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The Historiography of Trench Journalism and Troop Morale in World War I

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The Historiography of Trench Journalism and
Troop Morale in World War I

Advanced Research Project Submitted to
The History Department of the
Bard College Masters of Arts in Teaching Program

By

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Synthesis Essay

World War I is infamous for trench warfare; soldiers lived where they fought. This arrangement left soldiers vulnerable to harsh weather, unsanitary quarters, lice and rats.¹ Furthermore, the food supply was often scarce and monotonous, barely edible.² These conditions were only made possible through static warfare, characteristic of The Great War. Armies could not advance their lines because their opponents were patiently waiting to strike at the first sign of emergence. Therefore, soldiers mostly fought from their trenches and were forced to endure the harsh conditions explained above. How, then, did soldiers endure trench warfare? What kept them fighting? Moreover, why did soldiers fight a war that was not of immediate concern to them? After all, the spark for World War I was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in June 1914, a conflict that should have remained between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, but the complex web of alliances between other nations and these brought France, Britain, Russia and Germany into the war.

Each of the aforementioned questions has been of great interest to World War I historians. Six authors who have tackled questions of endurance and willingness to fight are Alfred E. Cornebise, J. G Fuller, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Alexander Watson, Robert Nelson, and Graham Seal. Each historian approaches the Great War from a slightly different angle, focusing on certain armies and elements of war. Nevertheless, each author highlights the significance of trench newspapers in helping soldiers continue to fight, in essence, to survive.

¹ J. G Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 59.

² *Ibid.*, 60.

The six monographs by these authors explore topics within cultural history, such as psychology, language and identity. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, authors of *The Great War in World History: Debates and Controversies, 1914-Present*, distinguish cultural history as the third evolution, or configuration of historical writing about WWI. Over the course of three time periods, from the 1920s to the 2000s, the three configurations were on diplomatic, social and cultural history of World War I. Winter and Prost make it clear that having three phases of writing does not mean that one “dominates all others”, it is simply a “question of emphasis.”³

Each configuration is defined primarily by its time period. Diplomatic history was prominent in the 1920s and 30s, in the years just after the war. Winter and Prost explain that in this period, historians had access to full sets of diplomatic documents which helped them to study war guilt, or who was responsible for the war. They write, “The ordeal had been so long, so hard, so murderous, the cost had been so staggering, that everyone absolutely had to know why it had broken out and why it had lasted so long.”⁴ There is little to no presence of diplomatic history in the six monographs featured in this essay. Diplomatic history takes a top-down approach to historical inquiry, one that studies the army’s high-ranking officers and generals, diplomats, elected officials and military documents. When there is mention of army generals or colonels, it is to explain the relationship between ranks and how they are reflected or written about in trench journals. Overall, the authors take a “history from below” approach to uncovering questions of

³ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in World History: Debates and Controversies, 1914-Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 31.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

combat endurance. This style, considered social and cultural history, focuses on the average soldier, diary entries, letters and poetry.⁵

The second configuration, social history, dominated the works of authors writing in the 1960s to late 1980s. The major gap between the first two configurations is a result of World War II because people were more focused on the war than writing history.⁶ By the 1960s, Winter and Prost explain, there was a “period of massive expansion of higher education in all European countries and in the United States”, leading to a growing number of trained historians, historical writing and national historical reviews.⁷ Furthermore, the influence of the disciplines of economics and sociology led to a proliferated use of charts and graphs to display historical findings. This addition to World War I historiography demonstrated a new level of historical professionalism. The six monographs that will be explored have second configuration topics such as economy, society and the home front. Winter and Prost write that social historians are writing about the “history of men at war”, as opposed to first configurationists who focus on international relations, diplomats and official documents.⁸

The third configuration, cultural history, in the early 1990s into the 2000s, emphasizes emotion, cultural practices in war and the individual experience of war. This configuration focuses on the average soldier just as social history does. Furthermore, third configuration historians are interested in sources such as personal diaries, letters, artwork,

⁵ John Tosh, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1991), 57.

⁶ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

poetry and architecture.⁹ Between the second and third configurations there is not as long of a time-gap as seen between the first and second. Rather, there is a smooth transition between historiographical emphases. Winter and Prost write that because of this transition, “many scholars passed easily from social to cultural history”, citing Audoin-Rouzeau as one of these scholars.¹⁰ To underscore the rapidity of this transition Winter and Prost present two international conferences, the first in 1988 and the second in 1992. The 1988 conference, led by Audoin-Rouzeau and another historian Jean-Jacques Becker, was on European societies and World War I. The topic of the 1992 conference was on war and culture, also led by Audoin-Rouzeau and Audoin-Rouzeau. Winter and Prost express that these topics center around a similar topic, but within four years there is a distinct shift in focus from society to culture.¹¹ Moreover, they explain that the move from social to cultural history was so smooth because cultural history already existed within social history with topics or foci such as “‘mentality’, ‘opinion’, or ‘psychology.’”¹² Each monograph selected for this study fits mainly within a cultural history lens, both in topic and their publication dates. All but one, Cornebise, falls into the time period for cultural history— with clear influence from social history. This is not surprising, given that the topic of soldier endurance during World War I is of second and third configuration interest.

Winter and Prost were not the first to develop the idea of cultural history. In 1929, the Annales school was established by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre. Together they founded the Annales journal, *Annales d'histoire sociale et économique*, which promoted a

⁹ Wendy Urban-Mead, “The Three Configurations”, Class Lecture, Bard College Masters of Arts in Teaching, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, June 29, 2015.

¹⁰ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 25.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 26.

historical approach called *La longue Duree'*, or, *The Long Duration*. This approach focuses on change over long stretches of time through analyzing the everyday lives of people, societies and cultures, drawing from various disciplines, namely the social sciences such as economics, sociology, and social psychology.¹³ This is a history from below, as previously explained; a historical approach that considers daily activities and average people. The six selected monographs are histories from below, falling within the second and third configuration. Therefore, these authors write about similar topics. There are three sub-topics that stand out in trench journals as vital to understanding soldier endurance during World War I: the home front, entertainment, and nationalism or patriotism. The way that each author writes about these topics, where their arguments interest and diverge, and how this helps one to understand the broader topic of soldier endurance, will be the central focus of this study.

The Home Front

The idea of the home front was a center of conflict for soldiers. Four of the six monographs that structure this study have a discussion of the home front, explaining how soldiers viewed the home front and how the idea of “home” influenced their willingness and ability to fight. Understanding how different authors explained the home front in relation to trench journals, and therefore its role in soldier endurance, reflects their historiographical influences.

