Emotions and Tourism: World War II France

This chapter explores the emotions, passions and movement that characterize World War II-related tourism in France, both during the war and in the occasionally contentious development of war-related tourist sites and what are often called *lieux de mémoire* [sites of memory] thereafter. The reaction, in the *Daily Mail*, a British tabloid newspaper, and elsewhere, to Queen Elizabeth’s non-invitation to the 65th D-Day anniversary events in Normandy in June 2009 speaks eloquently to the emotions aroused by wartime tourism (Hickley and English 2009; Burns 2009; Delasalle-Stolper 2009).

Tourism is sometimes considered a relatively new phenomenon, with some dating it to the English aristocratic Grand Tour of the sixteenth century and later, but its history goes back far earlier. Evidence for ancient tourism includes the graffiti dating to the middle of the second millennium B.C. found on walls in tombs in Sakkharah, Ghizeh, and Abusir in Egypt. Herodotus, who in Lionel Casson’s words, ‘spent the better part of his life as a tourist,’ described large swaths of the Persian Empire and was, according to Casson, the world’s first travel writer (Casson 1994: 32 and 96). Based on the ancient notion of *curiositas*, Petrarch wrote, ‘I know that in men’s minds resides an innate longing to see new places.’ (Thubron 1999: 12). Maurice Dupuy considers tourism, ‘from pre-history to our days,’ as based on ‘a desire to know’ and ‘to discover.’ (Dupuy 1994: 18).

Emphasizing that ‘far from being born a tourist, man became one,’ Pascal Cuvelier argues that tourism began with the Roman *otium*, a cultured retreat for the optimates (Cuvelier 1998: 19-20). More recently, Mike Robinson, a British specialist in tourism studies research wrote: ‘If one strips away much of the hardware of tourism and travel we find that the human imagination is at its core.’ (Robinson 2005: xix). As a cultural expression, the tourist ‘gaze,’ a term popularized in 1990 by John Urry, has taken on the signification of the ways in which people encounter, assimilate, and understand ideas,
material objects, and other people as they move around the world, observing and studying (Urry 2000: 1-2; Crawshaw and Urry, 1997: 176).  
Too often, however, the history of tourism in the twentieth century is depicted as stopping in 1939 only to resume again after 1945. Despite the extensive literature on cultural tourism and on warfare and its history, there has been relatively little study of the inter-relationships between the two. Anthologies of studies of specific times and places in tourism history include works edited by John K. Walton, Gilles Bertrand, and the collection edited by Hermann Bausinger, Klaus Beyrer, and Gottfried Korff, to name only a few (Walton 2005; Bertrand 2004; and Bausinger, et. al. 1991). More broadly themed historical studies of the development of tourism include studies by Jean-Didier Urbain, the work by Maurice Dupuy cited above, Catherine Bertho Lavenir, Maxine Feiffer, and Cindy Aron (Urbain 1993; Dupuy 1994: 18; Lavenir 1999; Feiffer 1986; and Cindy Aron 1999). In Germany, Hasso Spode's, ‘Zur Geschichte der Tourismusgeschichte,’ includes a picture of bathers at the Baltic Sea in 1941, ‘in the middle of the war,’ (Spode 2009: 20) but these and other general works on tourism history rarely address its relationship to war.  
Occasional linkages may be found in a study of urban tourism by Marc Chesnel (Chesnel 2009: 8) and in a presentation by Josette Mesplier-Pinet, who, in addressing a conference entitled ‘Tourisme Culture Patrimoine’ [Tourism, Culture, Heritage] in 2004, noted that cultural tourism, formerly concentrated on the beaux-arts, had become increasingly less ‘elitist’ and was opening more to "new themes" that included military heritage [patrimoine militaire] (Mesplier-Pinet 2009: 12-13). Magazines for enthusiasts, such as After the Battle, published in Britain, are devoted to the retrospective description of battlefield sites. The Dutch website WW2Museums.com, an initiative of STIWOT (Stichting Informatie Wereldoorlog Twee [World War II Information Foundation]), with listings of battlefields and other war monuments throughout Europe, states:  

