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TRANSNATIONAL SOLDIERING, BURIAL AND COMMEMORATION ACROSS BORDERS

The Case of Luxembourgers in the French Foreign Legion

Entangled history, or *histoire croisée*, has been presented as a means to overcome »methodological nationalism« in historiography¹. And yet it is often difficult to translate this approach into empirical research, as much of the available data and primary sources are nationally framed, and the context of the nation-state often has a paramount influence on legal structures, political institutions and social practices. Important contributions to transnationalism have been made notably in the fields of migration studies and global history². In this article, we propose to examine transnational military labour in the long nineteenth-century, with a particular focus on recruits from Luxembourg enrolled in the French Foreign Legion as well as, for comparative purposes, in the Dutch colonial army (Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger, KNIL). The study of funeral provisions and the commemoration of dead soldiers allows us to examine the tension between nation-building processes, on the one hand, and the continued use of mercenary troops, on the other.

The French Foreign Legion played a particular role in this regard, as it cultivated a sense of belonging distinct from – yet complementary to – French national identity. Together with other international war volunteers, individual Luxembourgers decided to fight for the French side during the Great War. They joined special regiments of the Legion, raised on this occasion by the French Republic, while the Grand Duchy was occupied by German imperial troops. After the war, Luxembourg claimed symbolic ownership of the fallen legionnaires.

There were two initiatives. One, the cenotaph and monument known as »Golden Lady« (Gëlle Fra), was not state-driven, but has progressively become a cornerstone of national commemoration. By contrast, the official Luxembourgish version of the Grave of the Unknown Soldier has not attracted similar attention. There is a vast body of literature on the political uses of military burial and commemoration, dating back to the pioneering work by George Mosse and Reinhart Koselleck in particular³.

1 Michael WERNER, Bénédicte ZIMMERMANN, Beyond Comparison. *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity, in: *History and Theory* 45,1 (2006), p. 30–50.

2 Nina GLICK-SCHILLER, Linda BASCH, Cristina BLANC-SZANTON, Transnationalism. A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration, in: *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 645, p. 1–24; Ludger PRIES, *Die Transnationalisierung der sozialen Welt. Sozialräume jenseits von Nationalgesellschaften*, Frankfurt/Main 2008.

3 It is impossible to name here all relevant works; the following are among the most influential: George MOSSE, *Fallen Soldiers. Reshaping the Memories of the World Wars*, Oxford 1990; Reinhart KOSELLECK, Michael JEISMANN (ed.), *Der politische Totenkult. Kriegerdenkmäler in der*

The aim of this article is not to rehash the instrumentalization of fallen soldiers for nation-building purposes, nor to compare this process in different countries, but rather to present a diachronic investigation of changes in dealing with military dead who did not fit the mould of citizen-soldiers.

The question of how the French Foreign Legion cared for and commemorated their dead soldiers is central to our analysis. It may thus be useful to briefly present this unusual armed force. The *Légion étrangère* was established on 9 March 1831 by the »citizen king« Louis-Philippe I to relaunch colonial expansion and occupation; it could not be deployed in metropolitan France. Contrary to regular armies of conscripted male citizens, later (in the last decades of the nineteenth century) depicted as »schools of the nation«⁴, the Foreign Legion was explicitly designed as military employer for men of »foreign extraction«. Originally, the force was grouped into specific national units of Swiss, German, Spanish, Sardinian/Italian, or Belgian/Dutch soldiers. It was deployed in the conquest of Algeria and during the Carlist War in Spain; any more areas of operation would follow. On 29 June 1835, a royal ordinance decreed that the Foreign Legion was no longer part of the French Army. The subdivision into national battalions was abandoned, and men of different nationalities served together in mixed units. Superior rank and command positions continued to be reserved for French nationals. It comprised several battalions, amounting to around 4,100 men⁵.

From the 1840s until the 1960s, the Legion was mainly garrisoned in Algeria, with its HQ in Sidi Bel Abbès. During this period, allegiance to the institution itself and funeral provisions for deceased legionnaires became – and still are – key elements to the self-understanding of the Legion, whose »brothers in arms« come from all over the world. In the nineteenth century, public opinion in their respective countries of origin (German states in particular), which the soldiers did *not* serve, was very negative about their engagement abroad. Authorities tried to prevent enrolment and generally tended to discredit the Foreign Legion⁶. This changed with the First World War, when foreign volunteers were assigned to the marching regiments of the For-

Moderne, Munich 1994; Jay WINTER, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History*, Cambridge 1998; Jay WINTER, Emmanuel SIVAN (ed.), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 2009; Jörg ECHTERNKAMP, Manfred HETTLING (ed.), *Gefallenengedenken im globalen Vergleich. Nationale Tradition, politische Legitimation und Individualisierung der Erinnerung*, Munich 2013.

- 4 Wolfram WETTE (ed.), *Schule der Gewalt. Militarismus in Deutschland 1871–1945*, Berlin 2005; Kai Uwe BORMANN, *Als »Schule der Nation« überfordert. Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur Erziehung des Soldaten in der Aufbauphase der Bundeswehr*, in: Karl-Heinz LUTZ et al. (ed.), *Reform – Reorganisation – Transformation. Zum Wandel in deutschen Streitkräften von den preußischen Heeresreformen bis zur Transformation der Bundeswehr*, Munich 2012, p. 345–368; Pierre ARNAUD, *Le militaire, l'écolier, le gymnaste. Naissance de l'éducation physique en France (1869–1889)*, Lyon 1991.
- 5 Christian KOLLER, *Die Fremdenlegion. Kolonialismus, Söldnertum, Gewalt 1831–1962*, Paderborn 2013; Douglas PORCH, *The French Foreign Legion. A Complete History*, New York 1991.
- 6 After the First World War, legionnaires of German origin were the backbone of the Legion in terms of numbers. See: Eckard MICHELS, »Sklaven der Marianne« – Die Fremdenlegion in den Deutsch-Französischen Beziehung vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg, in: *Francia* 23,3 (1996), p. 1–22; ID., Unerwünschte Freiwillige. Die Anwerbung Deutscher durch die Fremdenlegion in den französischen Internierungslagern 1939/40, in: *Francia* 25,3 (1998), p. 125–135.

eign Legion (régiments de marche de la Légion étrangère) and were celebrated in their home countries, be that in the U.S.A., the newly independent Czechoslovak Republic or Luxembourg, after the Allied victory.

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg has a longstanding, if little examined, history of providing soldiers to neighbouring (and other) countries⁷. Based on this case study, we will investigate how practices of military labour and migration continued and evolved in an age of accelerating state-building and nation-building processes. Commemorations of »fallen« soldiers provide us with a convenient entrance point, as they are intended to give consolation and meaning to death not only on an individual, but also a collective level. How were these commemorations framed ritually and materially? When and how was the death of mercenaries during their service re-signified as sacrifice for the fatherland, and ... for which fatherland?

In chronological order, we present military labour and the commemoration of its protagonists in two parts: before and after the First World War. Because of the great slaughter and destruction, the »war that will end war« (H. G. Wells) marks a turning point for the tribute to dead soldiers around the world.

For our analysis, the dyad *corporeal/sur-real* serves as our investigative principle and guiding idea. The dyadic relation of real dead bodies and their reflective, hence sur-real contemplation and imagination, has created different commemorative forms, causing an ongoing presence, or afterlife of a person *in this world*. On the corporeal side, bodily remains and their (decaying) material substance have always posed a challenge for society. There is a wide range of solutions, with pious burials and mere disposal at opposite ends of the spectrum. The nineteenth century witnessed a shift in the interrelation between corporeal and sur-real. On the one hand, the moral and legal right of the individual to his/her corpse was increasingly recognized. On the other hand, individual gravesites emerged as surfacing sites of memory for the bereaved. In the context of nation-building, the need for a common point of reference to heroic soldiers led to the production of a new hyperreal »body politic«. This is epitomized by the grave of the Unknown Soldier: a perfect, immutable and eternal body representing the whole polity. Too many »bodies natural«, to paraphrase Ernst Kantorowicz⁸, literally disappeared in the age of total warfare. Their sur-real ersatz transcended death and aimed to console their families as a means of national identity politics.

I. Transnational soldiering: Luxembourg as provider of military labour

National armies fighting national wars has been more an ideal than the reality of modern warfare. Military mobilization, particularly volunteer military service, continues to depend on foreign recruits even today⁹. Nowadays, the small army of the Grand Duchy, a founding member of NATO, counting around 1,100 military per-

7 Ulbe BOSMA, Thomas KOLNBERGER, Military Migrants. Luxembourgers in the Colonial Army of the Dutch East Indies, in: *Itinerario* 41,4 (2017), p. 555–580.

8 Ernst KANTOROWICZ, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton, NJ 1957.

9 Daniel MORAN, Arthur WALDRON (ed.), *The People in Arms. Military Myth and National Mobilization since the French Revolution*, Cambridge 2005; Erik-Jan ZÜRCHER (ed.), *Fighting for a Living. A Comparative History of Military Labour 1500–2000*, Amsterdam 2013, p. 267–290.

sonnel, is facing recruitment challenges and is inclined to be more open to foreign recruits. By contrast, in the past centuries there was insufficient demand for military labour in the Grand Duchy, and significant numbers of men left to serve abroad. The case of Luxembourgish legionnaires needs to be situated within the larger context of military migration. The Luxembourgish example is particularly instructive with respect to continuity and change in recruiting systems during the military »saddle period«, the transition to modernity (1750–1850) as defined by Koselleck¹⁰.

In 1781, a mercenary regiment of some 1,110 soldiers from the Duchy of Luxembourg was shipped to Ceylon by the commercial state-like V. O. C. (Dutch East India Company), which was nationalized in 1796 by the Batavian Republic. Most of these mercenaries came from the French-speaking part of the Duchy of Luxembourg, itself part of the Austrian Netherlands (*Belgium Austriacum*) until 1794/95¹¹. In the 1790s, revolutionary France welcomed (and paid) foreign fighters, grouped into legions, for instance of Liégeois, Belgian, and Dutch soldiers¹². In that context, a Luxembourgish contingent of over 200 anti-Habsburg »rebels« was redirected to side with the French against the forces of the First Coalition¹³.

In 1815, the Congress of Vienna fixed the territorial limits of the newly created Grand Duchy, containing about 213,000 inhabitants, which was to be ruled in a personal union by the King of the Netherlands (until 1890) and to join the German Confederation (until 1866)¹⁴. In terms of forced military service, young men were conscripted to serve in the Dutch militia (1815–1830). In case of war, they would have fought for the German Confederation. The conscription quota of the Dutch militia was, however, much lower than that of the French revolutionary and imperial *levées* (conscriptations) in the years 1798 to 1814, when thousands of men from the then Département des Forêts were recruited, including the so-called *Napoleons-dénger* (servants of Napoleon)¹⁵. Those who survived were able to use their profes-

10 Elisabeth DÉCULTOT, Daniel FULDA (ed.), *Sattelzeit. Historiographiegeschichtliche Revisionen*, Berlin 2016 (Hallesche Beiträge zur Europäischen Aufklärung, 52).

11 This regiment served together with the Württemberg and the Swiss de Meuron-contingents, see: Friedrich SAALFELD, *Allgemeine Kolonialgeschichte des neueren Europas*, Abtheilung 1, vol. 2, Göttingen 1812, p. 243.

12 In the eighteenth century, the French army was organized into »military nations« according to their (often presumed) origin: Swiss, German, Irish, Italian, and Hungarian. Recruits from Africa, Asia, and North America also filled the ranks. Napoleon and the restored Bourbon monarchy kept their foreign troops. See: Pierre MONTAGNON, *Histoire de la Légion de 1831 à nos jours*, Paris 1999, p. 6; Guy DEMPSEY, *Napoleon's Mercenaries*, London 2002.

13 Alphonse SPRUNCK, *Le Duché de Luxembourg et la révolution Brabançonne*, pt. 2, Luxembourg 1955 (Publications de la Section historique de l'Institut G.-D. de Luxembourg, LXXIV), p. 54–67; Peter ILLING, *The Brabant Revolution and the Western Question (1787–1790)*, in: *Dutch Crossing. Journal of Low Countries Studies* 33,1 (2009), p. 64–79.

14 Guy THEWES, 1815 – *Wie das Großherzogtum Luxemburg entstand*, in: Andreas FICKERS et al. (ed.), *Repression, Reform und Neuordnung im Zeitalter der Revolutionen. Die Folgen des Wiener Kongresses (Études Luxembourgeoises, 15)*, Berlin 2019, p. 77–101; Albert CALMES, *Naissance et débuts du Grand-Duché, 1814–1830. Le Grand-Duché de Luxembourg dans le Royaume des Pays-Bas*, Luxembourg 1971.

