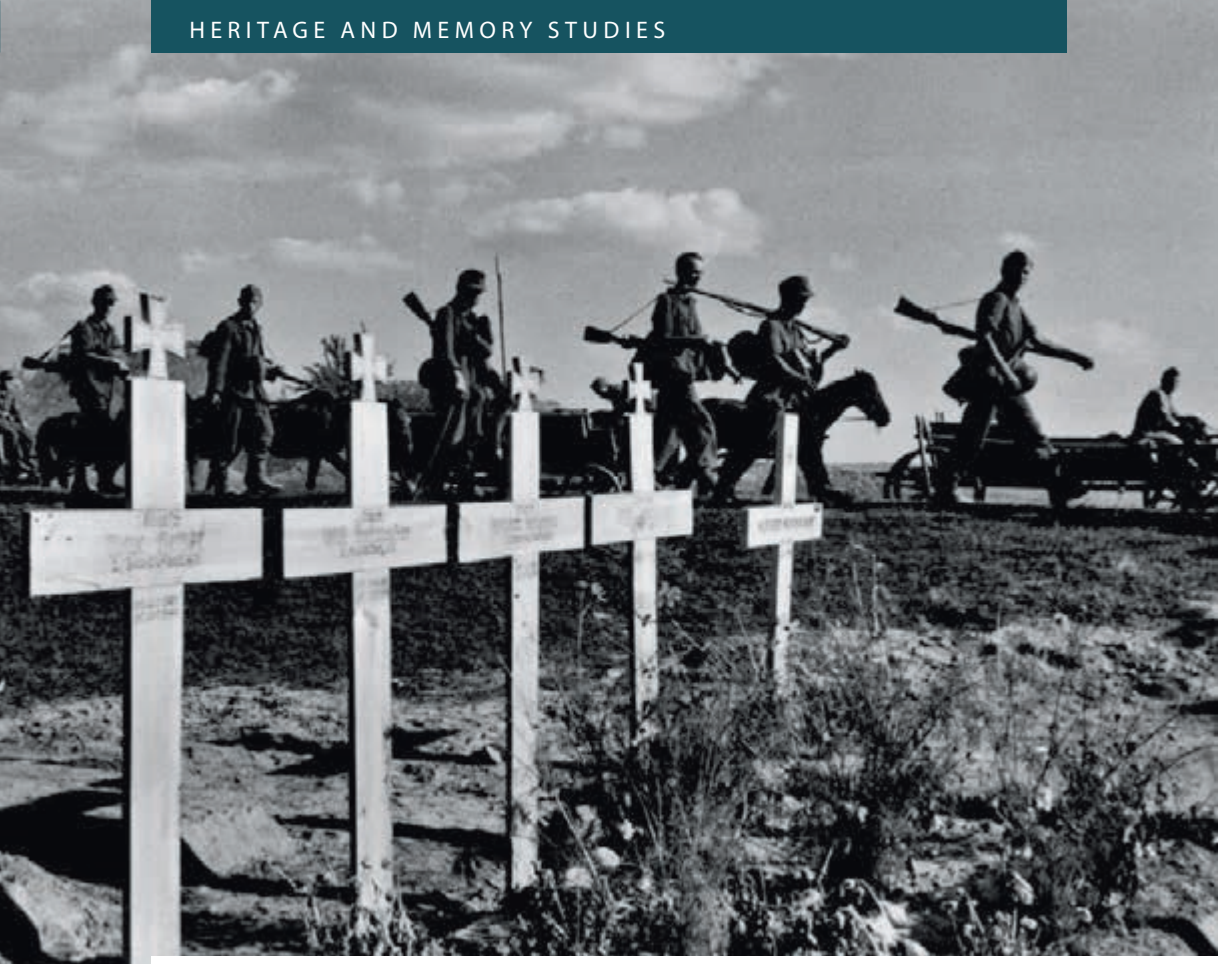
HERITAGE AND MEMORY STUDIES



Max van der Schriek

Archaeological Approaches to and Heritage Perspectives on Modern Conflict

Beyond the Battlefields

Amsterdam University Press

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Heritage Perspectives on Modern Conflict

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Beyond the Battlefields

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Cover illustration: German troops passing a military cemetery of both Waffen-SS and Wehrmacht soldiers near Murawczice, Belarus, in the summer of 1944
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In loving memory of our beautiful, stillborn son:

Felix Anton Floris

27.08.2021

Gone before, but not dead
Our little boy is only a few steps ahead
Waiting and watching.
Mum & dad.