‘WW2Museums.com is the place to plan your own battlefield tour along WW2 museums, monuments, cemeteries and other sights of interest in and outside Europe. Through WW2Museums.com you will be introduced to WW2 sights [sic] of interest that still can be visited today!’ (STIWOT 2010).
In many ways, tourism was attenuated during the war but it continued, even if altered in significant ways, and planning for postwar tourism continued as well. One of the pillars of postwar tourism became the sites and circuits linked to the memory of the battles, the concentration camps, the Resistance and the collaboration in France. Postwar tourism in memory became big business and people in the tourism industry recognized it, contributing to making France one of the largest receivers of tourists in the world. Wartime and war-related, tourism, sometimes known as ‘battlefield tourism,’ is now occasionally referenced as ‘thanatourism,’ or ‘dark tourism,’ linked to death, atrocity, or disaster, with visits to battlefields, cemeteries, and memorials, notably the Holocaust (Seaton and Lennon 2004: 63-64). The economic exploitation of three sites of memory connected to World War II in France is addressed by Henning Meyer (Meyer 2006: 529), whereas Wiebke Kolbe notes in her study of postwar German battlefield tourism that distinctions among pilgrimages, battlefield tourism, and tourism in general are difficult if not impossible to draw as reactions of visitors to lieux de mémoire vary. The same visitor to a battlefield or war cemetery might also visit other sites (Kolbe 2009: 47). As a field, World War II tourism study is hardly new but its publishing history and many of the related details still need to be elaborated. My own earlier efforts linking war and tourism include studies of the Germans in occupied France during World War II as well as wartime sites in their role as tourism attractions in the postwar period (Gordon 1996; Gordon 1998; and Gordon 2001).

This essay points to some of the emotion generated by World War II tourism and makes a hypothetical foray into the assessment of its significance in the larger tourism context using France as a case study. France is an important case in examining the connections between tourism and war especially in regard to World War II for three significant reasons: first, France's role as the current world leader in tourist visits; secondly, the development of the field of cultural memory following the work of French scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs and more recently Pierre Nora; and thirdly, the production of an extensive historical literature relating to the war and its interpretations in France since 1945.
People often think of World War II tourism in France as visits to the Moulin Rouge and Maxim’s restaurant in Paris, where German occupation soldiers spent leisure time; or the grand hotels in the Alps and beach resorts near Nice, many of which remained open during the war years. Just as a larger view of curiosity in motion is needed to analyze generic tourism, a more extensive view of World War II tourism is necessary to understand its history in France during the war and in the more than sixty years since. This essay re-examines World War II tourism in France by focusing first on the most significant sites of tourist curiosity, namely the Atlantic Wall and subsequent Normandy battlefield sites, before turning briefly to tourism during the 1940-1944 German occupation in France, and lastly to the post-1944 expansion of tourist sites that, in addition to the Normandy beaches, became lieux de mémoire.

Tourist Gazes during and after the War: Normandy and the Maginot Line

In sheer numbers, tourist gazes inevitably followed the major military sequences of the war with attention drawn to the Battle of Britain, the Great Patriotic War in Eastern Europe, the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters, and, D-Day. What focused the tourist gaze during the war in France was surely newsreel films of General Erwin Rommel on tour along the Atlantic Wall coastal defenses, aerial reconnaissance photographs taken by all sides during the war —arguably among the most photographed sites—, the gawkers on the streets as German, and later Allied, tanks rolled by, and the theaters, movie houses, cafés, and hotels, the romantic sites for French as well as foreign visitors. To this list should be added historic sites that became lieux de mémoire after the war.

How many aerial photographs and gazes were directed during the war toward the Atlantic Wall, or how many in France watched newsreels of General Rommel touring the fortifications will never be known. Although one might hesitate to call Rommel a tourist in the sense of a participant in a Cook’s tour, Scott McCabe in an essay on the concept of the tourist notes that the American Heritage dictionary offers as one of its definitions: ‘a brief trip through a place, as a building or a site, in order to view or inspect it: The visiting prime minister was given a tour of the chemical plant.’ (McCabe 2009: 31). Tourist curiosity is invariably involved in military campaigns and the interest in the coast
can only have been intense as Allies, Germans, military and civilians, looked toward the Atlantic Wall in anticipation of the outcome of the war with intense aerial photography focused on it (Desquesnes 2009B: 74-75). As early as October 1940, the German high command expressed concern about a possible English landing on the French coast and called for continual vigilance there (Rundstedt 1940). Ernst Jünger, a German officer and writer stationed in Paris, wrote on 4 May 1944, ‘the landing occupies everyone’s attention; the German command, as well as the French, believe it will take place one of these days.’ (Jünger 1965: 315). A mammoth undertaking that employed thousands of workers and was run by the Organisation Todt, the Wall was described by the magazine *L’Illustration* in 1943 as comparable in history only to the Great Wall of China (cited in Desquesnes 2009B: 22-23). With some 15,000 concrete fortifications of varying sizes, the Atlantic Wall was never completed (Quellien 2004: 6-7).