The first monograph that does not clearly discuss the home front is Cornebise’s work, *The Stars and Stripes: Doughboy Journalism in World War I*, written in 1984. It is

¹³ Tosh, *The Pursuit of History*, 53.

interesting that the home front is not discussed because, according to Winter and Prost, this topic falls under the umbrella of second and third configuration, or social and cultural history, which is where Cornebise's work fits.¹⁴ This book explains an essential connection to the home front that was fundamental in maintaining soldier morale: sports.¹⁵ An in-depth analysis of Cornebise's section on sports and entertainment will come in the following section, but it is interesting to highlight the uniqueness of this monograph compared to the others. For instance, one reason why this particular monograph may not have a section on the home front is because it is about one army, the American army, and on one trench paper, *The Stars and Stripes*. Cornebise's choice to investigate one specific journal has its benefits and drawbacks. The advantage to studying one journal is that it gives the reader an in-depth understanding of the journal from production to its distribution. The downside is that there is a possibility for readers to interpret the information as a given for similar journals. For instance, Cornebise does not explicitly write about the view of the home front in *The Stars and Stripes*, but this does not mean that other American trench journals do not incorporate this topic.

The second monograph that does not discuss the home front or civilian life, in terms of trench journals is *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German And British Armies, 1914-1918*, by Alexander Watson, written in 2008. Despite the different foci of each author, they seek to answer the same questions: what kept soldiers fighting? Watson's approach to this central question is through a psychological lens, which categorizes Watson's book as a cultural history.¹⁶ Watson recognizes that he differs from

¹⁴ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 15, 19.

¹⁵ Alfred E. Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes: Doughboy Journalism in World War I* (Connecticut: Press, 1984), 138.

¹⁶ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 19.

other historians in his field, writing that most historians take a diplomatic approach to the question of endurance, stressing the role of “military institutional factors” in maintaining soldiers’ morale, citing historian John Baynes and his book, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage*, written in 1967.¹⁷ Baynes argues that it was the “unique British regimental system” that helped to maintain troop morale.¹⁸ Watson also cites author and historian Trevor Dupuy, who argues that the power behind the German army was the army’s “personnel, doctrine and methods of the General Staff”, creating “institutionalized military excellence...”¹⁹ Therefore, Watson characterizes a book as a diplomatic history when the military and its tactics are its main focus, despite seeking to answer a social or cultural history question such as endurance. For instance, Baynes uses military history to study the morale of the 2nd Scottish Rifles. Examining soldier morale is, according to Winter and Prost, a social and cultural topic dealing with emotion and social bonds.²⁰ Winter and Prost describe diplomatic and military as history from above which studies generals, high-ranking officers and international relations to determine who is responsible for this “murderous” and “long” war.²¹ Arguably, Winter and Prost would disagree with Watson’s conclusion that Baynes’ book is a diplomatic study because of its main purpose of uncovering the root of combat endurance. Furthermore, Watson’s own monograph, along with Fuller, Audoin-Rouzeau, and Nelson, each have a section on inter-rank relations that discuss how soldiers viewed these relations within the German, British and French armies, and how these relations influenced troop morale.

¹⁷Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German And British Armies, 1914-1918*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., 2

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 19.

²¹ Ibid., 8.

Watson writes that authors who take a more cultural or social approach to this topic usually write about soldiers as a collective, ignoring the individual experience of war.²² Watson's book tackles the individual experience of World War I through his use of archives, letters and diaries of over one hundred soldiers, and his specific interest in soldiers' psychology.²³ He explains that "[k]nowledge of combatants' fears, motivations, mental defense mechanisms and coping strategies will not only explain why they were able and willing to fight so hard for so long but should also shed light on why certain military institutions were effective in providing support while others failed."²⁴ At its core, this book studies human resilience, the power of will and the ability for soldiers to adapt to a new environment.

The main reason Watson's book does not address the home front and soldiers' views on civilian life to a large extent is because the nature of Watson's study differs from the other authors' foci; he is interested in the psychology of soldiers and how they coped in the front lines of battle. Watson does however mention the home front briefly when writing about how homesickness was "exacerbated by the apparent purposelessness of combat."²⁵ In addition, he adds a small section about the psychological toll of suspicion towards the "crowned heads of state" that parallels the general feeling of German soldiers that the war was pointless.²⁶ He writes that suspicion led to a sense of alienation, fueled by soldiers' opinions that civilians were insensitive, selfish, and unable to understand their circumstances at war.²⁷ This small section echoes the larger sections seen in Seal, Fuller,

²² Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 7.

²³ *Ibid.*, x-xi.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁷ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 76.

Audoin-Rouzeau, and Nelson, except that they provide a more thorough explanation of soldiers' relation to the home front.

Seal, author of *The Solder's Press: Trench Journals in the First World War*, investigates what kept soldiers motivated, what drove the "willingness of soldiers to endure the palpable insanity to which they were consigned by forces beyond their control."²⁸ His book grapples with this concept through an analysis and explanation of the culture of war, a third configuration concern. This book was published in 2013, the most recent publication of the six monographs. Seal's bibliography is reflective of his later publication, citing Cornebise, Fuller and Nelson, among many others. Watson's book is not present in Seal's bibliography, which is surprising because it was written in 2009, just four years earlier, and it discusses the British army just as Seal does. It is likely that because Watson's work does not center on trench journals, Seal did not utilize it in his study. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider these two works in relation to one another.

A point on which Watson and Seal would likely disagree is that Seal states that he is *not* interested in the individual experience of war, but rather the communal experience of war. Seal studied the development of war culture through analyzing the newspapers and journals of English speaking Allied Powers.²⁹ Watson, on the other hand, believes that the individual experience of war is where a historian uncovers the true secret to combat endurance.³⁰ At the heart of each study is the same desire: to comprehend how soldiers were capable of enduring the ghastly conditions of trench warfare. Furthermore, the types of sources that these two authors utilize are similar: diaries, letters, and other historical

²⁸ Graham Seal, *The Solder's Press: Trench Journals in the First World War*, (England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), ix.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, x.

³⁰ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 7.

monographs. Of course their main difference is that Watson studies the psychology of soldiers while Seal focuses on trench journals and how they reveal the secret to combat endurance.