Alkmaar, 12 September 2021

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Alkmaar, 24 March 2021

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1 Introduction

Abstract
Aims and research perspectives are explained in this introduction chapter. To start with, this study is to be viewed as fundamental research with regard to an interdisciplinary approach consisting of heritage, archaeology and spatial development perspectives. Secondly, by assessing and validating the academic value of conflict archaeology in the Netherlands, it is a valuation study. And last, by implementing a non-invasive technique on sites of modern conflict, it can be considered methodological research. Explicit research goals were the development of archaeological research questions for conflict archaeology in the Netherlands. For both the preservation and conservation of sites of modern conflict, community interest is always of the utmost importance, as demonstrated by the example of Mont Cornillet.

Keywords: conflict archaeology, heritage management, the Netherlands, Mont Cornillet

1.1 The tragedy at Mont Cornillet

Reims, France, 1917. The Battle of the Hills, better known as the Nivelle Offensive (17 April-20 May) has reached its climax. The German lines have been under attack by French forces for over a month. Most of the Germans' first and second lines between Soissons and Reims have been captured after fierce fighting. East of the city of Reims, there are several important high points, including Mont Cornillet, with its 207-metre-high summit. After the heavy losses at Verdun and at the Battle of the Somme the year before, the German army is in desperate need of fresh troops. The Württembergisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 476 (Inf. Reg. Nr. 476) was formed in January 1917, consisting mostly of young, unexperienced troops. Some more experienced officers and non-commissioned officers were added from other regiments

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to form the backbone of Inf. Reg. Nr. 476, including *Leutnant*[1] Carl Heinrich Albert Schumacher (*1891-†1980). After several short weeks of training, the regiment was sent to France in March, where it received its baptism of fire in May 1917.[2]

On 14 May, Inf. Reg. Nr. 476 arrived at Mont Cornillet, where an important underground fortress had been built that consisted of three long, parallel tunnels dug into the limestone. The largest of these tunnels was 280 metres long, featuring entrances at both sides, and was named 'Lux'. The tunnels, which were approximately two metres wide and two metres high, were also connected. The French High Command was aware of the existence of this underground fortress, and French troops unsuccessfully attempted to seize the summit on 17 April and again on 30 April 1917. The hilltop provided the German troops with an excellent view over the lower-lying French positions, which prompted the French to engage in resolute attacks to seize Mont Cornillet.[3]

Seeing as small-calibre artillery had no effect on the German defence positions at Mont Cornillet, heavy artillery (380 mm) was brought into position. On 20 May, a severe artillery bombardment started on the German lines at 07:30, mainly aimed at the entrances of the tunnels. Infantry attacked at 15:15 and seized the hill the very same day. Meanwhile, a disaster had occurred underground. At the very start of the artillery bombardment, one of the tunnels received a direct hit. At 09:00, two other direct hits caused parts of the tunnels to collapse, annihilating a complete battalion. Many soldiers were killed by the collapsing ceiling, but most died as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning. Due to the lack of oxygen in the tunnels after the explosions, all candles extinguished. The survivors had to find their way out in the dark, but only a few succeeded in doing so, including *Leutnant* Schumacher.[4]

When Inf. Reg. Nr. 476 arrived at Mont Cornillet, it had consisted of 64 officers and 2419 soldiers. During the events of 20 May 1917, a total of 39 officers and 1064 soldiers were killed in action. This was one of the largest groups of German soldiers enclosed underground during the war. A year before, on 8 May 1916, an unattended cooking fire had detonated ammunition stores and flamethrower fuel in the tunnels of Fort Douaumont near Verdun. During the ensuing firestorm, 679 German soldiers perished. Due to the

1 Lieutenant.
2 Nick 1921, 3; Schumacher 2011, 12 and 18.
3 Nick 1921, 15-16 and 20-21; Schumacher 2011, 27, 44, 50 and 56.
4 Nick 1921, 21-22; Schumacher 2011, 68 and 70.

heavy artillery fire on the fortress, the bodies could not be buried outside and were therefore sealed in one of the tunnels. A similar event occurred among French troops at the nearby Tavannes tunnel on 4 September 1916. Over five hundred soldiers were killed in the fire, probably also as a result of careless cooking in the tunnel. After the disaster at Mont Cornillet, General Paul von Hindenburg (*1847-†1924) forbade the construction of such large underground fortresses to prevent similar calamities in the future.[5]