[Illustration 1: Pointe du Hoc – Atlantic Wall Bunkers. The Atlantic Wall was to secure Western Europe while Germany and its allies fought against the Soviet Union in the east.]

Described as the last great fortified system, the Atlantic Wall was to be an impregnable series of fortifications along the coast of western Europe extending from Norway’s North Cape to the French-Spanish border and was based on a directive of Hitler’s on 14 December 1941, a week after the entry of the United States into the war (Desquesnes 2009A: 9 and 17). Ultimately, the Atlantic Wall failed for reasons that included Allied surprise in the Normandy invasion of 6 June 1944, their overwhelming air and naval superiority in materiel, and German indecision and their expectation that the Normandy invasion was a feint, especially as the Allied operation Fortitude was designed as an ersatz invasion intended for the Pas-de-Calais further north (Grandhomme 2009: 108-109).

Aerial photographs to glean military intelligence both over the Atlantic Wall and Normandy, as elsewhere, were among the earliest expressions of World War II ‘battlefield tourism,’ even if directed toward military purposes. ‘Battlefield tourism’ or ‘memory tourism’ [*tourisme de mémoire*] is especially evident in Normandy, where the
postwar proliferation of *lieux de mémoire* as tourist sites attests to French success in 
exploiting the tourist potential of the battlegrounds (Meyer 2006: 529). In *La Mémoire 
désunie* [Divided Memory], Olivier Wieviorka traces the history of ways in which war-
related sites were given Resistance signification after 1944 as succeeding governments, 
following the suggestion of General Charles de Gaulle, portrayed a France united in 
resistance to the Nazis (Wieviorka 2010). The French had long before begun to classify 
military fortifications as official historic sites with the Amiens citadel in 1840. In 1946 
and 1947, they moved to protect the town of Oradour-sur-Glane, scene of a massacre of 
the villagers by a unit of the Waffen-SS on 10 June 1944; the Struthof concentration 
camp in Natzweiler in Alsace, and Omaha Beach in Normandy (Raffray 1999: 6-7). 
The Loi Triboulet of 21 May 1947, named for the first sub-prefect of liberated territory in 
Normandy, created an annual celebration of the landings there (Chapron 2009). Michelin 
published its first battlefield map, number 102, of the region in 1947. By 1953, a 
‘Liberation Circuit’ tour focused on the Allied landing beaches (Horizons 1953: 1-2; 
Gordon 2001: 250). In the 1950s there were two museums in Normandy devoted to the 
landings, whereas there are presently more than thirty. 
Anniversaries also played a part in the development of war-related tourism, as 
exemplified in the case of the Normandy invasion sites. A guidebook to these locales, 
prepared for the twentieth anniversary of the invasion in 1964, contained a preface by 
General Pierre Kœnig, who had commanded the Free French military contingent 
participating in the 1944 expedition. In the preface Kœnig claimed the 1964 guidebook to 
be the first of its kind. ‘No longer,’ he wrote, ‘would those wishing to tour the battlefield 
need to do extensive preparatory research as now all was put together in one accessible 
guidebook intended especially for war veterans, families coming to pay respects to their 
dead,’ and ‘naturally, tourists traveling these regions heavy with history.’ (Kœnig 1964: 
5-6). In addition to a brief history of the events leading up to the Normandy invasion, the 
guidebook listed seven touring itineraries, one focusing on the British parachute troops' 
landings, another devoted to the events from the battle of Cherbourg to that of Caen, plus 
five other tours, each visiting one of the landing beaches: Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha, and 
Utah. The book concluded with a chronology and a bibliography.
As of 2009, a ‘Normandie Pass,’ offered discounts for visits to 26 D-Day museums in the region (Normandie Pass 2009). Normandy has many other tourist attractions, such as the Bayeux tapestry, which, according to Philippe Chapron, the Director of the Musée Mémorial de la Bataille de Normandie in Bayeux, also draw people toward the D-Day story. The Musée Mémorial was inaugurated officially on 14 July 1981. As of 2009, the museum employed eight people who staffed the equivalent of eleven positions, according to M. Chapron (Chapron 2009). One display in the museum is a telegram sent by the American War Department to the parents of a 20-year old soldier killed in action in Normandy on 30 July 1944. The picture of the soldier, one of four brothers serving in the war at the time, is just below. ‘At that moment ‘Saving Private Ryan' was very close to me,’ wrote one visitor to the site, illustrating the role that cinema often plays in the creation of tourism images (van den Bogert 2010).