The sixth chapter of Seal's book, titled *The War*, has a sub-section called "Home", which investigates how the general collective of English-speaking Allied soldiers viewed the home front.³¹ He writes that home was a troublesome topic because:

'Home' was a complex and contradictory category for those removed from it. Simultaneously the place where the soldier desired to be most of all, it was also the location of those responsible for the war and the circumstances into which the trench soldier had been thrust. The longer the war dragged on, the further apart became the experiences and perceptions of those at the front and those at home. This was one reason that trench journals grew in number as the war progressed and why they were often revived after sometimes lengthy periods of absence, not only because they reflected a range of soldiers' needs but also because the need to present their reality to those at home became even greater.³²

Seal further explains that songs sung by the English speaking soldiers often expressed a longing for home, such as the song "I Want to Go Home" featured in January 1917 in the Canadian journal, *The Sling*: I want to go home, I want to go home,/ The bullets they whistle, the cannons they roar,/ I don't want to go up the line anymore./ Take me over the sea, where the enemy can't get at me./ Oh! my, I don't want to die, I want to go home.³³

Songs that express a longing for home, for safety out of fear of death, paralleled with the notion of war guilt, is explained by Audoin-Rouzeau in his book, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War*.

³¹ Seal, *The Soldier's Press*, 172.

³² *Ibid.*, 175.

³³ *Ibid.*, 173.

Audoin-Rouzeau dedicates two chapters to the home front which explain a transition in how trench journals presented the idea of 'home'; one of hatred to one of longing. He writes that in the early years of the war,

The thoughts of soldiers alone in the depths of their trenches quickly turned to their wives and families; by 1915 this is the second most frequent topic discussed in [French] newspapers. Its importance grew as time passed, so that during the final months of war the combatants appeared to concentrate more than ever on those from whom they were separated and whom they hoped – in the end with certainty – to see again.³⁴

Audoin-Rouzeau cites an article from the French journal, *Le Poilu*, written in 1918, which eloquently expresses this longing for home, for the woman they love, to finally be done with this “cruel” separation.”³⁵ The way that Audoin-Rouzeau explains these shifting feelings towards home as the war progressed shows how the same experience was happening with their English speaking Allies, as shown in the song and quote from Seal.³⁶ Seal does not reference Audoin-Rouzeau yet their findings mimic one another. This indicates that they have similar historiographical influences, one of which is Fuller’s work on the endurance in troop morale in the British and Dominion armies from 1990.

Fuller’s discussion of the home front takes a different path than Audoin-Rouzeau or Seal by writing about it in terms of how leave affects troop morale in both a positive and negative manner. He writes, “[o]n the one hand...leave was likely to disturb the soldiers by bringing home to them both the hardships of their families and the gulf in spirit between the Home Front and the front line. On the other...by renewing contacts with the people and

³⁴ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War, 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War* (United Kingdom: Berg Publishers Limited, 1992, 1995), 128.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Seal, *The Solder’s Press*, 173, 175.

things they loved, remind them of what they were fighting for.”³⁷ He continues this chapter by explaining the relationship the British soldiers had with French civilians and the impact of these interactions on morale. Troops would frequently visit the village’s *estaminets*, where cold beer, fresh food, and flirting with French girls were available.³⁸ In essence, he argues that trench journals reveal that time behind the lines in the occupied areas was a risk because the chance that soldiers would return on time to their base was questionable.³⁹

Nelson, author of *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War*, references Fuller’s discussion of the home front and civilian life in relation to the German experience. Before explaining the differences among these authors, it is important to explain that the German army was unlike their military counterparts. Nelson explains these differences through a comparison of the German, French, and British armies’ trench journals. Nelson’s central argument as to what contributed to the German army’s endurance of the Great War was a language of “manly justification...”⁴⁰ (There was an element of manliness attached to war within each army, but it was most prominent within the German army as their main justification for war.)⁴¹ The Germans saw themselves as a “colonizing’ force”, which meant that their view of the home front, civilian life and of the land in which they fought was perceived in a vastly different way than the other armies. Furthermore, using the idea of

³⁷ Fuller, *Troop Morale*, 73.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁰ Robert Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1.

⁴¹ Joe Lunn, “Male Identity and Martial Codes of Honor: A Comparison of the War Memoirs of Robert Graves, Ernst Juenger, and Kande Kamara”, *The Journal of Military History*, vol 69, no. 3 (July 2005): 713-35, JSTOR.

“manly justification” to warrant their foreign presence, helped the German soldiers continue their fight.

Before continuing to Nelson’s discussion of the home front it is also vital to understand his historiographical influences. Nelson situates his study amongst the historiography on the topic of German soldiers in World War I, highlighting his intentions with this monograph. First, he explains that at the core of his study, he answering the same questions that have intrigued past historians:

Why do soldiers fight? Why did German soldiers follow orders throughout the seemingly endless war...? Did German soldiers really believe that they were waging a ‘war on defense’ while occupying foreign soil and populations? Were German soldiers atavistic nationalists or bitter pacifist? In other words, were these men perpetrators or victims? What was the postwar legacy of these soldiers’ experiences for the dark events to come?⁴²

He claims that this book will not and cannot answer all of these questions, but will provide partial answers to them each through his analysis of trench journals in relation to comradeship and “manly justification.” It is important to note that with studies of trench newspapers, authors and historians are using a limited, yet comprehensive, set of documents to assert claims about any number of World War I related topics. Nelson makes it clear that he acknowledges this, writing that the “soldiers newspapers represent one (albeit substantial) discursive voice among the multitude of soldier languages that have been brought to light in recent scholarship.”⁴³

The historiography on Germany’s WWI soldiers has been through significant changes. Nelson explains that in the past twenty years, meaning around the 80s and 90s, since the book’s copyright is 2011, the more recent studies have focused on the questions

⁴² Nelson, *German Soldier*, 1.

⁴³ Ibid.

above with a particular move in the 1980s toward a study of the history of everyday life, or *Alltagsgeschichte*, more specifically, the lives of soldiers.⁴⁴ *Alltagsgeschichte*, as explained by Ernst Breisach in *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, & Modern*, was a critical development in German historiography because the focus was lifted off of Hitler and placed on the people of Germany.⁴⁵ Moreover, in the 80s there was a clear shift from a study of World War II to the study of World War I.⁴⁶ While Nelson does not write this, it can be assumed that this sudden change in focus is linked to the soldiers of the Great War dying off, thus creating a heightened sense of urgency to get their stories.⁴⁷

In the 1990s there was another shift in this historiography when the emphasis on World War I soldiers changed to analyzing their letters.⁴⁸ Nelson explains that these letters were “largely words of resistance, bitterness, pacifism and indeed sometimes revolution.”⁴⁹ Moreover, these works victimized the German soldiers, which had not been seen before.⁵⁰ He highlights two authors who further changed the study of German soldiers, Aribert Reimann and Klaus Latzel. These authors conducted comparative studies between the German and British letters and newspapers, very similar to Nelson’s analytic approach. Reimann’s study found a “plethora of examples of the language of nationalism and patriotism in the discursive world of German Soldiers.”⁵¹ Latzel’s research on the comparison of “language of the First and Second World War soldiers’ letters,

⁴⁴ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 2.