After the capture of the summit and the tunnels, French troops collected and concentrated the German dead in one of the collapsed tunnels and walled them off. Parts of the tunnels were restored and the air circulation was improved. At the end of the war, Mont Cornillet became part of a French military training site, making it inaccessible to the public. In contrast to Mont Cornillet, the soldiers enclosed at Fort Douaumont are commemorated with a plaque and the sealed tunnel with the soldiers' remains is regarded as an official German military cemetery. The French soldiers of the Tavennes tunnel were exhumed after the war and buried with full military honours at the French cemetery in front of the famous Ossuary of Douaumont.[6]

After World War I (WWI), a vivid trade in German gold and silver coins started in the villages surrounding Mont Cornillet; these coins were rumoured to have been taken from the dead in the tunnels. During the German occupation of France in World War II (WWII), Major Richard Büchner tried to recover the remains of the German soldiers who had perished in the previous war, conducting several campaigns in 1943 and 1944. He found an entrance to the tunnels, but was unable to reach the locations with the human remains. Although local inhabitants remembered the stories of the walled-off German soldiers somewhere underground on Mont Cornillet, this huge war grave was generally forgotten by the public.[7] However, on local flea markets, German military equipment would often come up for sale, including belt buckles from Württemberg.

Reims, France, 1968. A group of German soldiers of the Pionier-Lehrregiment der Bundeswehr was sent to France to maintain several WWI German military cemeteries in the Champagne region. The commanding officer, *Oberstleutnant*[8] Hermann Köberl, was not aware of the events that took place underground at Mont Cornillet over 50 years ago; he first learned of this

5 Nick 1921, 27; Schumacher 2011, 130.
6 Schumacher 2011, 131 and 156-157.
7 Schumacher 2011, 118 and 156.
8 Lieutenant Colonel.

story from a local farmer. Köberl's curiosity never faded – in the following years, he investigated the history of Inf. Reg. Nr. 476, and his private research eventually resulted in the successful recovery of the human remains from the tunnels at Mont Cornillet during two campaigns, conducted in 1974 and 1975, respectively.[9]

On the historical regimental maps, the tunnels were drawn and located on the northern side of the hill. However, the correct position was on the southern side – in the midst of the sketched French positions (Fig. 1.1; see color section). The recovery project started in the summer of 1974 and lasted for six weeks. As a token of reconciliation, French and German soldiers worked side by side during the recovery of the soldiers who had died so many years before. During the work, the labourers discovered French graffiti underground dating back from 1920 to 1931. Although it was a prohibited area, some people had clearly managed to enter the tunnels.[10] The rumours that military equipment and coins had been taken from the Mont Cornillet proved to be correct.

It turned out to be very difficult to reach the tunnel on the left (*Stollen 1*), which had collapsed entirely. When the rubble had been removed and the sealed wall could be opened up again, the workers stumbled across leather boots, belt buckles, ammunition pouches, helmets, weapons, munition and hundreds of human remains. In general, the artefacts were in very good condition. A prayer book from 1917 was still readable, as were several recovered private letters. The encountered ammunition, both for small firearms as well as for heavy mortars, appeared to have just left the German factories. Several victims were encapsulated in limestone, which had left behind a Pompeii-like imprint in some of the tunnels. As expected, many of the soldiers were between eighteen and twenty years of age.[11]

The recovery works were widely covered by the media, both in France and Germany. Locals – farmers, mayors, vicars – often visited the site, bringing champagne and food for the labourers. Veterans were also quick to show up, including both French and German ex-soldiers. *Oberstleutnant* Köberl had hoped to finish all the recovery work within six weeks, but at the end of the campaign, not all tunnels had been cleared yet. The first campaign saw the recovery of 267 German soldiers, but, surprisingly, not all recovered human remains were Germans. In the tunnels, the workers also discovered a French soldier and an officer. *Commandant* Paul-Adolphe

9 Schumacher 2011, 14 and 114

10 Schumacher 2011, 120, 122 and 128.

11 Schumacher 2011, 125, 139-140, 149, 154 and 158.

Champel (*1866-†1917) of the French 48th Infantry Regiment was wounded during a small-scale attack on the hill on 16 May. After being captured, he was given medical treatment in the tunnels and buried underground, along with his enemies, during the bombardment of 20 May 1917.[12]

Mont Cornillet, summer 1975. The tunnels were reopened one last time. Unfortunately, all the tunnels that had been cleared the year before had partially collapsed due to heavy rainfall. The recovery works were set up once more, and a further 63 individuals were uncovered. In two years, a total of 330 German soldiers were discovered in the tunnels beneath the summit of Mont Cornillet. Many of them could be identified as German soldiers, but they could not be buried individually.[13] Usually, German WWI soldiers are harder to identify than Allied soldiers, because most historical documentation was destroyed during the bombings of Germany during WWII.[14] The records of the former armies of Württemberg and Bavaria did, however, survive the Allied bombings. All human remains were reburied at the German military cemetery of Warméville (Fig. 1.2). During the reburial ceremonies, several veterans of Inf. Reg. Nr. 476 were present to pay their respects to their former comrades.[15]