In the British landing sector, the Musée du Débarquement in Arromanches-les-Bains, the site of an artificial harbor constructed to facilitate the landings, was one of the first D-Day museums.

[Illustration 2: Musée du Débarquement, Arromanches-les-Bains, Normandy]

Established as a private venture in 1953, it was inaugurated officially the following year, on the tenth anniversary of D-Day, by President René Coty (Arromanches 2009: 30; Lorrain 2009: 70; Meyer 2006: 210). By the early 1960s, the Musée du Débarquement was attracting over 200,000 visitors annually, according to paid entrance figures. The figures, gathered by the Institute National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques [INSEE], were 213,500 in 1962, 258,000 in 1963, and 284,000 in 1964, according to the Annuaire Statistique de la France 1965 (Annuaire 1965: 396). Frédéric Sommier, Director of the Musée du Débarquement, indicated that it drew about 400,000 visitors in 2004, the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day, but that it normally attracts some 300,000 annually. The war, Mr Sommier noted, transformed Arromanches-les-Bains from a spa town – hence its name – to a lieu de mémoire. He described his museum’s clientele more as “tourists” in quotes, than the visitors to some other places, such as the Mémorial Cité de l’Histoire pour la Paix at Caen. As of 2009, the Musée employed seventeen people
with an additional six or seven seasonal workers for the summer. A third of the visitors came in groups, the remaining visitors as individuals. Some 40,000 students, half French and half English, visited annually. Plans were underway in 2009 to enlarge the museum on some adjacent land available to it (Sommier 2009).

The Caen Mémorial has been depicted as a museum with a scenography ‘based on emotion, the mise en scène seeking to mobilize passions, sentiments, emotions – in this case the memories of the spectators – while the historical content seeks to mobilize reason.’ (Perissière 1998: 189; Sherman 1995: 50).

The Mémorial in Caen, a city heavily damaged in 1944, was established in 1988. According to paid entrance figures, it receives approximately 380,000 to 400,000 visitors each year. In 1994, the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings, some 600,000 persons visited the Mémorial. Comparing the Caen Mémorial to other World War II sites in Normandy, Marc Pottier, its educational and research director, stated: ‘we are more oriented to reflection, more demanding of the visitors.’ (Pottier 2009). To Shannon L. Fogg, an American historian of France, ‘A month spent studying at the Mémorial de Caen and visiting war sites throughout Normandy cemented my love for the period and for France.’ (Fogg 2009: xiii). The Caen Mémorial is also situated on a tourist access route to Mont Saint-Michel, so it attracts a substantial ‘tourisme d’autoroute, de passage’” [passing motorway tourism] in Pottier’s words. Foreign visitors, Pottier noted, tended to go more to the cemeteries than to the Mémorial and they generally frequented sites closer to the sea, so that Arromanches received more foreign visitors than did the Mémorial. (Pottier 2009; Tobelem and Benito 2002: 269). It was said to be just behind Mont-Saint-Michel as the second most visited tourist site in the Normandy region (Gautier-Desvaux 1998: 311).