⁴⁵ Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, & Modern*, Second Edition, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 384.

⁴⁶ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 2.

⁴⁷ Winter and Prost, *The Great War* 19.

⁴⁸ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

uncovered...many instances of soldier belief and language in 1914-18..."⁵² Overall, Nelson notes, it is impossible to "convey the outlook of an army of 10 million men", but that research such as Reimann and Latzel's begins to uncover the language and discourse of German soldiers, which gives one a deeper understanding of their life in war.⁵³ This is the focus of Nelson's research—to provide a more complete picture of Germans' experience, not the individual German experience, of the Great War.

A major part of the German soldiers' experience was their relationship to the home front. The general sentiment towards civilians was negative, but there was a shift in intensity towards civilians as the war progressed. In the early editions of German trench papers, civilians were portrayed as weak, womanly figures, reflected in an April 1915 cartoon titled, "Unfit for Duty".⁵⁴ Nelson explains that the figures in these early cartoons were targeting the intellectuals of German society, the professors who hid behind their books.⁵⁵ In the later years of the war, the sentiment towards civilians became more hostile and bitter. Soldiers were frustrated by the ease of civilian life and how little civilians understood the difficulty of enduring war.⁵⁶ In essence, civilians were portrayed in the papers as weak slackers with no manhood; as people unfit to fight for their country.⁵⁷

The German soldier's attitude of superiority played out in an interesting way in the land in which they occupied during the war. Soldiers often lived in the villages and towns that bordered their military bases. Nelson writes that soldiers' homes "served a special

⁵² Nelson, *German Soldier*, 3.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

function in conquered territory, that of preserving and upholding ‘German-ness.’⁵⁸ The Germans treated the land they inhabited and the local people and colonized so as to prevent them from “losing touch with their culture.”⁵⁹ Nelson compares this characteristic of the German army to the British army, citing Fuller as his reference. He writes that the British were on “friendly foreign territory” and were able to establish “canteens” and gather in French *estaminets*, which created a “rough form of British ‘national culture.’”⁶⁰ He stresses that the British soldiers were separate from the locals while the German soldiers “aimed at precisely such a form of cultural differentiation...”⁶¹ This harsh separation and need to feel like a colonizing force is what sets the German army apart from the American, British and French armies.

Entertainment

Keeping soldiers occupied with entertainment such as sports, music and theater, was essential to maintaining troop morale. Each army valued and displayed entertainment in various ways through their journals. Studying these differences and similarities helps to unmask the daily lives of different armies in World War I.

Sports and entertainment in the American army was absolutely vital to the soldiers’ lives. Cornebise writes, “Wherever the American soldier goes, he seemingly must have his sports and entertainment, and in order to help maintain morale, his commanders are usually willing to abet him, even in times of fiercest battle.”⁶² Soldiers were fond of movies,

⁵⁸ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 82.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes*, 138.

jazz and reading to pass the time, but sports was their main occupation, namely baseball and boxing.⁶³ Sports was so critical to soldiers that “*The Stars and Stripes* accepted the fact any American newspaper worth its salt must have a respectable sports page printing the latest sports news.”⁶⁴ Cornebise stresses how the army recognized that participating in sports was beneficial to improving soldiers’ performance on the battlefield because sports scenarios could mimic how soldiers need to behave in combat.⁶⁵ This particular statement and this emphasis on sports is not discussed as strongly within the other five monographs. Rather, the other studies emphasize entertainment such as theater and music.

Nelson, writing about the German army, references Fuller throughout his work. Looking at their works side by side reveals the stark differences between the types of entertainment and humor found within each army. Fuller writes that an essential aspect of British journals was their emphasis on humor and entertainment—something absent from the German papers. In addition, British soldiers use this humor, along with games, concerts, and sports, to help them cope.⁶⁶ These types of coping mechanisms are not seen as much in German papers, as Nelson explains. In fact, he calls them, “tame attempts at humor” because of the overall seriousness of the German newspapers.⁶⁷ In addition, Nelson states that there is virtually no mention of sports, and entertainment such singing or concerts are rarely written about, where as the British and French papers were full of these mentions.⁶⁸ One explanation for German papers lacking references to entertainment, according to Nelson, is that there was a lack of class-cohesion within entertainment. He explains that

⁶³ Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes*, 138-141, 142-5, 150-2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁶ Fuller, *Troop Morale*, 180.

⁶⁷ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 73.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 61, 80.

each social class had its own “distinct styles of music and theater” which made it difficult to write about for soldiers who crossed all social classes.⁶⁹ Furthermore, when entertainment was provided it was “of an elite character and so by very nature were unlikely to exert the enormously morale-building effects produced by British music hall...”⁷⁰

Fuller concludes that the British soldiers “learned from the long experience that it was better to concentrate on pleasures than hardships, that the best way to render tolerable the worse conditions was to make a joke of them, that moments of escape, such as games and concerts could provide, should be exploited to the full.”⁷¹ In essence, Fuller argues that without British humor, the soldiers would not have been able to endure for as long as they did.

Dark humor was another form of entertainment found in trench journals. Seal refers to spoof advertisements as means to vent soldiers’ frustrations while attempting to remain light hearted.⁷² (An example of a spoof advertisement can be found on the second page of the “Primary Document” section). Spoof advertisements were jokes, “very bad ones” according to Seal, which intersect the “fine and murky line between the familiar everyday world of the advertisement and the infernal unknowns of the front.”⁷³

Patriotism and Nationalism

Patriotism and Nationalism manifested itself differently within the German, French, American and British armies as a means of troop morale, but Germany’s case is the most

⁶⁹ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 59.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

⁷¹ Fuller, *Troop Morale*, 180.

⁷² Seal, *The Solder’s Press*, 216-17.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 217.

unique. Nelson explains that the idea of “manly justification” was at the core of Germany’s reason to fight; a sense of comradeship unlike the other armies. Furthermore, the German newspapers were essentially forced to focus on comradeship because Germany was a relatively new nation at the time of the War; only founded in 1871. Thus, Germans did not have a strong “popular nationalist discourse”, as the French and British soldiers did.⁷⁴

Nelson explains that there was a particular definition of comradeship that differs from the other armies. For the Germans, comradeship “involved both that among fellow soldiers, with its associated concepts of what it meant to be a ‘man’, and the idea of the German comrade, an honest, good gentleman, as a participant in an occupying, or ‘colonizing’ force.”⁷⁵