15 François DECKER, *La Conscription Militaire au Département des Forêts*, vol. 1–2, Luxembourg 1980. A comparative approach is currently being developed by the research project »Military History of the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg in a Transnational Perspective«, <https://history.uni.lu/military-history/>, accessed 11 July 2020.

sional experience later in other armies, as can be seen from lists kept in the National Archives of Luxembourg¹⁶. These lists show that »soldiering« – the job of being a soldier either as a volunteer or a mercenary in the service of the Grand Duchy, a foreign nation or monarch – was a professional option for hundreds of male Luxembourgers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Leaving aside the aforementioned conscriptions, Luxembourgers served in the following army units: the Dutch West Indian Army (West Indisch Leger), Cleerens Rifle Corps (Korps Jagers van Cleerens, 1831–39)¹⁷, Luxembourg Rifle Corps (Corps des Chasseurs Luxembourgeois), Corps of Gendarmes and Volunteers (Corps des Gendarmes et Volontaires)¹⁸, the French army and Foreign Legion, the Belgian army, the Prussian army, the Austrian army, the Papal Zouaves (1860–70)¹⁹, the British German Legion and the British Swiss Legion (1855–56)²⁰.

Transnational biographies, like that of Nicolas Gustave Coster, born in 1821 in Vianden, could encompass various military employers (and loyalties). He joined the newly formed Belgian army during the Revolution of 1830–39, at the age of sixteen, and was honourably discharged as sergeant in 1842. He then served with the Luxembourg Rifles (1843–48) as a pardoned »insurgent«. Later he joined the French Foreign Legion for a one-time contract of five years (1853–58) and fought in the Crimean War. In 1858, he enrolled in the KNIL and served the very Kingdom of the Netherlands that he had once fought. He rose in their military ranks, became »petty officer«, and died overseas in Java in 1873²¹.

The KNIL, along with its predecessors, was the largest employer of military labour of Luxembourgish origin during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries²². Compared to the substantial numbers of recruits from Germany, Belgium, Switzer-

16 Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux), Ministère des Affaires étrangères (1732–1998), Service militaire à l'étranger (1879–1939): AE 00687, 02262-76, 02284, 03466-68, 03698.

17 Jean Baptiste Cleerens (1785–1850) formed the »Korps Jagers van Cleerens« in 1831 during the Belgian Revolution. Later, he was adjutant of the Governor-General of the East Indies and Governor of the Moluccas. The Korps was moved to Java and became the 9th Infantry Battalion of the KNIL. Thomas KOLNBERGER, Luxemburger Söldner in Niederländisch-Indien während des »langen 19. Jahrhunderts«. Ein Quellenbericht und seine statistische Auswertung im kolonialen Kontext, in: Id. (ed.), August Kohl. Ein Luxemburger Söldner im Indonesien des 19. Jahrhunderts, Mersch 2015, p. 182–217.

18 Pierre CHRISNACH, Geschichte der bewaffneten Macht des Luxemburger Landes von den frühesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart, Grevenmacher 1912; Thomas KOLNBERGER, Benoît NIEDERKORN (ed.), Militärgeschichte Luxemburgs. Grundzüge einer transnationalen Entwicklung von Militär, Krieg und Gesellschaft. Histoire militaire du Luxembourg. Principales caractéristiques d'un développement transnational de l'armée, de la guerre et de la société, Mersch 2022.

19 A volunteer force of light infantry formed in defence of the Papal States against Garibaldi's troops during the last wars of Italian unification (1866–70), see: Georges HELLINGHAUSEN, Luxemburger in den päpstlichen Armeen, in: Nos cahiers – Lëtzebuurger Zäitschrëft fir Kultur 27,2 (2006), p. 69–111; Charles A. COULOMBE, The Pope's Legion. The Multinational Fighting Force that Defended the Vatican, Basingstoke 2008.

20 From 1854–56, the British recruited foreign mercenary troops for the Crimean War (1853–56), see: C. C. BAYLEY, Mercenaries for the Crimea. The German, Swiss and Italian Legions in British Service 1854–1856, Montreal 1977.

21 Jean Paul HOFFMANN, Sieben Viandener in der Königlich-Niederländisch-Indischen Kolonialarmee, in: Veiner Geschichtsfrënn 32 (2014), p. 25–28.

22 Until 1836, the Nederlandsch Oost-Indisch Leger.

land and France – about 150,000 soldiers transferred in total to insular Southeast Asia between 1814 and 1914 – the 1,075 men originating from the Grand Duchy constituted a tiny minority. For a small state, however, this figure represents a significant share of young men enlisted in the Dutch colonial army. The Grand Duchy thus served as a recruitment pool for the military interests of the Dutch crown both overseas²³ and on the continent²⁴. By comparison, only around 150 Luxembourgers enrolled in the French Foreign Legion between 1831 and 1914²⁵.

»The extent and duration of [the use of foreign soldiers] clearly indicates that they were far more than a temporary expedient adopted solely until states acquired the capacity to organize forces from their own inhabitants. Rather than being a hindrance to state formation, they were integral to that process«, Peter Wilson convincingly declares²⁶. The state does not need a nation to make war²⁷. However, in order to develop a national community, a »nationalization« of the armed forces became necessary – or, at least, a clear separation and division of labour. It is not a coincidence that France and the Netherlands undertook this step at the same time. In 1830, the old colonial army of the States General of the Netherlands was reorganised to meet new military challenges in the East Indies, today's Indonesia. The KNIL recruited predominantly foreigners. The French created the Légion étrangère in 1831, recruiting exclusively foreign soldiers. Both legions became major employers of military labour from Luxembourg, used for colonial enterprise. The subsequent chapters will examine how they treated the soldiers who died during their service, be it in battle or by succumbing to disease.

II. Funeral provisions of the French Foreign Legion before 1914

Since its establishment to fight outside mainland France, rooted in the conquest of Algeria (1830–57), the Legion has been the only branch of the French military whose members do not swear allegiance to France, but to the corps itself: the Latin motto of the unit is *Legio Patria Nostra* (»The Legion is our Homeland«). The Legion functions as a »total institution«, in the sense described by Erving Goffman: »a place of

23 BOSMA, KOLNBERGER, *Military Migrants* (as in n. 7).

24 HERMANUS AMERSFOORT, *The Nineteenth Century*, in: ID., P. H. KAMPHUIS (ed.), *Je maintiendrai. A Concise History of the Dutch Army, 1568–1940*, The Hague 1995, p. 47–72; ID., *The End of an Enterprise. The Swiss Regiments in the Royal Dutch Army (1814–1829)*, in: Sébastien RIAL (ed.), *De Nimègue à Java. Les soldats suisses au service de la Hollande XVII^e–XX^e siècles*, Morges 2014, p. 189–202; ID., *The Dutch Army in Transition. From All-Volunteer Force to Cadre-Militia Army, 1795–1830*, in: ZÜRCHER, *Fighting for a Living* (as in n. 9), p. 447–477.

25 Sébastien VECCHIATO, *Faire son service militaire à l'étranger, une alternative à la migration économique? Exemple à travers des Luxembourgeois ayant effectué leur service militaire à la Légion étrangère (1831–1914)*, unpublished master's thesis, University of Luxembourg 2019; ID., Thomas KOLNBERGER, *Entre »dette du sang« et »military labour migration«: les Luxembourgeois engagés dans la Légion étrangère (1831–1914)*, in: *Revue Historique des Armées* 302 (2021), p. 41–49.

26 Peter H. WILSON, *Foreign Military Labour in Europe's Transition to Modernity*, in: *European Review of History/Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 27/2 (2020), p. 12–32.

27 See Charles Tilly's dictum: »War made the state and the state made war«, Charles TILLY, *Reflections on the History of European State-Making*, in: ID. (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, Princeton, NJ 1975, p. 3–83, p. 42.

residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life²⁸. The motto »Honneur et Fidélité« has been embroidered onto the regimental colours of the Foreign Legion since 1844; it was taken over from the Swiss regiments traditionally at the service of the French king²⁹. At the same time, veneration of the dead and care for the wounded serve as a cruel reminder of the risks entailed by the performance of duty. As a military parallel society and temporary »ersatz-nation«, the Legion has elaborated a specific death cult, which has both the above-mentioned corporeal (body-centred, individual) and sur-real (transcendent, communal) dimensions. The two dimensions clearly overlap, and cannot be rigidly delimited. In this section, we will focus on the corporeal aspects of funeral provisions.

Places and forms of burial

According to Sébastien Vecchiato's calculations, 33 of the 150 Luxembourgers who had enlisted in the French Foreign Legion before the outbreak of the First World War died during their service time³⁰. This number may only represent 0.45 percent of the Legion's total losses in the same period³¹, but it does mean that 22 percent of the Luxembourg legionnaires lost their lives. By comparison, 36.1 percent of Luxembourgers enrolled in the KNIL before 1914 died in service³². The places of death of the Luxembourgish legionnaires reflect the Legion's history and global operational area. Most had been deployed in Indochina and in Algeria (above all in Sidi Bel Abbès, the Legion's HQ or *Maison mère*³³, and in Mascara/Mouaskar). The expedition to Tonkin (Northern Vietnam, 1883–86) and the Sino-French War (1884–85) caused the highest number of casualties for the Legion (around 1,900) and its Luxembourgish members. The main reason, besides the fierce combat, was the (sub)tropical conditions: 14 of 19 Luxembourgers shipped overseas died. By contrast, only seven out of 106 lost their lives in the more favourable latitudes of Northern Africa³⁴. Vecchiato found their traces in the archives of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs (for instance when family members inquired about their whereabouts) or in the French military archives at Vincennes (military rolls).

Burial rituals and potential spatial markers depended on the circumstances of the legionnaires' death. There were for instance two burials at sea, which left no material trace. If, however, the legionnaires died in a garrison town, military base or military

28 Classical definition by Erving GOFFMAN, *Asylums. Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, New York 1961, p. 11.

29 Alain-Jacques TORNARE, *Le régiment suisse de Diesbach au service du Roi face à la Révolution dans le Nord/Pas-de-Calais (1789–1792)*, in: *Revue du Nord* 71 (1989), n° 282–283, p. 739–756.

30 VECCHIATO, *Faire son service* (as in n. 25), along with additional information provided by this author.

31 Jean BRUNON, Georges-R. MANUE, Pierre CARLES, *Le Livre d'or de la Légion étrangère (1831–1976)*, Paris 1976, p. 379.

32 KOLNBERGER, *Luxemburger Söldner* (as in n. 17), p. 182–217.

33 Jean MICHON, *Sidi-bel-Abbès. Capitale légionnaire*, in: *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 237,1 (2010), p. 25–38.

34 Compare with three out of four during the intervention in Bénin (Second Franco-Dahomean War, 1892–94) and the sole one in Madagascar (Second Madagascar Expedition, 1894–95).

hospital, they were buried on the institution-owned burial grounds or in a separate section of the civil cemetery, the so-called *carré militaire*. This was the case of a Luxembourgier buried in Toulon, France; one in Constantinople, where he was stationed during the Crimean War of 1853–56; one in Bắc Giang (1888, Tonkin, French Indochina); and three in Algeria (one each in Sidi Bel Abbès, Algiers, and Mostaganem). However, during campaigns, long-distance patrols and reconnaissance missions, the dead were mostly buried en route. If they died in battle, usually mass graves awaited them. When the military situation permitted, the practice of comrades caring for their dead fellow soldiers prevailed. Respect was paid as it was hoped one would be shown respect oneself. This deferential attitude was thus a rather pragmatic one³⁵. In the Foreign Legion as in other armed forces, neither pious treatment nor material equality of the tomb and eternal grave rights were guaranteed³⁶. A rare pictorial example is included in an English account of the First Carlist War (1833–39). In this series of civil wars, the French government supported Queen Isabella II by sending in the Foreign Legion. The coloured drawing, made by an officer attached to Queen Isabella's staff (Fig. 1), depicts a burial scene following a battle, where three dead legionnaires are dragged into a pit by their comrades (recognizable by their uniforms). The dead men had been previously undressed and their clothes apparently sold to a civilian, who stands on the left, while on the right a soldier sits on a stone and smokes, impassive. In the background, other corpses lay around and another hole is being dug.

The same war was also described by a legionnaire who was previously enrolled in the Prussian army and stationed in the federal fortress of Luxembourg City. Carl Orphal's autobiographical account perfectly illustrates transnational soldiering, or what can be considered a military »Grand Tour«³⁷. Orphal relates his own hardships in the face of military life and death in great detail, but dedicates only two grim notes to burials. First, he describes how he witnessed medical staff dragging the deceased out of their deathbeds and dropping their mortal remains in a pit behind the field hospital³⁸. Second, on his way home over the Pyrenees, »where we often had to fight the Carlists as well as deprivation and misery«, he noticed that the burial mounds of his comrades had already been eroded by time: »No monument has been built there for the foreigners fallen for the Spanish government, but those burial grounds will certainly be pointed out to travellers [...] by their mountain guides³⁹.« Although he

35 Locals, motivated by piety or disdain, could be involved, granting or denying access to churchyards: see, for an early example of a multi-national/religious occupation force, Jacques HANTRAY, *Les cosaques aux Champs-Élysées. L'occupation de la France après la chute de Napoléon*, Paris 2005, p. 250.