The proliferation of Atlantic Wall, D-Day related museums, and related tourist sites has given rise to debate regarding their purpose and the historical messages they send to the public (Davallon 1998: 351-356). On one hand, a German guidebook, published in 1997, noted that much of the former Atlantic Wall had been turned into memorials to specific military actions, mile markers, and cemeteries for the fallen on both sides. In addition to the remembering, came the reconciliation, expressed in signs along the tourist route that bore German as well as British names (Schauseil 1997: 157). On the other hand,
Elisabeth Raffray expressed concern in Lower Normandy about ‘accusations made against all development of such a patrimoine that would promote “war tourism”.’ (Raffray 1999: 5). Tourist revenue potential of lieux de mémoire in France, however, is significant, although statistics regarding tourist visits are often subject to question and multiple interpretations. In one estimate, some 3,000,000 visitors toured the battle sites of Normandy in 2003, placing them arguably among the top 25 most frequented tourist sites in France (ORT-CRT 2003). The French Observatoire national du tourisme [ONT], which listed the 44 most visited sites in France for 2006, had war tourism tied for sixth and seventh place with three listings each. In first place were sixteen ‘general’ or unclassifiable destinations, such as the Saint-Ouen flea market near Paris and the Eiffel Tower; followed by religious and pilgrimage tourism sites with eight destinations. These included the Notre-Dame cathedral and the Sacré-Cœur basilica in Paris. Picnics, nature, and what might be called “environmentalist” locales, such as the Fontainebleau forest and the park at the Versailles château, were tied for fourth and fifth places with science and technology sites, including the Cité des sciences de La Villette in Paris and the Borély botanical gardens in Marseille (Vacances 2006). Because of problems with any statistics attempting to measure where people tour and how they spend their time, together with questions concerning who compiled the ONT list, the methodology used, and the fact that the list available came from a secondary source, a Wikipedia article, this attempt to place war tourism into the larger context must be regarded as hypothetical, awaiting further research. Marc Pottier’s comment that the Caen Mémorial attracts touristes de passage exemplifies the multiplicity of reasons for which people visit sites (Pottier 2009). A breakdown of tourist numbers by age and gender would also help analyze tourism in general and the place of war tourism in particular. According to Frédéric Sommier, of the 300,000 visitors drawn annually to the Musée du Débarquement in Arromanches, some are 40,000 students who are split roughly half and half between France and the U.K. (Sommier 2009). Approximately one-third the annual visitors to the Mémorial at Caen are students (Pottier 2009). Neither set of figures addresses the ages of the students, pre- or post-puberty.

Nonetheless, war-related sites comprised a significant segment of the tourist trade in the estimation of some. General Secretary of the Conseil national du Tourisme [National
Council of Tourism] in 1996, Alain Monferrand estimated some 15 million visitors
drawn to fortifications, battlegrounds, and military or historical museums of various
kinds in France annually, but this was ten years prior to the ONT figures and it is not
clear how he derived his numbers (Monferrand 1998: 335). These tourists, Monferrand
emphasized, visited ‘spontaneously,’ without an organized advertising campaign, which,
he believed, might have doubled the numbers of visitors. With some 60 million
international visitors per year, he argued, France was dependent on tourism’s economic
revenue, which employed a million persons, and constituted one of the last forms of
economic development still possible for the then coming millennium. Culture and history
were fundamental to this growth and many regions still had the potential, he wrote, to
exploit their patrimoine for tourist expansion (Monferrand 1998: 335-336 and 340-341).
Monferrand also warned that local historical museums needed to avoid duplicating their
exhibits (Monferrand 1998: 337), an issue also raised by Frédéric Sommier (Sommier
2009).

If the Atlantic Wall and Normandy together comprise the primary cluster of battlefield
sites in France, the next would be the sites relating to the German victory in the West in
1940, in particular the fortresses of the Maginot Line. Bitterly described as a ‘useless
bastion,’ by one of its French defenders, the fortifications had cost an estimated five
billion francs in the 1930s (Masson 1985: title page). With the German victory in 1940,
the Maginot Line changed in meaning almost overnight from an expensive state of the art
network of defensive fortifications to a site of touristic curiosity on the part of the victors.
The newly taken fortifications were said to be ‘all the rage’ among the Germans in June
1940 and Hitler himself visited on the 30th (Kemp 1981: 101). Following the war, the
fortresses were opened to tourists after 1964 when the French opted for nuclear rather
than conventional military defense. The fort at Fermont, for example, was repaired by the
French army shortly after the war and then abandoned in 1964. It subsequently came into
the possession of private societies. From 1964 through 1970 French military engineers
used several of the fortifications for study. The army maintained the Simserhof
fortifications and established a museum there in 1966 with an extensive collection of
A sequence of television programs in 1965 brought the Maginot Line's new status to the attention of the French public. In 1973, the publication of Roger Bruge’s book, *Faites Sauter la Ligne Maginot* [Blow Up the Maginot Line] that maintained that the forts had served France well in 1940, forcing the Germans to circumvent rather than attack them directly, gave a boost to tourism there. The Bambesch fort, near Metz, then recently opened to tourists, received nearly 10,000 visitors that year. The Marckolsheim fortress was opened to tourism in 1972 (Soudagne 2006: 117-118). At Fermont, the *Association de l'Ouvrage du Fermont* [Fermont Fortress Association] obtained access to the fort in 1976 and opened it to the public the following year (Pallud 1988: 19). Two Maginot fortresses were given official protection in the 1980s (Raffray 1999: 7). Those open in 2009 were estimated to receive some 300,000 visitors annually (Fortified military architectures in Europe 2009; Seramour 2007; Gordon 2001: 255). A group of tourists ascending from the French Maginot Line fortifications was seen to be more solemn than the same people earlier entering the site (Gordon 2001: 239).