Joe Lunn, author of “Male Identity and Martial Codes of Honor: A Comparison of the War Memoirs of Robert Graves, Ernst Junger, and Kande Kamara,” discusses this idea of manhood in the German army through the memoir of Ernst Jünger. Lunn highlights how Jünger maintained a sense of “honor” and “duty” that was felt by the entire army, which held “the army together” in the worst of times.⁷⁶ Jünger was a made a Lieutenant in 1915 and was awarded numerous metals of honor for his courage, which, as Lunn explains, puts great pressure on his shoulders.⁷⁷ Despite Germany losing the war, Lunn writes that “the honor of the German soldier-courageous unto death-was untarnished, because [Jünger’s] spirit remained undefeated.”⁷⁸ The strength of the German spirit that Lunn refers to was

⁷⁴ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Lunn, “Male Identity,” 722.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 724.

pervasive in the German newspapers, which, according to Nelson, was absolutely critical to building a common identity amongst the soldiers and thus maintaining soldier morale.⁷⁹

Nelson also writes about patriotism and nationalism in the French army, referring to Audoin-Rouzeau. He claims that the ways in which these national sentiments played out in the French and German armies was not dissimilar. A main reason for German endurance was the idea of preserving and upholding “German-ness”, the idea that they were protecting their new nation, protecting the women and children of Germany.⁸⁰ While this idea of a manly duty to the nation is not as present within France, there is still a strong sense of patriotism for the nation. Audoin-Rouzeau writes, “And so, even in the war’s worst moments, the impossibility of causing the defeat of their own nation by a collective weakness constituted a psychological barrier that nothing could overcome.”⁸¹

American patriotism within *The Stars and Stripes* had a similar tone of manliness as the German and French papers. The American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), “promised to come home to America ‘clean in body, excellent in mind and heart, and with the record behind us of a man’s size job manfully done.’”⁸² It is important to remember America’s hesitant involvement in the war, only entering in 1917 after continuous German U-boat bombings of Allied merchant ships. Therefore, America needed to prove to the world that their involvement was worthwhile and simultaneously uphold America’s reputation of being liberators of the oppressed; i.e., the colonists liberating American from the British and African American emancipation.⁸³ A poem from June 7th 1918 underscores this feeling:

⁷⁹Nelson, *German Soldier*, 1.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 43, 82.

⁸¹ Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War*, 184.

⁸² Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes*, 98.

⁸³ Ibid., 100.

We want a place for our Service Flag,/ For the Service Flag of America./ We looked in vain to find a place,/ In all the world there wasn't a place./ So we borrowed the sky and hung it wide/ Over the world from side to side/ And when the world is dark at night/ Our stars are shining clear and bright.⁸⁴

Not only were American soldiers proud of their victories, they had a sense of invincibility that carried them through the war. This is captured in a short and somewhat violent poem called "U.S.A., U.S.A.": With bayonet and shot and shell,/ We will give the Kaiser hell;/ U.S.A., U.S.A./ jab' em, jab 'em,/ Shoot and stab 'em:/ U.S.A.⁸⁵ The way in which the soldiers who wrote for *The Stars and Stripes* depicted nationalism and patriotism is unlike the other armies, which, as previously stated, is most likely attributed to America's late entry into the war due to President Woodrow Wilson's desire to remain neutral.

Conclusion

Overall, these six monographs seek to uncover the same question: how did the soldiers of World War I endure such a long and strenuous war? Trench warfare in the Great War, 1914-1918, was brutal. This style of combat was used in previous wars but WWI was the first time that soldiers both lived *and* fought in the same space.⁸⁶ Soldiers were, therefore, constantly staring death in the face while trying to maintain sanity and their strength to fight. Each author discussed in this study took a different approach to the study of troop morale, looking at particular armies or elements of daily life such as entertainment and sports. These topics fall underneath the umbrella of cultural history, with influences from social history. As Winter and Prost explain, the shift between these two historiographical approaches was seamless because of their mutual focus on the average

⁸⁴ Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes*, 99-100.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁸⁶ Seal, *The Solder's Press*, 147.

soldiers' experience in World War I, which explains why each authors' study can float between these two configurations.⁸⁷

Nelson's work, while focused primarily on the German newspapers, uses the work of other authors and the papers of the French and British armies to highlight the stark differences between them, and to emphasize what made the German army so unique. A key element that separates the German papers from the others is their focus on comradeship, on what it means to be a man, and how being a man relates to protecting their nation and its women and children. This is not seen to such a large degree in the British papers, but does appear in the French papers. Nelson points out that this is because Germany was a relatively new nation at the time of the Great War, and thus national cohesion and national discourse was not fully established.⁸⁸ France is a patriotic nation, and in war, the thought of letting it down was never tolerated.⁸⁹

Audoin-Rouzeau's monograph sheds useful light on how trench journalism in France represents the psychology of soldiers and how they coped with their chaotic circumstances of trench warfare. While he does not explicitly situate his work among other scholars in this field within his main text, it is evident that Fuller's work was of influence to his study because it is seen in his footnotes. Moreover, Audoin-Rouzeau's acknowledgment of previous historical inquiry throughout his book and in the bibliography, coupled with his respect for the reliability of this type of work, further reveals his attention to past historical works.

⁸⁷ Winter and Prost, *The Great War*, 25.

⁸⁸ Nelson, *German Soldier*, 1.

⁸⁹ Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War*, 184.

British endurance, as explained by Fuller, was somewhat of a marvel. Their numbers were far lower than other armies, they were a poorly trained civilian army, and they had to endure harsh living conditions.⁹⁰ At the surface, each of these characteristics of the British army seems like disadvantages, yet the British outlasted all other armies on the battlefield. In the end, Fuller suggests that these perceived disadvantages are what kept the army fighting. The soldiers brought with them aspects of civilian life such as “institutions and attitudes, which helped them to adjust to, and to humanize, the new world in which they found themselves.”⁹¹ Furthermore, the British allowed themselves happiness despite the ongoing war. They found ways to escape with humor, games, and concerts.⁹² He concludes by praising the British Army, writing, “To deny their humanity, to fail to recognize the way in which they adjusted to their appalling environment and made it endurable, is to belittle their achievement.”⁹³ Fuller’s appreciation for how the British managed to overcome perceived adversities is evident in this statement.

Watson’s interest in the individual, psychological experience of war, and his in-depth usage of letters and diaries, reveal his influences from all three historiographical lenses. Yet, the core of this book is rooted in cultural history. An added element that strengthens this assertion is Watson’s use of images. One will find, for example, an aerial view of British trenches, a photograph of German troops exuding comradeship, and a sketch from a soldier’s diary explaining why the war was being fought.⁹⁴ These sources add

⁹⁰ Fuller, *Troop Morale*, 1.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 175.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 180.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 13, 68, 78.

another level to the understanding of the emotional and psychological experience of war that Watson was striving to uncover.