36 André CORVISIER, *La mort du soldat depuis la fin du Moyen Âge*, in: *Revue Historique* 254,1 (1975), no. 515, p. 3–30.

37 Carl ORPHAL, *Militärische Wanderungen eines preußischen Ulanenunterofficiers aus dem Pfaffenthal zu Luxemburg nach Spanien, oder Erinnerungen an meine Militärdienstzeit in Sachsen, Preußen, Belgien, Algerien und Spanien, mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die französische Fremdenlegion und den spanischen Bürgerkrieg*, Gotha 1846.

38 *Ibid.* p. 75; A similar scene was witnessed by the Luxembourgier August Kohl, who had joined the KNIL, see KOLNBERGER, August Kohl (as in n. 17), p. 142–148.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

is dismayed by the little respect shown to dead soldiers on these occasions, the passages are kept factual and not designed to elicit pathos.

This type of disposal – of regular soldiers as of *legionnaires* – was common practice on the battlefield. Even as late as 1871, mass graves of *legionnaires* were discussed merely in terms of clearance, not with regard to dignity in death⁴⁰.

By contrast, when death occurred in garrisons, it was treated quite differently. Both the French garrison towns of the regular »*Armée d’Afrique*«⁴¹ and the Foreign Legion usually maintained their own burial places or used a section separated from the civil sector (*carré militaire*). These soldiers’ graves were highly individualistic, inspired by examples from metropolitan France – not yet as »uniform« as is common today in military cemeteries. A cemetery entrance in Morocco, shown on a contemporary postcard (Fig. 2), displays typical (non-religious) sepulchral symbols of the era, with pillars featuring weeping willow-branches and broken columns. In contrast to times of war and while out on a campaign, the garrisoned soldiers were able to provide for a more elaborate funeral and grave monument.

Neither the French nor other countries showed any interest in repatriating *legionnaires’* remains in the nineteenth century. In a context of intensified nation-building, however, measures were taken to reinforce both sentiments of belonging to the Legion as Fatherland and recognition of *legionnaires’* sacrifice for France.

In the middle of an international crisis about the fate of Morocco, the Foreign Legion posted the paradigmatic example of two *legionnaires*, who were killed in a border skirmish by »*hordes marocaines de la frontière*«⁴². These military »martyrs« did not only serve for community-building: their graves were erected in a border area at time of (political and spiritual) entanglement and mediation (Fig. 3). Graves and cemeteries have been used to stake territorial claims since Antiquity; like the tombs of marabouts from the time of Islamic expansion, which the French colonizers encountered in the Maghreb⁴³. In the case of the *legionnaires* Laubrot and As[s]mus, the grave monument served not only as political place markers to assert French rights to contested ground, but also – through the use of a photograph of the site as a postcard – to literally send these claims around the world.

The »transient nation« of the French Foreign Legion had, by this time, already created its own tradition of military hagiography. To understand this tradition, it must be situated in the larger context of spiritual protection offered by military saints.

40 Thomas KOLNBERGER, Gesonderte Ruhestätten für besondere Tote: Soldatengräber und Garnisonsfriedhöfe unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Entwicklung in Luxemburg, in: Benedikt LOEW et al. (ed.), *Intra muros. Infrastruktur und Lebensalltag in Festungen. Einrichtungen der Fürsorge, Saarlouis 2020 (Festungs-Forum Saarlouis 4)*, p. 215–240.

41 »*Armée d’Afrique*« was a commonly, albeit unofficial term for troops of the French regular army usually stationed and recruited in the Maghreb (»*Afrique française du Nord*«, 1830–1962).

42 Zohra MALDJI-SALAH, *Itinéraire d’une Frangérienne*, Paris 2000, p. 171–172 – an account of past monuments in and around the city of Nemours (now Ghazaouet). See also: Francis LLABADOR, *Le Tragique Épisode du combat de Bab-el-Assa (27 novembre 1907)*, Paris 1938.

43 Edmond DOUTTE, *Notes sur l’Islâm maghrabin [sic] – Les Marabouts (extrait de la Revue de l’Histoire des Religions, tomes XL et XLI)*, Paris 1900. On the placing of dead soldiers in border regions, compare: Gerald STEINACHER, *Die Toten als Grenzwächter der Nation. Die Beinhäuser des italienischen Faschismus in Südtirol*, in: Zibaldone. Zeitschrift für italienische Kultur der Gegenwart 49 (2010), p. 37–45.

Beyond the body: Captain Danjou as secular »patron saint« of the Legion

Up to the present day, many European nations are placed under the protection of martial patron saints. St. George (a knight and dragon-slayer) is venerated in England; St. James the Great became Santiago Matamoros, the »moor-slayer« of the Spanish Reconquista. The archangel St. Michael, in his role as spiritual warrior and leader of the Army of God in their triumph over the powers of hell, became the patron of all Germans after the Battle of Lechfeld, won against the Hungarians in 955 AD. St. Martin of Tours left his post in the Roman army to become a »soldier of Christ« and was revered, together with armour-clad Joan of Arc, as a republican saint in nineteenth- and twentieth-century France⁴⁴. Marianne, the symbol of the Republic, was also increasingly portrayed in full armour, facing her ironclad warrior-sisters Germania, Britannia or Austria⁴⁵. These patriotic allegories were spearheaded by Hollandia – a symbolic figurehead of the Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648) and substitute for the patron saints, whom the Calvinists had chased out. In the nineteenth century, the Dutch Maiden became a symbolic means to assert sovereignty and the unity of the nation-state beyond any religious, social or political cleavages⁴⁶.

Akin to these national figures but much less of an allegory, Captain Danjou may be seen as the secular patron saint of the Foreign Legion. Danjou and his legendary detachment of 62 legionnaires made their last stand at the »bataille de Camerone« on 30 April 1863 – where they were vastly outnumbered. Their action was hailed as an exemplary act of bravery during the second French intervention in Mexico (1861–1867), even though – or in compensation for the fact that – this battle at Camerón de Tejada (state of Veracruz) did not lead to victory. In 1863, Emperor Napoleon III acknowledged Danjou's »sacrifice suprême à Camerone«⁴⁷, and over the next decades, the cult developed in exclusive connection with the Legion. Especially after the humiliating defeat of 1870/71 and in times of rekindled national pride and revanchism⁴⁸, »l'esprit de Camerone« grew and served as a reminder that even mercenaries gave their lives selflessly for France.

Since 1906, each year on April 30 the legionnaires have celebrated the anniversary of the battle and its secular saints with military parades – first at their headquarters in Algeria, later in France. Similar to the procession of relics in Roman Catholic »vernacular« local traditions, the military ceremony includes a parade, led by the Legion's Pioneers, a special unit with distinctive uniforms and attributes. The Pioneers

44 Brian BRENNAN, The Revival of the Cult of Martin of Tours in the Third Republic, in: Church History 66/3 (1997), p. 489–501; Loi instituant une fête nationale de Jeanne d'Arc, fête du patriotisme, in: Journal officiel de la République française, 14 July 1920, no. 191, p. 10018.

45 For Marianne, see the trilogy by Maurice AGULHON, Marianne au combat. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1789 à 1880, Paris 1979; ID., Marianne au pouvoir. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1880 à 1914, Paris 1989; ID., Les métamorphoses de Marianne. L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1914 à nos jours, Paris 2001.

46 Hollandia also flew the first tricolour as a symbol of republicanism, liberty or revolution. See: Hubert DE VRIES, Wapens van de Nederlanden: De historische ontwikkeling van de heraldische symbolen van Nederland, België, hun provincies en Luxemburg, Amsterdam 1995.

47 Choice of words: BRUNON, MANUE, CARLES, Le Livre d'or (as in n. 31), p. 99.

48 Bertrand JOLY, La France et la Revanche (1871–1914), in: Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine 46,2 (1999), p. 325–347.

act as guardians of the central »relic«: the Captain's wooden prosthetic hand, which represents the only remains (Lat. *reliquia*) of this »martyr«. Technically speaking, it is only a physical and not a corporeal secondary relic – only an imitation of a body part. The ceremony itself is evocative of the solemnly peripatetic procession of Christian relics as *pia exercitia* (pious exercise) seeking to tie the patron saint to a certain community and a certain place⁴⁹. This service represents not only the re-enactment of a military funeral but also that of a solemn *translatio* (Latin for the displacement of a relic). This offers a good illustration of Wolfgang Eßbach's concept of »floating sacralization« (*flottierende Sakralisierung*), whereby sacredness – since the experience of revolutionary enthusiasm – is not limited to concepts of divinity but can include the arts, the people or the nation⁵⁰. In dying for a sacred cause (the Legion and France), Danjou himself became a sort of saint or martyr. There was no military strategic gain to his »sacrifice« and that of his men, but their last stand was given meaning and allowed to turn a military defeat into a moral victory.

In 1962, when the Legion had to leave Algeria for its new headquarters in France, its most precious relics travelled ahead as the avant-garde: the wooden hand of Danjou (who can be considered as a »martyr and military saint«), as well as the mortal remains of General Rollet (renowned as the »Father of the Legion«), Legion Officer and Danish Prince Count Aage of Rosenborg (the »celebrity member«), and of the legionnaires William Moll (an American benefactor – »the money«) and Heinz Zimmermann, the last casualty in Algeria (the »young blood«) were walked down the *voie sacrée*⁵¹ in Sidi Bel Abbès on the way to Aubagne, on the opposite coast of the Mediterranean. In this transfer, their gifts affirmed the time-honoured tradition and historical continuity, or – in other words – the re-generation of the community of the French Foreign Legion over their dead bodies⁵².

At the same time, a colossal monument was also transferred to Aubagne (Fig. 4). It had originally been inaugurated on 30 April 1931 – that is, on the anniversary of Danjou's death – in Sidi Bel Abbès. In its own way, the symbolic language follows the example of hundreds of war memorials that mushroomed not only in mainland France but also in its colonies during the interwar period⁵³. A stylized sarcophagus displaying lion heads, a symbol of power and strength, ornamented with acanthus

49 For »quêtes itinérantes«, see: Arnold ANGENENDT, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart*, Munich 1994; Robert BARTLETT, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation*, Princeton, NJ 2013.

50 Wolfgang ESSBACH, *Welche Religionsbegriffe eignen sich zur Analyse sakraler Dimensionen des Heroischen?* in: Felix HEINZER et al. (ed.), *Sakralität und Heldentum*, Baden-Baden 2017, p. 19–34, here p. 25–26.

51 Named after the vital supply route to Verdun during the archetypical battle in 1916.

52 The »intergenerational reproduction of a collective«, see: Egon FLAIG, *Symbolischer Tausch und heldischer Tod*, in: *Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken* 63 (2009), no. 724/725, p. 843–848 (special issue: *Heldengedenken. Über das heroische Phantasma*).

53 Mechthild GILZMER, »A nos morts«. *Wandlungen im Totenkult vom 19. Jahrhundert bis heute*, in: Jörg ECHTERNKAMP, Manfred HETTLING (ed.), *Gefallenengedenken im globalen Vergleich* (as in n. 3), p. 175–198; Antoine PROST, *Les monuments aux morts. Culte républicain? Culte civique? Culte patriotique?*, in: Pierre NORA (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1: *La République*, Paris 1984, p. 195–228.

and laurel garlands (signifying »Glory & Honour«, resurrection and immortality) serves as the (second) podium for a giant globe, which rests on a bed of palm branches: the Christian martyr's palm, a symbol of triumph and peace, as well as the victory of the spirit over the flesh. Space and time are defined by the areas of operation and »pacification« which constitute the Legion's history, mapped on the globe. The glorious past is represented by four oversized figures, larger-than-life statues of legionnaires, whose varied combat gear represents various periods in the Legion's history: the conquest of Algeria, 1830–40; the Second Empire, 1852–70; the Third Republic and the colonial wars until the 1930s; and finally, a volunteer in the uniform of the RMLE, the Régiment de marche de la Légion étrangère, represents the Great War. They stand watch on each corner and guard over the eternal rest of their past, present and future comrades. The spatiotemporality of this cenotaph is customized to the Legion, and thus much more extended in time than comparable monuments (e. g. the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London). The memorial was financed exclusively by donations from the Legion's personnel. Since its re-inauguration on 30 April 1963, this cenotaph has been the pivotal point for the annual procession in honour of Danjou and his men around the *cour d'honneur* of the barracks on the same date ever since⁵⁴.