Did Carl Schumacher know about the recovery of his former comrades at Mont Cornillet? He passed away in October 1980, and during his lifetime, he never talked about his war experiences with any of his relatives. In the winter of 1980-1981, Arne Schumacher, his grandson, was given a photo album with war pictures by his grandmother.[16] To find more pieces of his family history, Arne Schumacher obtained the original regimental history, the *Württembergisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 476 im Weltkrieg 1914-1918* by *Oberst*[17] Nick (1921), from which he learned about the tragedy at Mont Cornillet. Using the pieces of the puzzle he managed to collect, Arne Schumacher published a book broadly reconstructing the events of 20 May 1917.[18] A century later, Inf. Reg. Nr. 476 remains in people's memory. On 20 May 2017, the French army opened the site for the general public for this special occasion. On the day of the commemoration, locals, mayors, dignitaries and schoolchildren from France and Germany attended the commemorative ceremony at the summit of Mont Cornillet.

12 Schumacher 2011, 142, 152, 159, 165, 167 and 173.
13 Schumacher 2011, 176 and 185.
14 Cf. Fraser and Brown 2007.
15 Schumacher 2011, 183 and 188.
16 Schumacher 2011, 6.
17 Colonel.
18 Schumacher 2011.

Figure 1.2 The final resting place of the 330 recovered German soldiers at Warmériville, France

Source: Author

During and after WWI, 'heroism' was underlined in literature as well as in depictions in all countries that had fought the war. Over the course of the past few centuries, warfare has been romanticized greatly by all nations worldwide.[19] An important, recurrent topic has been how to triumph in the most honourable way, rather than how to prevent war.[20] This process of romanticizing the past is directly connected to the Romanticism (approximately 1800-1850). For states, warfare was typically regarded as a heroic exploit, and only recently has warfare changed into something painful. Since the end of WWII, the communal attitude towards war in general has changed significantly.[21] The commemoration of fallen soldiers has shifted from glorification to victimization. Even the German soldiers are now often seen as victims by their former enemies.[22] Archaeology and cultural

19 Sutherland and Holst 2005, 3-4.

20 Helmuth Kiesel quoted in Jünger 2014, 306.

21 However, this has only been the case in the West, and only in hindsight. Nothing has changed in respect to the current war on terror, for example. Personal communication Rob van der Laarse.

22 Meire 2003, 29 and 91-93; Suleiman 2006, 13 and 266; Todman 2008, 210; Login 2015, 120.

memory, especially related to more recent periods, cannot be separated. The power of family 'lore' and 'memory' should not be underestimated either.

1.2 Aims and research perspectives

Although the project at Mont Cornillet was sensu stricto not conflict archaeology, many ingredients for the development of this specialization were already present. In France, it was not until 1991 that the first official archaeological excavation was conducted on a site of solely modern warfare.[23] As this study will demonstrate, conflict archaeology is often the result of community interest. For both the preservation and conservation of sites of modern conflict and, directly related, to the social basis for archaeological heritage management, community interest is always of the utmost importance.[24] Most of the earliest work in conflict archaeology was conducted out of personal interest rather than as a result of development control or grant-funded research.[25] An attempt to recover the human remains for identification was necessary due to grave looting. Not much has changed – looting can still be observed on practically all conflict-related sites. Personal identification of the dead would become much more difficult if all tokens of identity were taken.[26]

There are five major categories of data for conflict archaeologists – namely, (1) human remains, (2) iconography, (3) artefacts, (4) architecture, including field-fortifying earthworks and lastly, (5) historical sources.[27] In archaeological terms, the site at Mont Cornillet was perfect for archaeological research. Because the site was sealed off for visitors directly after WWI, the conditions produced an area with high research value.[28] The historical sources, however, should not be trusted without asking questions. On the regimental maps of Inf. Reg. Nr. 476, the position of the tunnels proved to be incorrect, for instance.[29] Archaeologists should always evaluate the available historical records and oral histories. A combination of contemporary sources, oral history and a geographical reconstruction of the site provided an improved

23 Cf. Adam 2006, 24; cf. Saunders 2007, 102.

24 Deeben *et al.* 1999, 191; Sutherland and Holst 2005, 7; Pollard and Banks 2010, 440.

25 Cf. Pollard and Banks 2007, iii; cf. Wijnen *et al.* 2016, 24.

26 Cf. Connor and Scott 1998; Sutherland and Holst 2005, 30; Moshenska 2008, 165; cf. Schiltmans and IJntema 2014, 138; cf. Lecroere 2016.