Where Watson and Seal would disagree most is Seal's assertion that the main reason why soldiers were able to endure the long war was because of the "*communitas* of the trench", the comradeship and community that formed in a time of chaos and terror.⁹⁵ The periodicals that the allied soldiers of the Great War created gave them hope, gave them a much-needed element of normalcy, an opportunity to, "project themselves emotionally and intellectually to a better time and a safer place."⁹⁶ Moreover, the press was an outlet of agency for the soldiers. It "allowed them to go beyond simply coping with what they had been dealt and to state a position of their own."⁹⁷ Soldiers could vent, complain, joke, commemorate and mourn through their writing and drawings. Furthermore, the press helped to create and sustain the wartime community, it brought soldiers together, gave them a common interest beyond fighting. Arguably, the six authors featured in this paper would agree that community or war culture was a vital component of endurance; some type of cohesion, whether through patriotism, humor, entertainment or feeling towards the home front, was necessary, and trench journals provided soldiers with the means to establish or create this cohesion.

Lastly, comparing the various approaches to troop morale and endurance of these six authors reveals their historiographical influences and thus how their narratives were shaped. Understanding how authors within the same field of study interact with one another makes a broader statement about soldiers of World War I; that comparisons

⁹⁵ Seal, *The Soldier's Press*, ix.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

expose international similarities that uncover the human condition, which paints a clearer picture of how the everyday soldier endures.

Primary Documents

This poem was printed in The Stars and Stripes, a newspaper written by and for the American troops fighting on the front-line, in the trenches of World War I. The primary purpose of the newspaper was to boost morale, stimulate patriotism and inspire troops to remain strong willed in the face of the horrors of combat.

“Uncle Sammy in the Box” was written on February 15th 1918, a year and two months after the United States entered the war and joined the allied forces of Britain, France and Russia to fight against Germany. While the poem’s author is unknown, the wording and the text preceding the poem from Alfred E. Cornebise indicate that the author was an American soldier waiting to be sent to battle. Note the way the poet makes use of baseball analogies as a way of coping with battle.

Uncle Sammy in the Box⁹⁸

Oh, just watch me when it’s Springtime
 and the sunshines on the bleachers,
 When the Big Game starts, my laddie
 On di’mond Over Here—
 See the grin on jousyous rapture sneaking
 o’er my classic features
 As I’m thinking how Our Boys will
 win the bacon and the beer
 Tho’ the Gothas play a savage game
 and lately they’ve been winning
 From some pitchers not in training
 and who couldn’t stand the knocks,
 You will hear em’ shouting “Kamerad”^{*}
 about the second inning
 When Uncle Sam dances to the box.

(15 February 1918)

^{*} “Kamerad” is German for ‘comrade.’

⁹⁸ Alfred E. Cornebise, *The Stars and Stripes: Doughboy Journalism in World War I* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1984), 138-139.

Enduring war takes perseverance and a stable mind. World War I was particularly psychologically trying for soldiers because of the static nature of trench warfare. Soldiers were consistently bombarded by shellfire and forced to live in dreary and harsh conditions. Sleep was rare and lice were rampant, dead bodies laying everywhere. An essential aspect of war culture that kept soldiers motivated and allowed them a sense of normalcy and the allowance to smile was trench journals. Many papers printed comics and jokes, others raunchy poems or spoof advertisements.

On July 30, 1916, The Sommes Times printed the following spoof advertisement. Note the use dark humor of this advertisement to highlight the soldiers' true emotions.

ARE YOU A VICTIM TO
OPTIMISM?⁹⁹

-0-0-0-0-
YOU DON'T KNOW?
-0-0-0-0-

THEN ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

-0-0-0-0-

1. - DO YOU SUFFER FROM CHEERFULNESS?
- 2.- DO YOU WAKE UP IN A MORNING FEELING THAT ALL IS GOING WELL FOR THE ALLIES?
- 3.- DO YOU SOMETIMES THINK THAT THE WAR WILL END WITHIN THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS?
- 4.- DO YOU BELIEVE GOOD NEWS IN PREFERENCE TO BAD?
- 5.- DO YOU CONSIDER OUR LEADERS ARE COMPETENT TO CONDUCT THE WAR TO A SUCCESSFUL ISSUE?

IF YOUR ANSWER IS "YES" TO ANY ONE OF THESE QUESTIONS THEN YOU ARE IN THE CLUTCHES OF THAT DREAD DISEASE.

WE CAN CURE YOU.

TWO DAYS SPENT AT OUR ESTABLISHMENT WILL EFFECTUALLY ERADICATE ALL TRACES OF IT FROM YOUR SYSTEM.

DO NOT HESITATE - APPLY FOR TERMS AT ONCE TO:

Messrs. Walthorpe, Foxley, Nelmes and Co.

Telephone 72, "GRUMBLESTONES.

" TELEGRAMS "GROUSE."

⁹⁹ Graham Seal, *The Soldier's Press: Trench Journalism in the First World War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 216-217.

World War I is known for trench warfare. The trenches were wretched, filthy and relentless places to be. Soldiers lived and fought in the trenches, and thus exposed to the elements. Not only were the colder, winter months problematic, but also the rainy season caused just as much hardship and agony to the soldiers' daily lives. As rain and mud were a primary source of the soldiers' suffering, this aspect of trench life was a common theme among front line trench newspapers.

Here we are, caught the rain. The simple word, the rain, virtually meaningless, for the townsman, the civilised man protected in bad weather by the roof he has built over his head, yet it is a word that contains all the horror of being a soldier on campaign. While at war, in short, I was never really unhappy except on account of the rain. I can remember snowy morning in the Argonne when I covered the sector as trench-major; sometimes a shell whistled past... But rain, the eternal rain of the first winter in Artois, the sticky, runny mud, the broken roads in the Argonne where the mire came up over your knees... No, better think of something else. But what can you think about when it is raining? ¹⁰⁰

(L'Horizon, July 1918,)

¹⁰⁰ *L'Horizon*, July 1918, cited in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1992), 36-7.

The main purpose of trench newspapers was to provide soldiers with an escape, to distract them, in a sense, from the trials and tribulations of war. Moreover, the articles in the papers were intended for soldiers to boost morale and in some cases, patriotism and nationalism. J. G Fuller writes about how the British and Dominion armies maintained morale, providing a definition of morale, which guides him and the reader through his study. This definition is provided by S.L.A Marshall, who was a U.S Army combat historian, from an interview on American soldiers in World War II.

...morale is the thinking of the army. It is the whole complex body of an army's thought: the way it feels about the soil and about the people from which it springs. The way that it feels about their causes and their politics compared with other causes and other politics. The way that it feels about its friends and allies, as well as its enemies. About its commanders and goldbricks. About food and shelter. Duty and leisure. Payday and sex. Militarism and civilianism. Freedom and slavery. Work and want. Weapons and comradeship. Bunk fatigue and drill. Discipline and disorder. Life and death. God and the devil.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ S.L.A Marshall, *Men Against Fire* (New York, 1947), 158, cited in J. G Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 29.