The new HQ built in Aubagne (Bouches-du-Rhône) includes a »crypt«, which contains Danjou's reliquary and the other military memorabilia. In this vault, the relic is surrounded by the names of the fallen commissioned officers of the Legion, written in golden letters on the adjacent walls. This hall forms today the final chamber of the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Foreign Legion, which reopened in 1966. The museum had been founded in 1934 in the Algerian headquarters⁵⁵, based on collections of former regimental »salles d'honneur«: treasury chambers holding trophies, memorabilia and curiosities. When we visited the museum in Aubagne in December 2019, there was an additional, more playful, commemoration of Camerón at the entrance of the building: a large »diorama« made entirely out of LEGO® pieces re-enacting the Battle of 1863, by Sylvain Delbès. It contrasts with the very solemn »crossover« of religious and military elements in what can be described as a secular memorial chapel. In a republican, *laïciste* setting, Danjou eclipsed the Legion's traditional patron saint, St. Anthony the Great. The latter's »self-abnegation, humility, courage, balance and faith« are nonetheless still seen as an ideal that legionnaires should aspire to today⁵⁶.

Catholic traditions – even in a state as attached to secularism as France – may explain the cultivation of a (military) nation with a quasi-religious but non-denomina-

54 Jean-Louis RICCIOLI, Marie-Odile GIRAUD, Une protection hors du commun. Le monument aux morts de la Légion Étrangère du quartier Viénot d'Aubagne et sa »voie sacrée«, Patrimoine(s) en Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (Lettre d'information) – Direction régionale des affaires culturelles/Met 50, September 2019, p. 1–24, http://www.infos-patrimoinespaca.org/index.php?num_livre2=50#fragment-2, accessed 10 November 2019.

55 See: <https://www.legion-etrangere.com/mdl/page.php?id=473&titre=Qu-est-ce-qui-se-cache-derriere-l-acronyme-SAMLE>, accessed 5 June 2020.

56 Mot du redac'chef, in: Magazine Képi Blanc mag'. La Vie de la Légion étrangère 762 (Feb. 2014), https://www.kbmagazine.com/mots-du-redacchef-historise-mot-du-redacchef-762-pxl-213_13_73.html, accessed 5 June 2020.

tional patron saint and ritual⁵⁷. This contrasts very strikingly with the practice and tradition of another colonial force: the abovementioned Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL). The sur-real incorporation of the legionnaires into the mystical body of the Foreign Legion differs from the more pragmatic methods of the KNIL in ensuring loyalty to the Dutch Crown. The KNIL offered far better remuneration including pensions, and functioned less as a »total institution« than the Foreign Legion. Female companionship in the barracks (*concubinage*) was tolerated, and there were fewer (reported) physical punishments and informal disciplinary actions by peers. KNIL soldiers such as the Luxembourger August Kohl had to swear allegiance to the Dutch flag⁵⁸, but there was no elaborate heroic death cult in any way comparable to the French tradition⁵⁹.

Both the Dutch and the French colonial forces were a multinational crowd (except for the commissioned officers). Neither the KNIL nor the *Légion étrangère* were part of the regular army organization in their respective states. Both had a bad reputation for accepting what in a different context has been called »the scum of every country, the refuse of mankind«⁶⁰. This perception changed, however, in the course of the First World War – or, at least, for that period.

III. Foreign Legionnaires in the First World War

With the declaration of war in August 1914, the French government made a call for foreigners residing in France to support the Republic as their »adopted« fatherland⁶¹. Formally, these volunteers had to enlist in the Foreign Legion and not in the regular French Army as *engagés volontaires pour la durée de la guerre* (*E.V.D.G.*). Due to heavy losses at the beginning of the war, what were originally four marching regiments were merged into one, the RMLE (*Régiment de marche de la Légion étrangère*), on 11 November 1915. Altogether around 43,000 foreign volunteers joined France's

57 An ecumenical exception is Saint Barbara, the patron saint of military branches dealing with explosives and construction work, i.e. artillery, tunnel construction, military engineering etc.

58 Ulbe BOSMA, Remco RABEN, Being »Dutch« in the Indies. A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500–1920, Athens, OH 2008; Jaap A. DE MOOR, The recruitment of Indonesian soldiers for the Dutch Colonial Army, c. 1700–1950, in: David KILLIGRAY, David OMISSI (ed.), *Guardians of Empire. The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c. 1700–1964*, Manchester 1999, p. 53–69.

59 To our knowledge, there is, outside military cemeteries, only one monument explicitly dedicated to KNIL soldiers who served before 1914: a very modest memorial in Arnhem, erected in 1990 in the garden of the home for disabled KNIL soldiers (*Koloniaal Militair Invalidenhuis*), <https://www.defensie.nl/onderwerpen/bronbeek>, accessed 10 November 2019.

60 Peter WAY, »The Scum of Every Country, the Refuse of Mankind«. Recruiting the British Army in the Eighteenth Century, in: ZÜRCHER, *Fighting for a Living* (as in n. 9), p. 292–329.

61 Décret du 3 août 1914 relatif aux engagements dans les régiments étrangers pour la durée de la guerre, in: *Journal officiel de la République française* du 8 août 1914. *Bulletin des lois de la République française* 144, 1914, no. 7434, p. 2256; see the special issue: *Les étrangers dans l'armée française après 1870*, in: *Revue historique des armées* 265 (2011); Philippe GUYOT, *D'un régiment de marche de la Légion étrangère (RLE) à l'autre, répétition ou évolution de l'histoire?*, in: *Revue historique des armées* 26 (2011), p. 24–34; Christian KÖLLER, *Recruiting Policies and Recruitment Experiences in the French Foreign Legion*, in: Nir ARIELLE, Bruce COLLINS (ed.), *Transnational Soldiers, Foreign Military Enlistment in the Modern Era*, Houndsmills 2013, p. 87–104.

military ranks during the war. Among 51 nationalities, both the number of volunteering Luxembourgers and their death toll were disproportionally high. According to Joé Bellion, only 332 of 1,048 Luxembourgish Legion soldiers survived the war; 382 were killed in action, and the fate of the remaining 333 is unknown⁶². Referring to the Legion's *Livre d'or*, a »Golden book« of remembrance, 4,702 legionnaires lost their lives. Hard figures on the death toll are difficult to obtain, especially in relation to Luxembourgers (as explained below). The numbers provided by secondary literature are sometimes contradictory. We regard the following overview as plausible.

Death toll 1831–1914	Foreign Legion (of total number of individuals)	Luxembourgers (of total number of individuals)
	7,308 ^(a)	33 (out of 150) ^(b)
Death toll 1914–1918	Foreign Legion (including RMLE volunteers)	Luxembourgers (of total number of individuals)
	5,316 ^(c)	382 (out of 1,048) ^(d)

Table 1. Death tolls of Foreign Legion soldiers, notably Luxembourgers before and during the First World War, 1831–1914, 1914–1918.

Sources: (a) 166 commissioned officers, 549 non-commissioned officers, 6,593 soldiers, for a total of 7,308 men between 1831 and 1914. BRUNON et al., *Livre d'or* (as in n. 31), p. 379. (b) VECCHIATO, *Faire son service* (as in n. 25). (c) Christian KOLLER, *Légion étrangère*, in: Ute DANIEL et al. (ed.), 1914–1918 (online). *International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, Berlin, 4 March 2019, DOI: 10.15463/ie1418.11345 (accessed 5 June 2020). Very few official numbers are given by the Legion itself; some calculations presented in historical writing and memoirs are contradictory: The *Livre d'or* lists 160 commissioned officers, 472 non-commissioned officers, and 4,702 soldiers (5,334 in total): BRUNON et al., *Livre d'or* (as in n. 31), p. 379. See also Guy PEDROCINE, *L'armée française et la Grande Guerre*, in: ID. (ed.), *Histoire militaire de la France*, vol. 3: 1871–1914, Paris 1992, p. 161–201. (d) BELLION, *Im Grande Guerre* (as in n. 62).

Before we explore what happened to their corporeal remains, and how they were commemorated in different national or transnational sur-real settings, we propose to first sketch a collective portrait of the Luxembourg-born legionnaires who fought in the First World War, and map the spatial information that we have.

The Luxembourg volunteers of the Great War (1914–18)

The following maps are based on information retrieved from a cross-referencing of two databases covering France's ten National Memorials (*hauts lieux de la mémoire nationale*) and 274 (military) necropolises around the world, which list 1.3 million dead from the Great War posthumously honoured with the distinction »Mort pour la France«. The resulting sample includes only names with sufficient information⁶³. It

62 Joé BELLION, *Im Grande Guerre auf Seiten Frankreichs? Luxemburger in der französischen Armee während des Ersten Weltkrieges*, in: Thomas KOLNBERGER et al. (ed.), *Krieg in der industrialisierten Welt*, Vienna 2017, p. 451–470.

63 MEMORIALGENWEB, *Relevés de monuments aux morts, soldats et victimes civiles, français et étrangers, tués ou disparus par faits de guerre, morts en déportation, »Morts pour la France«*, accessed 11 November 2019, <http://www.memorialgenweb.org/index.php>. MINISTÈRE DES ARMÉES/SERVICES D'ARCHIVES DU MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE, *Mémoire des Hommes, fiches des soldats/*

is smaller than Joé Bellion's figure of 382, which is derived from lists compiled after the war by veterans' associations seeking to maximize figures and tending to include, for instance, legionnaires who were of Luxembourgish descent but who were born in France, or who had moved to Luxembourg after the war.

The statistical findings for the diaspora of killed and perished Luxembourgers in and for France during the First World War are as follows:

Total number of dead born in the Grand Duchy, according to their unit or service	274
»Legionnaire«	168
»Zouave« ⁶⁴	4
»regular soldier«	86
»garde des voies de communication« ⁶⁵	1
»civilian victim«	7
»German soldier« ⁶⁶ (see explanation below)	8

Table 2. Luxembourg-born soldiers and civilians who lost their lives during the First World War as recorded by French sources (see n. 63).

It is uncertain how many of these 274 Luxembourg-born men were actually Luxembourgish citizens. In general, possible or pending naturalization procedures force us to leave the formal question of nationality and belonging of all these soldiers open, as the example of Jean Alff (1879–1916) shows. Born in Clervaux in the Grand Duchy, Jean Alff was granted the status »Mort pour la France«. He had been convicted on minor criminal charges in Luxembourg and joined the Legion before the outbreak of the Great War⁶⁷. Although he is listed in the *Livre d'or* of Luxembourgish legionnaires who served in the First World War, it indicates that he served in a regular French artillery battalion, which he could only have joined if he had acquired French citizenship. He might have been naturalized after having resided (with the Legion) in Algeria for three years⁶⁸, or he could have benefited from the law of 5 August 1914,

militaires décédés (records of deceased soldiers), <https://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/fr/>, accessed 11 November 2019.

64 Light infantry regiments of the regular French Army in North Africa (1830–1962).

65 GVC: armed servicemen guarding roads and railway networks during the First World War.

66 The Luxembourgers listed as »German soldiers« are among the names of the Mosellans listed in the Archives Départementales de la Moselle, Registres matricules militaires, 1893–1921), <http://www.archives57.com/index.php/recherches/archives-en-ligne>, accessed 11 November 2019.

67 MINISTÈRE DES ARMÉES/SERVICES D'ARCHIVES DU MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE, *Mémoire des Hommes, fiches des soldats/militaires décédés* (records of deceased soldiers); ANON., *Historique du 45^e régiment d'artillerie de campagne. Campagne 1914–1918*, Paris 1920; ANLux, AE-02267, *Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Maison-mère (1732–1998), Services militaires à l'étranger (1879–1919), Légion étrangère de France: enrôlement de jeunes Luxembourgeois, demandes en libération (1900–1919)*, extrait du casier judiciaire de Jean Alff, 26 August 1902.

68 Sénatus-consulte du 14 juillet 1865, sur l'état des personnes et la naturalisation en Algérie (art. 3), in: *Bulletin officiel du Gouvernement général de l'Algérie* no. 151 (1865).

which gave foreigners who enlisted under the French flag for the duration of the war the opportunity to gain French citizenship without any condition of residence⁶⁹. Interestingly, Alff's battalion had never deployed outside the Western Front, but Alff may have temporarily been detached to another regiment when he was killed in action during the Gallipoli campaign in the Dardanelles.

This case highlights how difficult it is to identify Luxembourgers who volunteered to fight for France. The total number of enlisted legionnaires, however, provides a fairly good estimate of this group of recruits, because foreigners who wanted to fight for France could only enlist in the units of the French Foreign Legion. The French Zouaves also recruited – in addition to French settlers in Algeria and Tunisia undertaking their compulsory military service – French-speaking war deserters or prisoners of war from German Alsace and Lorraine (Reichsland Elsaß-Lothringen, 1871–1918), who wanted to fight on the French side. Four of them were also Luxembourg-born.