**Changes and Continuities: Tourism in France - 1940-1944**

War and occupation, not surprisingly, brought significant changes to the prewar tourism models and itineraries in France. Beyond the tourist curiosity directed toward invasion sites in Normandy -- both prior to and following the 1944 landings -- and the transformed symbolism of the Maginot Line after 1940, a significant, if immeasurable, manifestation of tourist curiosity has to have been the numbers of those who watched the various tanks, trucks, and wagons of all types roll down highways and village lanes, often depicted in the German newsreels of 1940 and their American counterparts of 1944. A hint of the magnitude of this kind of tourism can be seen in the 510 documentary films produced in France between 1940 and 1944. The list, taken from the *Brochure du premier congrès du Film Documentaire*, CARAN, Paris, F42/114 and F42/132, and “Le Nouveau Film, January 1943, is reproduced in an appendix in Steve Wharton’s book, *Screening Reality: French Documentary Films during the German Occupation* (Wharton 2006: 209-228). Lastly, the cinemas, theaters, hotels, cafés, and restaurants, and related romantic sites that attracted French as well as foreign visitors form a significant component of wartime
tourism both during the war and in the years thereafter. Many of these sites, such as the Eiffel Tower, had drawn tourists from within France and abroad prior to the war and would resume their role as popular sites afterward, the continuities in German perspectives on tourist France represented by the journalist Friedrich Sieburg (Gordon 1996). On 23 June 1940, Hitler was one of the first Germans to tour occupied Paris. He is seen standing at Trocadéro with the Eiffel Tower in the background in the well-known photo taken by his personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann. Der deutsche Wegleiter, a bi-weekly German language guide to Paris, similar to today’s Pariscope, was published in Paris and made available to military and civilian personnel there who were given tours by the tens of thousands by a special military unit, in occupied France during World War II (Gordon 1998: 618).

The German Tourist Office [Deutsches Verkehrsbüro] also began offering travel suggestions in the occupied zone in France as well as information regarding travel from France to Germany beginning in September 1940 (Deutsches Verkehrsbüro 1940). The Pariser Zeitung, a German-language daily newspaper, and the Guide Aryen, a bilingual brochure in French and German, steered the Occupation soldiers to tourist attractions that included the re-opened Louvre, Moulin Rouge, and Longchamps race track. In addition, the Germans created an organization called ‘Jeder einmal in Paris’ [Everyone in Paris once], with offices in the Palais Bourbon, the former (and future) home of the French Chamber of Deputies. The mission of Jeder einmal in Paris was to offer all the troops a holiday in Paris, arranged in rotational visits to the city by German army units (Perrault and Azéma 1989: 17). Descriptions in the Wegleiter (Hönig 1942: 16-17) of German tourist sites in and outside Paris are echoed in the memoirs of the German officers, such as Jünger and Gerhard Heller, whose accounts also provide a good sense of what they did in France. In preparation for an exhibition of Arno Breker's sculptures at the Orangerie in May 1942, Heller was sent to Collioure, a small Catalan town in southern France, to accompany Breker's old master Aristide Maillol who lived there, to Paris. As in the case of so many business trips, before, during, and since the war, Heller combined work with tourism. He stopped off at Toulouse, where he had studied in 1934-1935, and also visited the Côte Vermeille, the Catalan coast along the Mediterranean in southern France where
he was enchanted with ‘a little fishing port whose picturesqueness had been completely preserved.’ (Heller 1981: 123).

As Ahlrich Mayer writes, the quotidian bureaucratic activities of Germans such as Jünger and Heller, combined with the attractions of Paris, enabled them to avert their gazes from the German occupation policy in France that dictated privations for most of the French population, the rounding up of Jews to be sent to the extermination camps, and the war against the Soviet Union (Mayer 2002: 29). Gerhard Heller's postwar memoir is a telling example of a self-serving apologia for living the good life in occupied Paris while Germany carried out its belligerent policies (Heller 1981: 168). German tourist itineraries can also be followed in the postwar films that are copious in their descriptions of occupied France, such as: ‘Is Paris Burning?’ ‘The Longest Day,’ or ‘Les visiteurs du soir.’ To these may be added the accounts of witnesses such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

American soldiers after 1944 were equally likely to be tourists, as indicated by the guidebook, For You, published, as had been the Wegleiter, by locals in France. Many young Americans, British, Canadians, Australians, and New Zealanders first saw France as soldiers in uniform, as had so many of the Germans in 1940. The excitement described by Arthur Frommer upon seeing Europe for the first time from the confines of a military transport plane was by no means unusual and the many Allied soldiers who came to France to fight in 1944 and in peacetime during the years that followed contributed to the surge in tourism that characterized the postwar landscape and played so large a role in postwar European prosperity.

