rider Cemetery at Etaples (Canadian Official photograph)
(National Archives of Canada / PA-003888).



Figure 15. Cover of the *National Post* 11 November 2002 with archival photograph of the Cloth Hall.