The French databases also include eight Luxembourg-born men in the category »soldats allemands« (German soldiers). As inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine, they had been recruited into the German imperial army and were part of the 7.5% of »Mosellans morts sous l'uniforme allemande« (Mosellans who died in German uniform)⁷⁰. Other ascriptions and administrative categories found on individual graves or monuments, or in archival records, include: »Non morts pour la France« (i.e. *fusillés, condamnés, morts accidentellement, morts de maladie*), »Morts pour leur Patrie« (military cemetery of Metz), »(soldat lorrain) mort sous l'uniforme allemande« or »mort sous l'uniforme allemande avec un cœur français« (*Livre d'or du souvenir français*). They were posthumously repatriated and reintegrated as »lost citizens« of France in order to smoothen the reintegration process of Alsace and Lorraine. In the case of Luxembourg, previous (sometimes slackening) ties were reactivated by various stakeholders after the war in order to reclaim the fallen heroes (see below). No one expressed any interest in the Luxembourgers who had died for the defeated German Empire.

The following maps (Figs. 5, 6 and 7) show the places of birth, recruitment and death of the Luxembourg-born legionnaires in our sample. Of the 168 who died in the Great War, almost half lost their lives on the battlefield (81). Another quarter (40) died later from their combat wounds, 17 are classified as missing in action, eight died from diseases caused by their war service, two died as POWs, seven succumbed to illness or injuries received other than in combat or military service (most are not recognized as »Morts pour la France«), and in 13 cases the circumstances of death are unknown.

69 Loi du 5 août 1914 relative à l'état de siège (art. 3), in: Journal officiel de la République française no. 213 (6 August 1914).

70 Jean-Eric LUNG, Morts pour la patrie. Les soldats lorrains de 1914–1918, in: Communications de l'année académique 2012–2013 (2013), p. 207–213, here p. 211, see: <http://hdl.handle.net/2042/59876>; Guy FLUCHER, Le traitement des corps des ennemis et des vaincus. L'exemple du Nord-Est de la France pendant la Grande Guerre, in: Archéopages. Archéologie et société 39, octobre–janvier (2013/2014), p. 46–55. In total ca. 380,000 men from Alsace and Moselle were drafted into the imperial German army; ca. 18,000 volunteered to serve in the French army, see: Mémorial de l'Alsace Moselle (Schirmeck), URL: <https://www.memorial-alsace-moselle.com> (accessed 5 June 2020); Raphaël GEORGES, Les soldats alsaciens-lorrains de la Grande Guerre dans la société française (1918–1939), PhD thesis, University of Strasbourg, 2018.



Burying the Dead after a Battle

Fig. 1: Illustration from a book entitled »Civil War in Spain: Characteristic Sketches of the Different Troops, Regular and Irregular, Native and Foreign, Composing the Armies of Don Carlos and Queen Isabella, also Various Scenes of Military Operations, and Costumes of the Spanish Peasantry«, credited to »Major C.V.Z. Attached to the Staff of the Queen's Army«, lith., J.W. Giles, W.R.D., London 1837, unpaginated. Courtesy of Zumalakarregi Museoa (Basque Country/Spain).



Fig. 2: At the garrison: legionnaires at the entrance of a cemetery in Taourirt, northwest Morocco. French postcard, 1912. Public domain.



Fig. 3: Beyond cemeteries: Placing heroes' graves at the border. French postcard, 1907. Public domain.



Fig. 4: The French Foreign Legion's *monument aux morts* in Aubagne (Bouches-du-Rhône), 2015.
© Copyright Jean Andret (Armée de terre/Défense, France).



Fig. 8: Monument for French soldiers who died in the Grand Duchy, and the »Unknown Luxembourgish Legionnaire«, at the Notre-Dame cemetery in Luxembourg City, 1993. Photo by Jean-Pierre Fiedler. © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg.



Fig. 9: Inauguration of the »Golden Lady« at the heart of Luxembourg City, 1923. Photo by unknown author. © Photothèque de la Ville de Luxembourg.

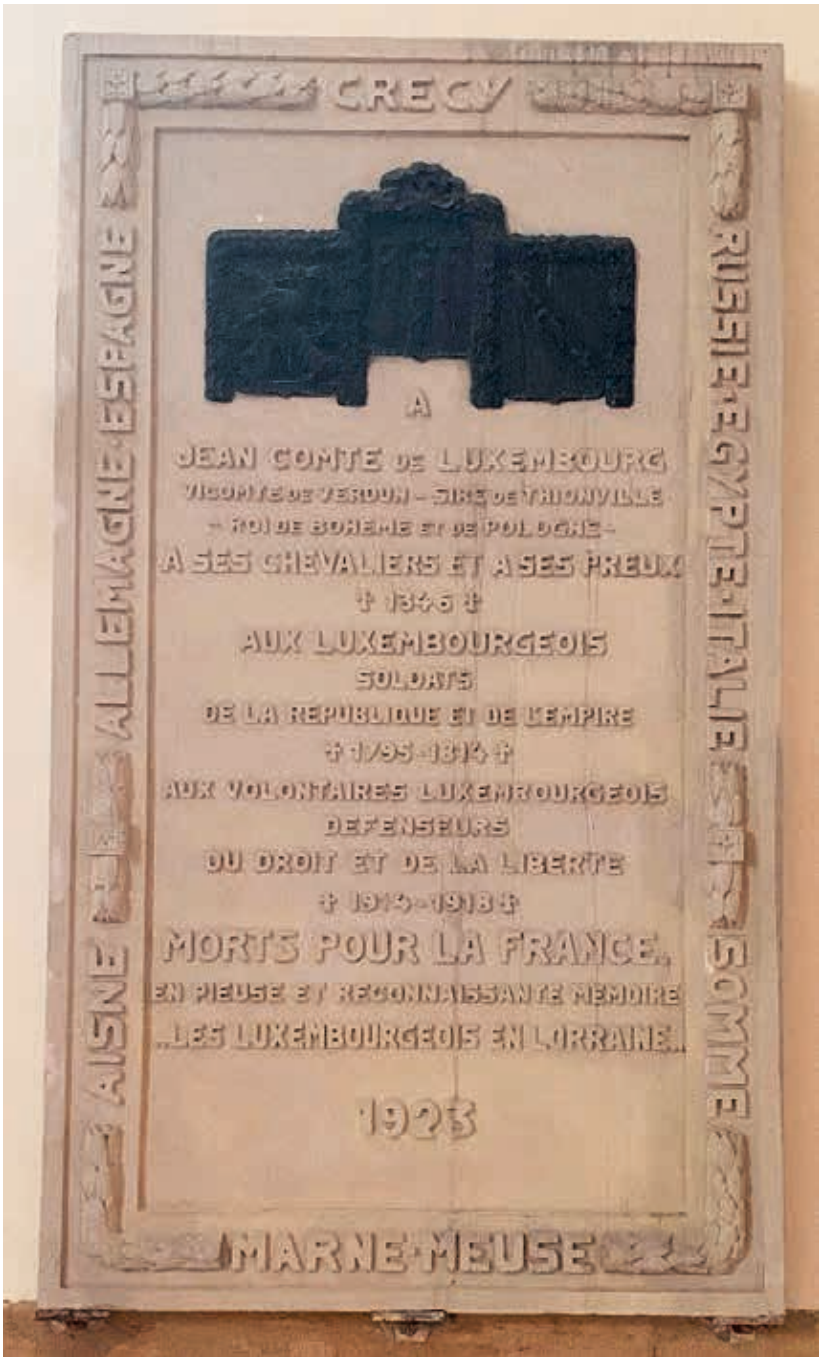


Fig. 10: Commemorative plaque inside the Church of Saint Maximin in Thionville. Photo courtesy of Céline Schall, Thionville 2020.



Fig. 11: Commemorative plaque in the Church of Saint Joseph l'Artisan in Paris. Photo courtesy of Jürgen Finger, Paris 2022.

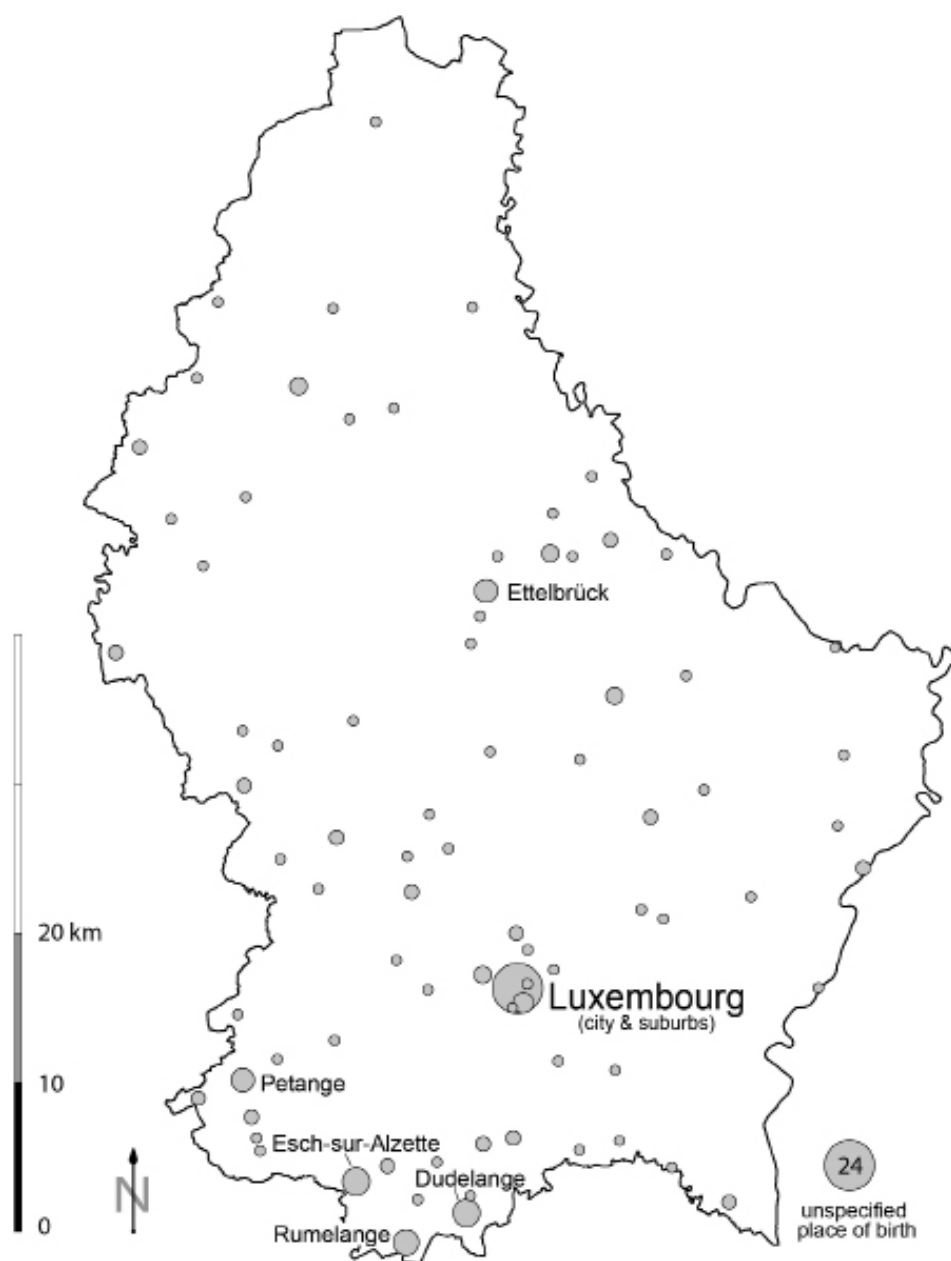


Fig. 5: Where did they come from? Places of birth of Luxembourg legionnaires who died in the Great War (n=168). Map by T. Kolnberger & M. Helfer (University of Luxembourg).