Essentially, French tourism was little changed from the advent of the bus and train touring pattern in the early 1920s to the coming of the Common Market in the late 1950s. The wartime Germans strove to preserve this infrastructure, which served them as it did others. Their documents show an interest in keeping top Parisian restaurants, often reserved exclusively for them, well stocked. As of August 1941, the restaurants categorized as ‘hors classe’ [unclassified] and, therefore not subject to rationing, were Carton, Drouant-Gaillon, Laperouse, Maxim’s, and La Tour d’Argent in Paris, and Le Coq Hardi in Bougival, the last so designated in November 1941 (État Français 1942; Guy 1985: 132). Heller asked rhetorically in his memoir how many meals he had taken
with the French publisher Bernard Grasset at Lipp (Heller 1981: 132). German documents also show a lively interest in maintaining clean brothels for their soldiers (Brauchitsch 1941). Within a month of their arrival in Paris, German officials determined that local French brothels lacked proper hygiene and were insufficiently supervised by the governing authorities. Selected brothels in larger cities and under medical supervision were made available to German military personnel with access to them forbidden to French civilians, other than the prostitutes themselves. Germans were forbidden to frequent bordello other than those especially designated for them. Jewish and other ‘alien race’ prostitutes were not allowed to serve German personnel nor were bordello allowed to serve as hotels for travelers (Schreiber 1940; Müller 1940).

For the French during the Occupation years, however, tourism continued but not always in the normal prewar manner. The creation of the Commissariat au Tourisme and the Popular Front's paid holidays program in the mid-1930s had given a new impetus to tourism in France. Although only a minority of eligible workers took advantage of their paid vacations to travel, Marc Boyer, a historian of tourism in France, notes that the paid vacations after 1936 came to be considered as a right by the public (Boyer 2007: 130). Despite the economic hardships of the Occupation and its own moralistic agenda of ‘Travail, Famille, Patrie,’ with its emphasis on work, the Vichy government extended the paid holidays, set at fifteen days in 1936, by an additional day for those on the job five years or more (Boyer 2007: 96).

The division of occupied France into several military zones meant German permission was required to travel within much of France. Students were allowed to go on vacations, but only if visiting family members in other parts of France (Isoré 1942: 4). Parisians continued to take vacations but the Atlantic coast was off limits to them, so they headed inland instead. As Boyer points out, however, many in France during these years experienced mobility, even if not of their own choosing and under severe conditions of transport restrictions. Hiding places and pilgrimage sites could be agreeable, as in the case of the Côte d’Azur, which served as a refuge for many but was also a prized tourist area. The French countryside was rediscovered by many hungry urban dwellers sometimes finding good food in the rural homes of previously neglected parents or other relatives. Health benefits of the countryside were also rediscovered. Despite the
hardships, many of the French, Boyer argued, retained pleasant memories of these experiences, which encouraged them to tour in ever larger numbers when conditions improved after the war. The stunning success of the first postwar Salon de l’Automobile [Automobile Exposition] in 1946 and the increase in automobile touring in the years that followed, were due in no small part to the experience of so many of the French during the war (Boyer 2007: 151-152).

Some in the tourist trade saw optimistic trends despite the wartime restrictions under the Occupation. According to Monsieur Clauzel, the head of Vichy’s Comité d’organisation de l’industrie hôtelière [Hotel Industry Organization Committee] some 400,000 pensioners with paid vacations, dating from the French legislation of 1936, found lodgings in 2,000 hotels recommended by his service in 1942 and an additional 500,000 vacationers were helped as well. He anticipated an expanding opportunity for the French hotel trade amongst retirees with pensions in 1943 (Bouis 1942). On the other side of the tourism equation, Suzanne Sauvan, writing in a geography periodical in 1942, excoriated the effects of tourism that she believed was turning France’s rural areas into suburban developments with garish red corrugated metal rooftops (Beauguïte 2007: 84). The last prewar Guide Michelin appeared in 1939. In the spring of 1944, a special edition of the guidebook, based on the 1939 edition, was published in Washington by the Allies to provide their forces with maps of French towns. The Michelin series was resumed only in 1945 with its stars rating system reappearing in 1946 and 1947, as the French hotel-restaurant system returned to its prewar norms (Blandin 2009; Michelin 2009).