The German army fighting in World War I was vastly different than its British and French counterparts for multiple reasons. One major way that the Germans differed was through their technological resources. The German army did not have tanks like the Allies did, but this was not seen by the soldiers as a deficit in battle. Rather, German soldiers viewed war technology, such as tanks, as a sign of an army's weakness, priding themselves on their capability to defeat the tanks. This sentiment is reflected in the following drawing entitled, "Siegfried's Battle with the Dragon", in the journal, Die Wacht im Westen, from July 15, 1917.



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¹⁰² Robert Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 144.

As soldiers returned to the Home Front or went on leave from battle, curious civilians trying to relate to their experience at War often confronted them. The French soldiers were infuriated by this, as they felt that civilians were ignorant of their struggles and hardships at war. The following document is a reflection of this sentiment towards civilians.

Little Phrases Heard by the Men on Leave¹⁰³

- But how well you look!
- You see, you've got away with it!
- I heard you'd been killed!
- What does a Boche* look like?
- How many Boches have you killed?
- A bayonet charge must be magnificent!
- I heard they were installing heaters in the trenches this winter?
- How many times have you been in battle?
- The worse thing is the rain, isn't it?
- Oh, it will turn out all right, you'll see!
- What's this about morale?
- I read this morning in the paper that...
- It appears that their shells are useless.
- You can't imagine our suffering and anguish.

(Le Bocofage, 21 October 1916)

**A Boche is a German soldier.*

¹⁰³ *Le Bocofage*, 21 October 1916, cited in Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France during the First World War* (Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1992), 113.

Textbook Analysis

Historical textbook accounts serve as an overview of, for instance, the key people, places, battles, and treaties of a major historic event. Therefore, one could read a textbook that lacks detail, sticking to the most pertinent knowledge for standardized exams, and another one that is plush with interesting facts, diagrams, maps and detailed accounts of history, and then textbooks that fall somewhere in between. The chapter on World War I in the *History Alive!: The United States* textbook, by the Teacher's Curriculum Institute, is one such textbook that falls in between being highly detailed and providing just the basics.

The World War I chapter in *History Alive!* will provide one a solid foundation of the events leading up to the war, what happened during the war, and then how it ended, but it does not provide much detail beyond that. From a student's point of view, this could be beneficial because too much detail could become potentially overwhelming. Yet for one seeking more information, this account is lacking. A way in which this textbook could have provided the detail without necessarily incorporating it into the main text would be to have fun-facts in the margins so that students who wanted more information could have it without turning to other sources. The only extra information provided is descriptions of images that coincide with the information on the page. Even still, the information is mainly a reiteration of something stated in the main text. For instance, section 27.8 *To Make the World Safe for Democracy*, mentions when President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany after they continued to sink Allied vessels. The only graphic and side note is an image of Wilson addressing Congress to ask for the declaration of war. The note also restates Wilson's effort to avoid war, but how Germany's U-boat attacks left him no

choice.¹⁰⁴ These captions that accompany the primary sources are useful in giving one a clearer picture of the events being explained, but do not necessarily add new knowledge.

The overall structure of this chapter, or how it presents the war is laid out in four sections with sub-sections. The four main sections are, 27.6 The Outbreak of World War I, 27.7 A New Kind of Warfare, 27.8 To Make the World Safe for Democracy, and 27.9 The Struggle for Peace. Each section will be pieced apart in order to understand the flow of this chapter, and moreover to uncover what information is presented and left out.

Section 27.6 on the start of World War I is broken into two sub-sections: “Tensions in Europe” and “Assassination Leads to War”, which are intended to introduce the reader to the war. The textbook adequately describes the history of European tensions leading up to the war. It states, “European countries had long competed with each other for colonies, trade, and territory. By the early 1900s, **nationalism** was complicated by these rivalries.”¹⁰⁵ The word ‘nationalism’ is in bold because it is a keyword in this section. The other bolded word is ‘**militarism**’. This keyword is used to explain the Balkan people’s desire to be independent from Austria, and how this tension, among others, fueled European leaders to seek safety in militarism, pushing European countries such as Germany, Britain and France to compete for military dominance. Understanding the significance of these words will help students understand the pre-existing conditions that made the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand such a huge ordeal in Europe. His assassination was the spark that Europe had been waiting for.

¹⁰⁴ Bert Bower, *History Alive!: The United States*, (Teacher’s Curriculum Institute, 2002), 395.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 392.

Interesting is that Kaiser Wilhelm the II, the German emperor and King of Prussia from 1888-1918, is not mentioned in this section. His desire for a global empire was a trigger for the formation of the Triple Entente in 1907 of Britain, Russia and France. Another portion of this story that is lacking is an emphasis on American neutrality. The final sentences in this section read, "Like most Americans, President Woodrow Wilson wanted to stay out of the war. Declaring that the United States would remain neutral, Wilson begged citizens to be 'impartial in thought as well as deed.'"¹⁰⁶ A section that discussed the importance of American neutrality on European tensions would be a useful addition to this chapter, one that could be placed within section 27.8 To Make the World Safe for Democracy.

Information that would be helpful in a section on American neutrality could include how America's loyalties leaned towards the Allied forces, which was partially influenced by Britain having control of Atlantic shipping routes. Additionally, knowing that the Allies purchasing American goods fixed the 1913 business recession in the United States would further highlight why America would favor the Allies. This chapter does explain, however, how trade "swelled" between the United States and the Allies to \$3.2 billion in 1916, but dropped with the Central Powers to \$1 million.¹⁰⁷ More stress should be given to Germany acknowledging this favoritism, which resulted in growing tensions between Britain and Germany. Understanding this is imperative to comprehend why Germany continued to bomb merchant ships even after The "Sussex" Pledge, another piece of information absent from this chapter. After sinking the Lusitania and then the Sussex, Germany pledged to not bomb any merchant ships without prior warning. The Zimmerman Telegram, in which

¹⁰⁶ Bower, *History Alive!*, 392.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 394.

Germany wrote to Mexico to make a deal that if Mexico declared war on the United States that Germany would aid it in recovering California, Texas and New Mexico, is also left from this chapter. Adding this would enhance a student's understanding as to why Wilson waged war on Germany when combined with Germany's violations of the "Sussex" Pledge. Perhaps the creators of this textbook felt that this information is not essential for a student's understanding of why America entered the war. From experience working with students on World War I, in many cases they felt confused by the whole war. They did not understand why the U.S.A. entered a war that concerned Europe, nor did they fully comprehend why the assassination of Franz Ferdinand led to a world war in the first place. Therefore, providing students with these pieces of information, giving them a more complete story, could help to ease students' confusion.