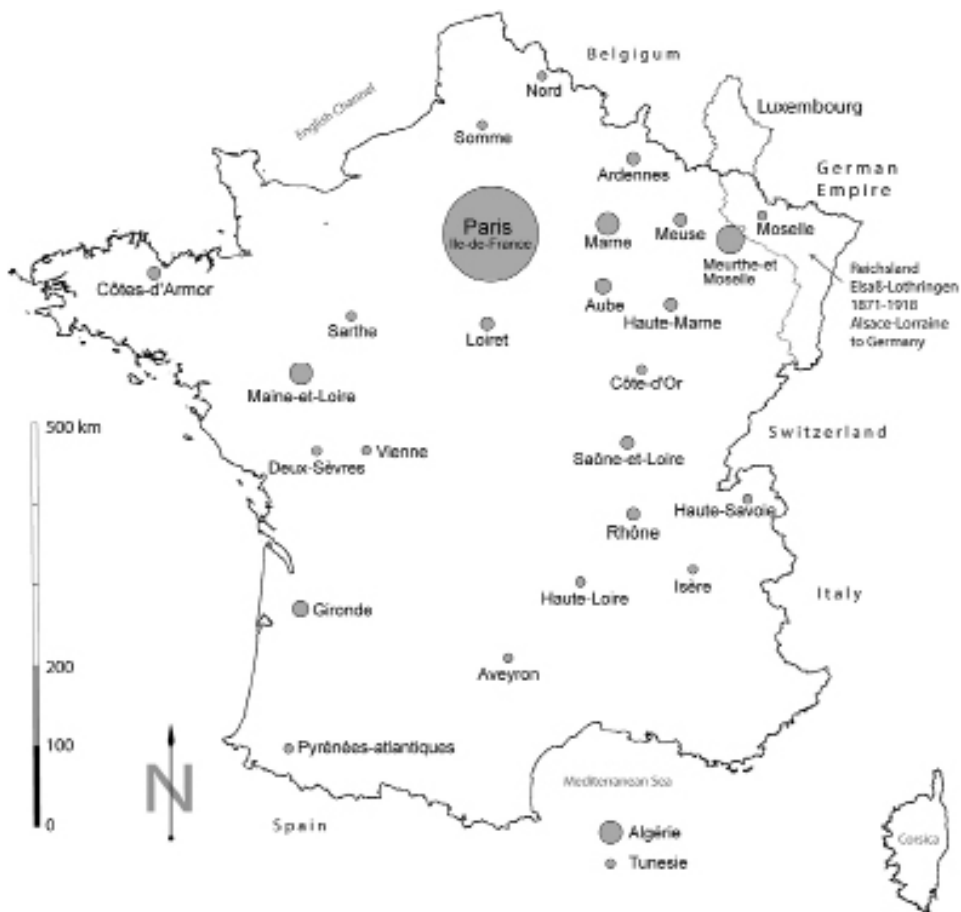


Fig. 6: Where did they go? Recruitment offices (by current French department) used by Luxembourg-born legionnaires who died in the Great War (n=168). Map by T. Kolnberger & M. Helfer (University of Luxembourg).

The places of birth of these Luxembourgish soldiers are distributed fairly equally across the Grand Duchy, with concentrations in the densely populated industrial south and in the capital (Fig. 5). The places of the recruitment offices indicate the spread of Luxembourg-born immigrants mostly in the northern half of France, with the metropolitan area of Paris forming a hotspot (Fig. 6)⁷¹. According to census data, there were 19,139 Luxembourgers living in France in 1911 and 12,499 in Reichsland Elsaß-Lothringen in 1910⁷².

71 Antoinette REUTER, *Les Luxembourgeois en France et à Paris (19^e siècle)*, in: *Migrance 20* (2002): Luxembourg. *Histoires croisées des migrations*, p. 50–59; Arnaud SAUER, *Les Luxembourgeois dans la Légion Étrangère durant la Première Guerre mondiale. La construction d'un mythe national*, in: Benoît MAJERUS et al. (ed.), *Guerre(s) au Luxembourg 1914–1918. Krieg(e) in Luxembourg*, Mersch 2014, p. 149–161.

72 Office de statistique/Statistisches Amt (Luxembourg), *Luxembourgeois à l'étranger, d'après des*

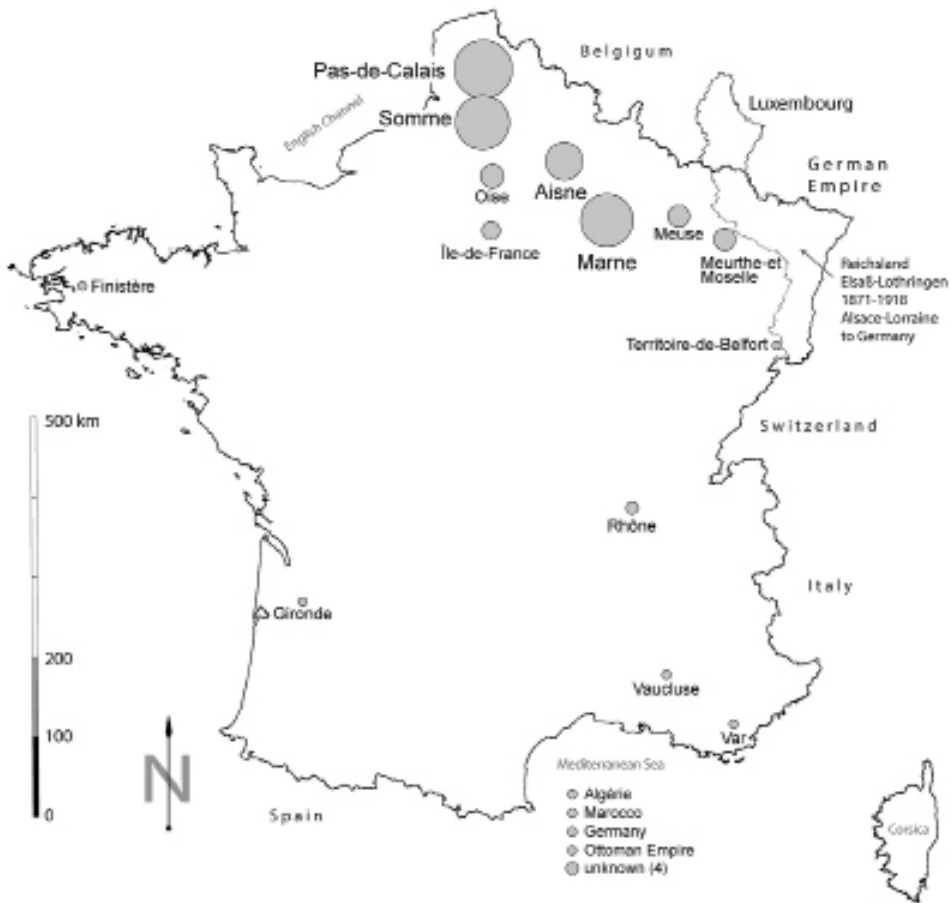


Fig. 7. Where did they die? Places of confirmed death (by current French department) of the Luxembourg-born legionnaires 1914–18 (n=168). Map by T. Kolnberger & M. Helfer (University of Luxembourg).

The places of confirmed (or assumed) death are congruent with the main theatre of war on the Western Front. The place of death may, however, differ from the place of burial and commemoration (Fig. 7)⁷³. Let us now turn to the sites and rites of memory instigated by France, Luxembourg and the Legion itself.

récentes publications statistiques, in: Bulletin trimestriel de l'Office de statistique, no. 10, August 1935, p. 32; *id.*, Les Luxembourgeois en France, in: Bulletin trimestriel de l'Office de statistique, no. 17, May 1937, p. 14.

73 Basing his investigation on two French departments (Marne at the front and Sarthe in the hinterland), Stéphane TISON, *Comment sortir de la guerre? Deuil, mémoire et traumatisme (1870–1940)*, Rennes 2019, presents in detail the challenges on a regional level.

IV. The archipelago of graves and the conundrum of the transnational dead

During the nineteenth century, the rise of the urban bourgeois class and their values in the age of industrialization changed the materiality of sepulchral culture. Modern cemeteries replaced the old churchyards progressively in France as well as in Luxembourg. These symmetrical spaces, organized down to the last detail in fractal plots, run by the municipality, or at least under their hygienic control, featured permanent individual graves or family vaults – and the names of the dead engraved on the grave-stones⁷⁴. The custom of placing the name of the deceased on the grave (necronominalism) was first adapted on a large scale in a military context in the wars of Revolutionary France and Napoleon's Empire. As Thomas Laqueur observes, »the names on the tombstones of soldiers were the avant-garde of the age of necronominalism, not in absolute numbers but in the proportion that were marked«⁷⁵. Nonetheless, monuments and military state funerals were generally reserved for high-ranking army officers. The first specific agreement stipulating the state's responsibility for the perpetuity and design/construction of war graves was the 1871 Treaty of Frankfurt, after the Franco-German War⁷⁶. Half a century later, the millions lost in the First World War made death, the proverbial great equalizer, also a leveller in military funeral affairs⁷⁷. Almost all families in European warring nations mourned the loss of close relatives. State authorities had to respond⁷⁸.

In France, the use of mass graves (*fosses communes*) was abandoned by law in 1915, after a public outcry⁷⁹. The stalemate of the Western Front during the Great War, which started two years later, gave soldiers on both sides ample time in the pendulum swing of military offensives to establish war cemeteries (*cimetières de guerre* or *Kriegerfriedhöfe*, literally warrior cemeteries) in the hinterland and off-limits for enemy artillery. They were designed like the bourgeois cemeteries of their respective homelands; sometimes outfitted with an astounding variety of ingenious tombstone and grave designs, made by the living for their dead comrades. Nearly all of these cemeteries were eliminated in the 1920s, with the bodily remains transferred to the intentionally monotonous lines and rows of tombstones of later military cemeteries⁸⁰. The latter were built around a group identity with the explicit goal of maintaining continuing bonds between the living and the dead. France, the territory with the highest number of battle sites on the Western Front, faced particular challenges with

74 Thomas KOLNBERGER, Cemeteries and Urban Form. A Historico-geographical Approach, in: *Urban Morphology* 22/2 (2018), p. 119–139.

75 Thomas W. LAQUEUR, *The Work of the Dead. A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, Princeton, NJ, Oxford 2015, p. 416.

76 In France this was translated into law by the *Loi du 4 avril 1873 sur les tombes militaires*.

77 Shannon BONTRAGER, *Death at the Edges of Empire. Fallen Soldiers, Cultural Memory, and the Making of an American Nation, 1863–1921*, Lincoln, NE 2020.

78 Stefan SCHUBERT, *Soldat (Moderne)*, in: *Compendium heroicum*, DOI: 10.6094/heroicum/soldat-moderne, Freiburg 2018.

79 *Loi du 2 juillet 1915* (attribution de la mention »Mort pour la France«) and *Loi du 29 décembre 1915* (sépultures perpétuelles pour les »Morts pour la France«).

80 Thierry HARDIER, Jean-François JAGIELSKI, *Combattre et mourir pendant la Grande Guerre (1914–1924)*, Paris 2004.

the sheer number of corpses; clandestine and unauthorized exhumation or destruction and the disappearance of provisional *cimetières de guerre* and dedicated sections in municipal cemeteries (*carrés militaires*) were common⁸¹. Legislation during and after the war laid down new rules. The French state »nationalized« the dead bodies of its soldiers, taking on responsibility for and the costs of exhumations, (re)burials, and the maintenance of burial grounds as national monuments (*nécropoles nationales*). Soldiers had mostly been buried in local cemeteries⁸² or in mass graves next to battlefields, and were exhumed after the war. In around 230,000 cases, comprising 960,000 exhumations (figure for 1924), the families claimed the right to transfer their relative to a permanent burial place in the cemetery of their choice, usually the home parish, at public expense⁸³. No distinction was made between legionnaires (mercenaries or volunteers) and regulars of the French forces⁸⁴.

Of our sample of 168 Luxembourg-born soldiers serving in the French military as legionnaires, 66 were buried individually in French national military cemeteries, such as, for example, the Luxembourgish volunteer Anton Krippeler, who was buried at the Nécropole nationale du Faubourg Pavé in Verdun⁸⁵. Forty-four are mentioned on monuments and commemorative plaques of all sorts, usually mourned as heroic sons of their (last known) municipality of residence in France. At least 58 are listed in various local *livres d'or* and/or the pension roll of the French Ministry of War. The fact that a mere 40 percent of the Luxembourgish legionnaires received an individual burial plot reflects two things: first, the particularly challenging administration of war volunteers; and second, the tragic fact that tens of thousands of corpses could not be given a name⁸⁶. Even after the introduction of mandatory identification tags

81 Anne BIRABEN, *Les cimetières militaires en France. Architecture et paysage*, Paris 2005; Béatrix PAU, *La violation des sépultures militaires, 1919–1920*, in: *Revue historique des armées* 259 (2010), p. 33–43; EAD., *Le transfert des corps des militaires italiens tombés en terre de France*, in: *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 81 (2010), p. 221–237.

82 Thomas KOLNBERGER, *Tote Soldaten und ihre Gräber. Kriegs- und Militärfriedhöfe des Ersten Weltkrieges in Luxemburg*, in: *Éischte Weltkrich. Erster Weltkrieg in Luxemburg*, accessed 11 November 2019, <https://ww1.lu/media/pdf/thomas-kolnberger-tote-soldaten.pdf>; ID., *Eine andere Migrationsgeschichte. Tote Soldaten der Grande Guerre im Luxemburger Erzbecken*, in: *Mutations. Mémoires et Perspectives du Bassin Minier* 10 (2018), p. 127–129.