**Emotion, Trauma, and Thanatourism in Postwar France**

Following the war, the list of sites expanded to include those associated with trauma, such as Oradour-sur-Glane; the Drancy concentration camp in the suburbs of Paris; and Mont Valerien, also close to Paris, where some one to two thousand people were tortured and executed during the Occupation. Focusing on the attempts to preserve the ruins of Oradour-sur-Glane, destroyed during the 10 June 1944 Nazi massacre, Sarah Bennett Farmer evaluated the problems of trying to preserve the town exactly as it had been when destroyed, in order to convey the horror of the atrocity, as opposed to the inevitable
deterioration of the ruins, caused by time and weather, necessitating intervention to create something other than the wreckage of the 1944 massacre. Analyzing the layout of the various sites: the ruined town, a cemetery still in use, and a new town, Farmer constructed a ‘topography’ of memory (Farmer 1995: 35). She described plans to make the site available to ‘pilgrims,’ ‘visitors,’ and ‘tourists,’ situating the pilgrims in a tradition of Christian visitors to holy sites (Farmer 1995: 40; Pearson 2008: 174).

Mont Valerien was inaugurated as a lieu de mémoire by General de Gaulle on 17-18 June 1960, the twentieth anniversary of his first radio address from London to occupied France, underscoring again the importance of anniversary commemorations in the construction of war-related tourism (Barcellini 1998: 53).

[Illustration 3: Mont Valerien – inaugurated 1960]

Places related to the deportation of both French and non-French and Jews and non-Jews to the Nazi camps in Central and Eastern Europe also became tourist sites, referenced in a geography of Resistance sites in Paris, by Jean-Louis Goglin and Pierre Roux (Goglin and Roux 2004). The Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation, a monument to those deported from France to concentration camps in Germany and Eastern Europe during the war, directly behind the Notre-Dame cathedral on the Ile de la Cité, which I first visited when I began my research on World War II France in 1973, was inaugurated on 12 April 1962, by General de Gaulle.

[Illustration 4: Le Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation, Ile de la Cité, Paris (1962)]

Specific to the Holocaust in France is the Shoah Memorial, an entire building that holds an archive and library, which I also visited in 1973 and where I was first able to locate documents related to the Second World War in France.

In the postwar years, birth or death sites of prominent personalities also became tourist spots. Some were official, such as the many monuments to General de Gaulle, including the naming of an airport for him, and the Historial Charles-De-Gaulle, inaugurated in 2008 at the Invalides. Others were not, such as the acquisition and preservation of
Marshal Philippe Pétain’s birthplace in the village of Cauchy-à-la-Tour, in the Pas-de-Calais, by a private organization, the Association pour Défendre la Mémoire du Maréchal Pétain [The Association to Defend the Memory of Marshal Pétain] that seeks to restore his name.

[Illustration 5: Birthplace of Marshal Pétain, Cauchy-à-la-Tour, Pas-de-Calais, France, 25 April 2009]

In conclusion, it may be argued provisionally that war tourism is in a second tier of destinations by popularity, but that it continues to generate significant revenue at least in France. Battlefield tourism for one side or another appears to be the most significant element in war tourism both during and after the war. There is a timeline for meaningful attention to a tourist site, whether for a specific purpose or for incidental curiosity, that arguably might be quantified. Between the fall of France in 1940 and the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, one could estimate that virtually the entire adult population of France virtually craned their necks with curiosity over the Atlantic Wall and related military sites. Highs in interest may be established by examining the publication peaks of the World War II related documents in the listings of the French publication catalogues ‘Biblio,’ Bibliographie de la France, and Bibliographie Nationale Française, from 1939 through the present. The publication statistics peak during the war years and again in the mid-1990s, reflecting the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation, some of the last trials of those involved in the war, and in general a higher ratio of World War II themes in the more recent series. A recent decrease in World War II related publications may indicate a decline in tourist interest as well but the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Atlantic Wall and Normandy sites, as well as the Maginot Line, reflect an interest and emotional involvement at least in the battlefield lieux de mémoire whose history decisively affected the outcome of the war. The dust-up over the failure of the French government to invite the Queen to the 2009 Normandy anniversary commemoration reflected a continuing, if limited interest in and passion for the World War II sites in France (Hickley and English 2009).
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