Section 27.7 A New Kind of Warfare covers the uniqueness of how World War I was fought and the war technology that was developed during the war. Since it is an American textbook, it is refreshing to see a page and a half dedicated to the conflict between the European nations involved in the war. Furthermore, this section is successful in emphasizing the brutal nature of trench warfare: "Men ate, slept, fought and died in these miserable ditches... The trenches were wretched places, infested with rats, lice and disease."¹⁰⁸ Detail such as this makes reading about trenches become more relatable and intriguing for the student, they help to create a more full-bodied story.

Another positive attribute of this chapter is its extensive use of direct quotes. For example, to highlight the horrors of trench life, an American who volunteered with the British forces is quoted saying, "We are not leading the life of men, but that of animals,

¹⁰⁸ Bower, *History Alive!*, 393.

living in holes in the ground, and only showing outside to fight and to feed.”¹⁰⁹ This section incorporates an image of soldiers in the trenches that serves to enhance the words on the page. Something missing from this section, and the entire chapter, are maps and diagrams. Geography is essential to teaching history, and without a map showing the where the Allied Powers and Central Powers were located, and then where they fought is a loss for students. A map of the trenches or an aerial view of the trenches would broaden students’ conception of trench warfare. Moreover, the choice to not incorporate maps into a chapter where geography is pertinent to understanding the war seems careless. In addition, it sends a message that maps and geography are in fact unnecessary to historical studies. Even one map would at least give students a sense of why it was a world war.

The sub-section entitled, “New Weapons” further highlights why trench warfare was so treacherous, explaining the impact of machine guns and poison gas on soldier deaths. Machine guns are explained as one of the deadliest war inventions to hit the battlefield: “By the end of 1914, the French had lost 30,000 men. Germany lost most than 130,000 soldiers in a single battle.”¹¹⁰ The information on poison gas minimal, explaining that the Germans invented it and soon both sides used it to fight. Furthermore, it explains how chemical weapons were only “effective for defense, but not for decisive attack.”¹¹¹ An interesting piece of information that is left out of this section is the banning of poisonous gas in 1925 through the Geneva Protocol after the world witnessed its horrific consequences.

Section 27.8 To Make the World Safe for Democracy, is focused on America’s role in the war. It underscores how Wilson’s strong desire to remain neutral was necessarily

¹⁰⁹ Bower, *History Alive!*, 393.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

overthrown when Germany violated the multiple agreements it made with the United States and the international community. As mentioned earlier, this section shows an image of Wilson addressing Congress to ask for a declaration of war on Germany. The caption for this image further stresses Wilson's struggle between neutrality and war. It seems that the purpose of the images throughout the chapter are intended to provide a gist of the main text. This would allow students to skim the pages, read the captions and have a sense of what the section is explaining.

The sub-sections within 27.8 titled, "Americans Prepare to Fight" and "Fighting and Winning" are well thought out and informative. Together, they paint a full picture of America's involvement in World War I and how its resources to the Allies helped to end the war; for instance, a detailed paragraphs such as the following:

The German forces rushed to capture Paris before large numbers of Americans could arrive from overseas. They pushed quickly through the village of Chateau-Thierry and a nearby forest called Bellau Wood. They were within 50 miles of Paris when Americans reinforced the exhausted French. Gradually, American machine guns and artillery enabled the Allies to push Germany back.¹¹²

The only element lacking from this type of information, explaining locations of battles or events, is a map. Saying that the Germans were within 50 miles of Paris has no meaning to someone who is unfamiliar with the geography of France. Once again, this entire chapter lacks maps, which is a detriment to historical thought.

The section on America and the War also lacks a discussion of the home front and what pivotal events were occurring in the United States because of the war. The main effect of the war of society was war-induced prosperity, which led to new opportunities for disadvantaged groups such as women and African American men. For instance, with men

¹¹² Bower, *History Alive!*, 396.

fighting the war overseas, women were left to run the factories, which raised the status of women in society. African American men were also fed into the workforce, but with a more negative outcome than it did for women. African American men were given low paying jobs and the influx of this population into urban areas created a growing urban poor, which fueled racial tensions in the United States. In addition, this section also fails to highlight how the war stifled civil liberties through the passage of laws such as the Espionage Act on 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918. These acts were intended to promote the American cause with the Allied Powers and remove any possibility of undermining the American cause. Information such as this is both important to the American story and some adds much-needed excitement to this section. Once again, it seems that this chapter is focused more on the fundamental details of World War I rather than a more holistic approach to its explanation.

The final section, 27.9 The Struggle for Peace focuses on the end of war, Wilson's Fourteen Points for world peace and the Treaty of Versailles. This part of the chapter is successful in its explanation of both America's role in ending the war, Wilson's struggle with Congress to pass the Treaty of Versailles, and how the Treaty left a "bitter legacy" for Germans. The final sentence of this chapter alludes to how this legacy led to World War II: "At a rally in 1922, Hitler shouted, 'It cannot be that two million Germans should have fallen in vain...No, we do not pardon, we demand—revenge!'"¹¹³

The *History Alive!* Chapter on World War I provides students with the base knowledge for understanding the war. There is information missing that would be of great use to a student who is seeking a more in-depth or fuller understanding World War I. For

¹¹³ Bower, *History Alive!*, 398.

instance, the importance of Kaiser Wilhelm II and his desire for a global empire, which prompted the formation of the Triple Entente in 1907 of Britain, Russia and France, or how American neutrality strengthened the tensions between Britain and Germany. One of the stronger sections within this chapter is on trench warfare. Its most positive feature is how strongly the text emphasizes the uniqueness of trench warfare and how horrific it was to endure.

While the information in this chapter is relatively basic, it gets the job done. In other words, for someone who is looking for a general understanding of World War I, this textbook will suffice. The main negative critique of this chapter is its lack of maps. There is not one map throughout the entire chapter, which is a huge detriment to students. Moreover, not including maps send the message that geography is separate from the study of history, when in fact it is pertinent. What makes this even more perplexing is that the title of this textbook, *History Alive!: The United States*, implies an engaging bounty of information that uncovers more than the surface information. At the very minimum I would expect a textbook written, as the website for the Teacher's Curriculum Institute explains, "by and for teachers" to be more engaging and interactive, providing students with a wide breath of information so that students who desire more detail can obtain it.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Teacher's Curriculum Institute, "What is TCI?", *Social Studies Textbooks, Science Textbooks & Curriculum for K-12 Schools*, 2016.

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