83 In the following decades, this figure rose to 1.4 million French soldiers, 70,000 colonial troops and 5,000 legionnaires. See: Christian LEMARCHAND, *Le fichier général des militaires de l'armée française décédés au cours de la Première Guerre mondiale*, in: *Revue historique des armées* 252 (2008), p. 132–133; Yves POURCHER, *La fouille des champs d'honneur. La sépulture des soldats de 14–18*, in: *Terrain. Revue d'ethnologie de l'Europe*, 1993, no. 20, DOI: 10.4000/terrain.3057, p. 37–56; Alain RAOUL, *Le transfert des corps des militaires de la Grande Guerre*, accessed 11 November 2019, <http://sepulturesdespoilus.e-monsite.com/blog/le-transfert-des-corps-des-militaires-de-la-grande-guerre.html>.

84 Bullet points of the chronology of events and measures: *Le Souvenir français*, Homepage, <http://le-souvenir-francais.fr/>, accessed 11 November 2019.

85 Nécropole nationale du Faubourg Pavé (Verdun), Carré des alliés, tomb 15. This war cemetery contains 5,516 bodies, of which 4,852 from the First World War (including 17 graves of foreigners).

86 To compare: 463,000 of 1,350,000 French WWI soldiers (34.3%) have no known grave site/have disappeared. See: Christian BENOÎT, *Les corps disparus des soldats français de la Grande Guerre*, in: *Corps. Revue interdisciplinaire* 12 (2014), p. 109–110 (special issue: *La Grande Guerre des corps*). An exception to the »anonymity« of the Legion – that is the practice of mercenary-

(*plaques d'identité*) in 1881 and an individual military ID card in 1905 (*livret militaire*), the identification of bodies, provided they were found, was nonetheless often impossible⁸⁷.

Apart from the unknown Luxembourgish legionnaire mentioned below, there seems to have been no Luxembourgish state response in terms of repatriation, maybe due to political tensions. Following a failed attempt to topple the monarchy and establish a republic in January 1919, the grand-ducal family preferred not to participate in the welcoming ceremony of the legionnaires organized by Francophile circles on 16 March 1919⁸⁸. Moreover, many legionnaires and their families did not live in Luxembourg, and the associations set up to help them were mostly concerned with financial help for mutilated veterans, widows and orphans, as well as employment⁸⁹. There are a few examples of post mortem repatriations within and to Luxembourg, and some remaining epitaphs on family graves in Luxembourg, marking the empty, sur-real and symbolic graves of family members whose bodies remained lost on the battle fields. One example is the memorial of Legionnaire Fonck in Luxembourg-Weimerskirch, missing in action during the battle of St. Eloi (Flanders 1916). Due to the limited duration of grave rights in Luxembourg, many family graves no longer exist 100 years later.

In France, the commemoration of military personnel and the task of administration and practical care for war graves on the national level was spearheaded by a non-profit organization, *Le Souvenir français*, founded in 1881, which is still in operation worldwide. During the war, and comparable to most other combatant nations, a special branch of the War Ministry was established in 1917. Today – after several name changes – it is the *Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerres (ONACVG)*⁹⁰. At the local level, albeit with official support, 38,000 monuments were set up throughout the country⁹¹. Others were established abroad.

In Luxembourg City, a first monument was inaugurated in 1922 for the joint commemoration of the civilian victims of Entente air raids and the fallen legionnaires of the district of Bonnevoie⁹². From 1922, the bodily remains of 56 (of total 75) regular

recruits enlisting under an assumed identity (new name) – was made for volunteers during the First World War.

87 The burial sites became a strong indicator of »cultural and political identities«: TISON, Comment sortir de la guerre? (as in n. 73), p. 165.

88 Jean REITZ, Sabine DORSCHIED, Exposition d'Gëlle Fra. 11.12.2010–23.1.2011, Kärjeng 2010, p. 35–37.

89 *Der Arme Teufel* 688 (20 April 1919), p. 3 – cited by SAUER, *Les Luxembourgeois* (as in n. 71), p. 161 (endnote 42); ANLux, AE-02273, Pétition adressée en 1920 à la Chambre des Députés par l'Amicale des Volontaires Luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre 1914–1918 or Amicale chargée des intérêts des anciens combattants et de leurs familles.

90 See: <https://www.onac-vg.fr/presentation-de-onacvg>, accessed 31 October 2021.

91 Antoine PROST, *Monuments to the Dead*, in: Pierre NORA, Lawrence D. KRITZMAN (ed.), *Realms of Memory. The Construction of the French Past*, vol. 2: *Traditions*, New York 1998, p. 306–330.

92 Evamarie BANGE, *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, in: Sonja KMEC, Pit PÉPORTÉ (ed.), *Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Erinnerungsorte in Luxemburg*, vol. 2, Luxembourg 2012, p. 19–24. See also: Sonja KMEC, Robert L. PHILIPPART, Antoinette REUTER (ed.), *Ewige Ruhe? Grabkulturen in Luxemburg und den Nachbarregionen. Concession à perpétuité? Cultures funéraires au Luxembourg et dans les régions voisines*, Luxembourg 2019.

French soldiers, buried by German occupational troops during the First World War, were exhumed all over the Luxembourgish territory and reburied in a crypt in the central municipal Notre-Dame cemetery of the capital. The golden-lettered inscription on the memorial (Fig. 8) reads: »Aux soldats français de la Grande Guerre morts dans le Grand-Duché, 1914–1918« (To the French soldiers of the Great War who died in the Grand Duchy, 1914–1918). Their names are listed on the walls surrounding an open space; in its centre lay the mortal remains of an unknown legionnaire of Luxembourgish origin: »Ici repose un légionnaire luxembourgeois inconnu« (Here lies an unknown Luxembourgish legionnaire). The French soldiers who died in military hospitals or in captivity in Luxembourg were first buried in the former Prussian garrison cemetery in Clausen, a quarter of Luxembourg City, next to German soldiers, then – if unclaimed by their families – reburied⁹³ in the same collective memorial at Notre-Dame cemetery, surrounding the unknown Luxembourgish legionnaire⁹⁴.

The commemoration of the unknown soldier was modelled on that of other countries: a rite to overcome the corporeal challenges of identification, exhumation and reburial. It provided a sur-real placeholder for all unclaimed, unidentified and missing dead. Because his namelessness stood in for all other names, his tomb could become a national pilgrimage site. For France, this monumental grave was placed beneath the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. The *Tombe du soldat inconnu* was inaugurated on Armistice Day 1920, 11 November, by igniting the eternal flame which has been ceremonially »revived« every day since⁹⁵.

The corpse of the Unknown Luxembourgish Legionnaire had first been repatriated from France to Luxembourg. The re-enacted corporeal »state burial« of the last coffin (of the Luxembourgish) in 1923 combined a secular celebration with Catholic consecration rituals on All Saints' Day (1 November). The complete monument was inaugurated on 16 November 1924, the Sunday following Armistice Day, and took place in the presence of high officials and emissaries of the French Republic⁹⁶. This monument never became a focal point for national commemoration and, hidden behind cemetery walls, it does not have the same visibility in the public space as the *Monument du Souvenir*, inaugurated in May 1923 (Fig. 9).

Better known as »Golden Lady« (*Gëlle Fra*) because of the golden Nike statue rising high on an obelisk, this monument is much more centrally located, close to the cathedral, governmental buildings and tourist sites. It has an even more sur-real quality

93 These »secondary treatments« were often used to re-signify the chosen territory and to elevate the spiritual condition of the dead: Peter METCALF, Richard HUNTINGTON, *Celebrations of Death. The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, Cambridge 1991, p. 33.

94 ANLux, AE-00685 (*Affaires étrangères*), Division des Affaires étrangères et de la Justice, *Inhumation au cimetière militaire de Clausen des dépouilles mortelles de tous les soldats allemands ensevelis dans les divers cimetières du pays, 1916–1931*.

95 Neil HANSON, *The Unknown Soldier*, London 2005; François CROCHET, *Cérémonial du 11 Novembre*, in: *Publictionnaire. Dictionnaire encyclopédique et critique des publics*, 22 January 2018 (last modification 18 September 2019), <http://publictionnaire.huma-num.fr/notice/ceremonial-du-11-novembre/>, accessed 5 June 2020.

96 ANLux, DH 40, *Guerre de 1914–1918. Tombes et cimetières militaires dans le Grand-Duché*; Robert PHILIPPART, *Le mausolée du soldat inconnu*, in: *Luxemburger Wort (Die Warte)*, 13 November 2014, p. 6–7.

than the Tomb of the Unknown Legionnaire, because it includes a cenotaph (empty tomb). As a tribute to the Luxembourgers who fought in the armies of the Entente, it was destroyed under National Socialist occupation in 1940. The pedestal was reconstructed in the 1950s, including homage to the Luxembourg volunteers who had joined the Allied forces in the Second World War and soldiers who died in the Korean War. After the obelisk was rebuilt and the statue replaced in the 1980s, it became a landmark again and a symbol for national liberty.

The eponymous statue high up on the top of the obelisk is raising a wreath of laurel over a dead warrior (*gisant*), laid out over a sarcophagus-shaped podium, still holding his sword on his chest, while another bronze figure of a young man sits nearby, his Italo-Corinthian helmet, sword and shield down, keeping watch. Its timeless design in antique guise, with perfectly sculpted bodies even in death and mourning, is utterly sur-real, and keeps death at bay by aestheticizing it. The monument, designed by the Luxembourgish artist Claus Cito⁹⁷, placed the Grand Duchy (purportedly neutral during the War) on the side of the winners by highlighting its military contributions. Ferdinand Foch, the Supreme Allied Commander during the Great War, provided the »heroic death« certificate engraved on the pedestal:

»Sur les champs de Bataille de la Marne, de l’Aisne et de la Somme, en Artois, en Champagne, comme à Verdun – unis aux armées de l’Entente dans la Grande Guerre de 1914–1918 partageant les fatigues, les souffrances et la Gloire de leurs frères d’armes de la Légion étrangère, les légionnaires luxembourgeois, héroïque phalange, ont combattu pendant plus de quatre ans sans une défaillance, donnant partout l’exemple de leur courage, de leur ténacité, de leur dévouement. Ils se sont acquis avec l’immortalité la reconnaissance de leur patrie, celle de la France et de tous les peuples qui luttaient pour le même idéal de justice et de liberté. Gloire à eux aux vivants et aux morts! Honneur au pays, qui les a enfantés. Le maréchal de France, commandant en chef les armées alliées – Foch⁹⁸.«

Although this monument, with its barely clothed female allegorical figure, was initially considered vulgar by Catholic opinion leaders, it quickly became the central site for national commemorations, as it enabled Luxembourg to overcome the divisive years of the war and the civil unrest that followed by firmly anchoring the Grand Duchy on the side of the victors⁹⁹.

97 Jean REITZ, Sabine DORSCHIED, Claus Cito. Eine luxemburgische Bildhauerkarriere. Werkverzeichnis, Luxembourg 2014.

98 »On the battlefields of the Marne, the Aisne and the Somme, in Artois, Champagne and Verdun – united with the armies of the Entente in the Great War of 1914–18, sharing the fatigue, the suffering, and the Glory of their brothers in arms in the Foreign Legion, the Luxembourgish legionnaires, a heroic phalanx, fought for more than four years without fail, everywhere giving the example of their courage, their tenacity, their devotion. They acquired for themselves the immortal recognition of their fatherland, of France, and of all the peoples who fought for the same ideal of justice and liberty. Glory to them, the living and the dead! Honour to the country that gave them birth. Marshal of France, Commander in Chief of the Allied armies – Foch.«

99 Benoît MAJERUS, D’Gëlle Fra, in: Sonja KMEC et al. (ed.), Lieux de mémoire au Luxembourg. Erinnerungsorte in Luxemburg, vol. 1, Luxembourg 2007, p. 291–296; Evamarie BANGE, Der Erste

The Luxembourgish legionnaires and their families who continued to live in France also sought to stress their contribution to this victory and, at the same time, their continued bonds with Luxembourg. In Thionville, a border town that belonged to the Duchy of Luxembourg until 1659 and had been annexed by Germany from 1871 to 1918, the St. Maximin church displays a large and massive stone plate, in the fashion of tomb slabs but fixed to the wall at eye level (Fig. 10). It features a piece of heavy black cast iron with the heraldic arms of Luxembourg and Lorraine and, in their middle, the ancient Roman fasces with the monogram RF for »République française«. Below the cast, it reads:

»À Jean Comte de Luxembourg, Vicomte de Verdun – Sire de Thionville – Roi de Bohème et de Pologne – À ses chevaliers et à ses preux † 1346 † Aux Luxembourgeois soldats de la République et de l'Empire † 1795–1914 † Aux volontaires luxembourgeois défenseurs du droit et de la liberté † 1914–1918 † Morts pour la France en pieuse reconnaissante mémoire .. Les Luxembourgeois en Lorraine .. 1923¹⁰⁰.«

The cast and text are surrounded by laurels and by the names of battle sites, spanning the narrative arc from Crécy, where John the Blind died, to the Napoleonic campaigns in Germany, Spain, Russia, Egypt, and Italy, ending with the battlefields of the First World War: Aisne, Marne, Meuse, and Somme. It may well be wondered how John the Blind fits into this. In the 1920s, for the French, the battle of Verdun was becoming the key symbol of the Grande Guerre¹⁰¹. The reason for the prominence given to this lower office in the king's long line of titles is obvious. In fact, John was never viscount of Verdun (there is no such title), but merely exercised the feudal guardianship¹⁰². In Luxembourg, he was seen at that time as a national hero, who had fought for France¹⁰³. In Thionville, he allowed the families of Luxembourgish legionnaires to express their loyalty to their adopted country, following the example of a former ruler who was also »Mort pour la France«¹⁰⁴. This designation can

Weltkrieg (as in n. 92), p. 13–18. Isabelle WICKLER, *Le monument luxembourgeois du souvenir Gille Fra. Formes de représentations médiatiques et usages sociopolitiques*, master's thesis, University of Luxembourg, Paul Verlaine University – Metz, Saarland University, 2010.

100 »To John, Count of Luxembourg, Viscount of Verdun – Lord of Thionville – King of Bohemia and Poland – To his knights [*chevaliers/preux*] † 1346 † To the Luxembourgish soldiers of the Republic and the Empire † 1795–1914 † To the Luxembourgish volunteer defenders of justice and liberty † 1914–1918 † *Morts pour la France*, in pious grateful memory. Luxembourgers in Lorraine, 1923.«

101 Antoine PROST, Verdun, in: Pierre NORA (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 2: La Nation, Paris 1986, p. 110–141.

102 An appointment he shared with the Count of Bar. See: Nicolas VAN WERVEKE, *La garde luxembourgeoise de Verdun sous Jean l'Aveugle*, Luxembourg 1923.

103 Pit PÉPORTÉ, *L'image de la France au Grand-Duché de Luxembourg. Discours identitaire et interprétation de l'histoire du XIX^e au début du XX^e siècle*, in: Gallomanie et gallophobie. Le mythe français en Europe au XIX^e siècle [online]. Rennes 2012 (generated on 18 July 2019), DOI: 10.4000/books.pur.116571, accessed 11 November 2019.

104 The official status »Mort pour la France« was created by a law of 2 July 1915, which stipulated that »L'acte de décès d'un militaire des armées de terre ou de mer tué à l'ennemi ou mort des suites de ses blessures ou d'une maladie contractée sur le champ de bataille (...) devra sur avis de

also be found on a monument in Crécy-en-Ponthieu (1905). It bears the inscription »À Jean de Luxembourg Roi de Bohême et à ses vaillants compagnons d'armes morts pour la France à Crécy le 26 août 1346« above an oversized bronze copy of the king's equestrian seal¹⁰⁵. The same seal served as model – with the inscription *Luxemburgum Virtuti* – for a medal of honour bestowed by the Luxembourg government to volunteers having served at least three months in the Allied ranks¹⁰⁶. The reverse features the dates 1914–18 and the French Adrian helmet.

Another commemorative plaque (Fig. 11) was installed in the quasi-parish church of Luxembourgish immigrants in Paris, Saint-Joseph-l'Artisan, in the 10th arrondissement, situated in the centre of the district with the most German-speaking immigrants in Paris, and thus until 1925 called »Saint-Joseph-des-Allemands«. At the top, a plain cross at the centre of a laurel wreath is flanked by the heraldic arms of Luxembourg on the left and of the French Republic on the right. The inscription reads: »À la mémoire des soldats luxembourgeois engagés/Volontaires au service de la France/Morts pour la défense de leurs foyers 1914–1918«¹⁰⁷. This formulation is rather ambivalent, as it combines the fight for France with the protection of private homes (»foyers«). It is not entirely clear whether these are their new homes in Paris or their old family homes back in Luxembourg, which was occupied by German imperial troops. Home and homeland (*Heim* and *Heimat*, in German) may have been conflated here. At any rate, it is a very unusual wording, its ambivalence possibly intentional.

Many churches all over Europe have monuments or plates listing the fallen soldiers of their parish by name. Here, they are tributes to unnamed soldiers. Traditionally, epitaphs in churches were inscriptions that referred to nearby graves. Here, the graves are far away and dispersed. Like the Golden Lady, these church plates have a doubly sur-real quality: there is no body and no name. The only connection to real dead bodies are the names of the battlefields, which evoke death on a mass scale and function as placeholders for (Luxembourgish) history.

Conclusion

Military service was a – particularly dangerous – offer of manual labour, which men from Luxembourg provided to other countries over the long nineteenth century, from the French Revolution to the Great War. Within this general context of transnational military labour, we have focused on the French Foreign Legion, examining

l'Autorité militaire, contenir la mention »Mort pour la France« », in: Journal officiel de la République française 184, 9 July 1915, p. 4653. For a description of the monument, see: René VAN DER KROGT, Peter VAN DER KROGT, Statues. Hither and Thither, accessed 5 June 2020, <https://vanderkrogt.net/statues/object.php?webpage=ST&record=frpi065>.

105 »To John of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia and to his valiant companions in arms, morts pour la France at Crécy on 26 August 1346«.

106 Arrêté grand-ducal du 10 mai 1923 instituant une médaille commémorative dite »Médaille des Volontaires Luxembourgeois de la Grande Guerre de 1914 à 1918«.

107 N.N., De Saint-Joseph des Allemands à Saint-Joseph Artisan (info-brochure), Paris 2001. »To the memory of the Luxembourgish soldiers/Volunteers in the service of France/[who] Died in defence of their homes/1914–1918«.

in particular funeral provisions and commemorations in order to shed light on the reappropriation of dead soldiers (or lack thereof) for different national causes.

Until the First World War, burials very much depended on how and where death occurred. They ranged from ad hoc interment without any type of commemoration to individual graves in cemeteries overseas modelled on churchyards back home. We proposed to differentiate between »corporeal« and »sur-real« consideration for the dead and their bodily remains. The official death cult of the Legion and its veterans, which emerged in the late nineteenth century, has sur-real qualities, detached from the corporeal or embodied materiality of death. While this heroic representation is well known and part of the Legion's gallant self-image, the physical reality of burial and its practical challenges are rarely addressed. This corporeal factor seems to be an unpleasant side topic in the literary genre of individual memoirs¹⁰⁸. The question of how they have been addressed by service regulations merits further study (limited in this case by archival restrictions).

The corporeal dimension is not necessarily obfuscated but rather sublimated, most notably in the heroic narrative of the battle of Camerón in Mexico. The commemoration of an infantry patrol and its captain, Jean Danjou, who refused to surrender to the Mexican army on 30 April 1863, has become the historical touchstone for the Foreign Legion. The connection between heroism and sacralization is evident in the deployment of Captain Danjou as the »patron saint« of the Foreign Legion in the following decades.

While in the course of the nineteenth century soldiers were mostly buried on the battlefield, in the burial grounds of (mobile) hospitals or in increasingly elaborate garrison cemeteries, they were rarely repatriated. In the case of Captain Danjou, his wooden hand was transferred back to the headquarters of the Legion and his martyrdom or »floating sacralization« (Eßbach) sought to give meaning to the deaths of mercenaries in the service of the Foreign Legion and of France.

During the Great War, foreign-born volunteers seeking to serve France were incorporated into the Foreign Legion's marching regiments. This led to changes in transnational soldiering, as shown here by a quantitative and cartographic analysis of Luxembourg legionnaires »Morts pour la France«: the recruitment offices were not in immediate border regions, and most legionnaires had migrated to France before the war. Unlike mercenaries before 1914, they had not previously served in another army. Moreover, the mass casualties of the First World War led to new forms of collective mourning and remembrance of rank-and-file soldiers. The post mortem movement of hundreds of thousands exhumed soldiers across borders and former front lines became a corporeal reality after 1918. A collective grave of French soldiers who died on Luxembourgish soil combined with a monument to the unknown Luxembourg legionnaire exemplifies this trend. At the same time, the unknown (but decidedly Luxembourgish) soldier represents the politicized body of the nation and its alliance with France. The sur-real dimension of commemoration is even more evident in the cenotaph known as Gëlle Fra, which contains no mortal remains, but pays homage to legionnaires of Luxembourgish origin and the country that begat

108 Concerning the egodocuments of legionnaires, we refer to a conversation with Prof. Christian Koller, June 2020.

them. In the context of heightened nationalization, these legionnaires came to represent the Grand Duchy's contribution to the Allied cause, overwriting the memory of German occupation and Allied accusations of collaboration during the War.

The perspective of *histoire croisée* allowed us to highlight a double process. On the one hand, overlapping national appropriations of the legionnaires led to a series of sur-real celebrations of the »body politic«. On the other hand, the messy corporeality of death made any clear-cut national heroization arduous. Broken and disfigured »bodies natural« rendered personal identification difficult. And even where it was achieved, national identification was far from evident, as families had moved and borders had shifted.

Today, the overseas graves of the »old« Legion have mostly disappeared, while graves established since the First World War have been preserved and maintained – or transferred. The last patriotic »recall« was the exhumation the mortal remains of around 20,000 dead from the Indochina War and their repatriation from Southeast Asia to Fréjus (Var), where the Mémorial des Guerres en Indochine (1940/45–54) was inaugurated in 1993, including the names of 29 Luxembourgish legionnaires who died during that conflict¹⁰⁹.

In the 1980s, in a changing postcolonial world, the Legion's guidelines were rewritten for its new combat mission as an elite force for global military intervention on behalf of France.

The *Code d'honneur du légionnaire* in force today is a normative moral tool used to establish an inclusive military culture (*esprit de corps*) of soldiers of different nationalities and various backgrounds¹¹⁰. This code of honour is the accepted doctrine of ethical behaviour and is frequently recited by new recruits and veteran soldiers alike. It stipulates that »in combat, you act without passion and without hate, you respect defeated enemies, and you never abandon your dead, your wounded, or your arms«¹¹¹. Honouring the dead is still a vital constituent of the Legion's *esprit de corps*. Ceremonies reactivate bonds ensuring that dead legionnaires are very »present« in their absence¹¹². Since 1999, as a new entitlement, any soldier with combat injury in service for France has been eligible to apply immediately for French citizenship under a provision known as »Français par le sang versé« (»French by spilled blood«)¹¹³.

109 According to the commemorative plaque in Aubagne, the Legion's total losses amounted to 10,483 men. According to General Jean Maurin, commander of the Legion, a total of around 40,000 Legionnaires (obviously including the war volunteers of WWI and WWII) died in combat. All Souls' Day (2 November) and Armistice Day (11 November) are part of the commemoration calendar of the Legion; see Képi blanc mag' 792 (2014), <https://www.legion-etrangere.com/mdl/page.php?id=474&titre=La-Legion-ne-pleure-pas-ses-morts-elle-les-honore>, accessed 5 June 2020.

110 Michel YAKOVLEFF, *Fondement du moral et de l'éthique dans les armées. Des différences révélatrices entre proches alliés*, in: *Inflexions*, 6,2 (2007), p. 151–176.

111 § 7: »Au combat tu agis sans passion et sans haine, tu respectes les ennemis vaincus, tu n'abandonnes jamais ni tes morts, ni tes blessés, ni tes armes«, recited in French, see: <https://www.legion-etrangere.com/mdl/page.php?id=92&titre=Code-d-honneur>, accessed 5 June 2020.

112 Avril MADDRELL, *Living with the Deceased. Absence, Presence and Absence-Presence*, in: *Cultural Geographies* 20,4 (2013), p. 501–522.

113 This wording was used in the written question of Sen. Philippe Marini (no. 20266), in: *Journal officiel de la République française, Sénat*, 11 November 1999, p. 3695, and the answer by the Garde des Sceaux, in: *Journal officiel de la République française, Sénat*, 24 February 2000, p. 696,

Thereby, the *patria* of the Foreign Legion's motto has been integrated ever more tightly into the imagined community of France. This highlights the double or triple nationality of volunteers in the First World War, and their entanglement in the statistical records of Luxembourg, France and the Legion.

<http://www.senat.fr/questions/base/1999/qSEQ991120266.html>, accessed 10 November 2019. A new law changed the section of the Code civil on the acquisition of French nationality, adding article 21-14-1: Loi no. 99-1141 du 29 décembre 1999 modifiant les conditions d'acquisition de la nationalité française par les militaires étrangers servant dans l'armée française, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/LEGIARTI000006284625/1999-12-30/>, accessed 13 January 2021.