27 Armit *et al.* 2006, 6-7.

28 Cf. Passmore and Harrison 2008; cf. Rass and Lohmeier 2011; cf. Passmore *et al.* 2013; cf. Meylemans and Petermans 2017.

29 Cf. Pollard and Banks 2007, xii.

perspective on the events, in addition to its main purpose: recovering the human remains.[30] Although most attention was given to the mass grave, the alternate German and French occupation of the tunnels during WWI was noted as well. The recovery works received overwhelming community interest and were covered by several media sources. Without the media, the shift of awareness among professional archaeologists would have taken place much later, and traditional archaeological funding agencies would not have supported conflict-archaeological research at the very start. Although conflict-archaeological research is often based on national sentiments and is often strictly divided by national borders, both French and Germans worked side by side during the recovery works at Mont Cornillet.[31]

Since the recovery work in 1974 and 1975, conflict archaeology has developed rapidly. Today, it is a research domain with a wide geographic and temporal scope, ranging from the Palaeolithic era to modern times. However, archaeology should not limit its focus to long-term processes but incorporate the impact of past events into its narratives.[32] As a discipline, archaeology is regarded differently in different countries.[33] The archaeology of conflict has a multidisciplinary character, using concepts, insights and methods from social anthropology, military history and heritage studies. This specific and distinctive branch of archaeology reveals the 'bottom-up' history of human violence and suffering.[34] It is possible to create models for the archaeological material that can be referenced and tested. In the broad, multidimensional approach of conflict archaeology, elements of different research agendas are integrated. When shown in a diagram,[35] a distinction can be made between a time-space dimension, an institutional dimension and a cultural dimension (Fig. 1.3). Modern conflict archaeologists are focused on events. This microscale can only be fully understood when it is compared and evaluated in a broader temporal and macro-regional context. In the institutional dimension, the role of power relations, social structures and the intertwined connection with the economic domain are considered. However, violent conflicts cannot be properly understood

30 Cf. Fox 1993, 326-327; cf. Rass and Lohmeier 2011, 179; cf. Scott and McFeaters 2011, 116.

31 Cf. Pollard and Banks 2007, vi; Schumacher 2011, 128, 157 and 165; cf. Carman 2013.

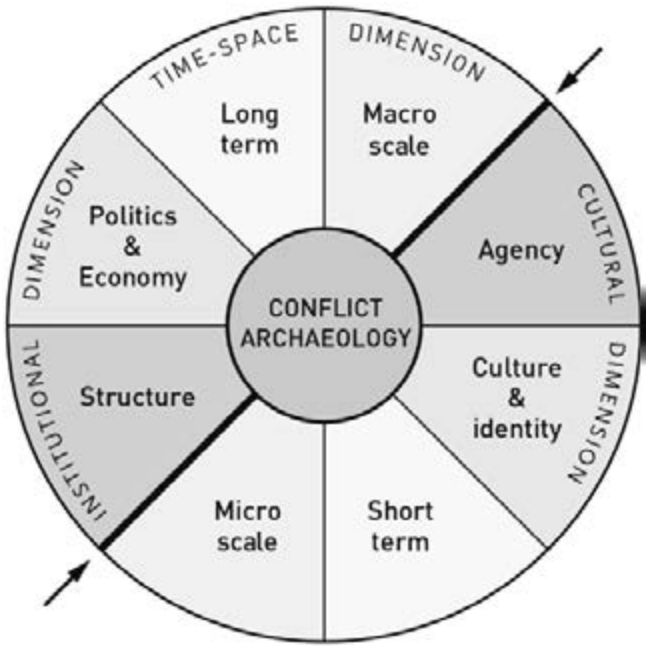
32 Roymans and Fernández-Götz 2018, 6; Keeley 1996, vii and 47; Scott and McFeaters 2011, 103; Armit *et al.* 2006, 2; Carman 2013, 24.

33 Sturdy Colls 2012, 75.

34 Carman 2013, 66 and 95; Sagona and Birkett-Rees 2016, 83; cf. Capps-Tunwell *et al.* 2016a, 327.

35 This scheme was originally developed by Dutch archaeologist Jan Slofstra (2002, 20) for the study of processes of Romanization.

Figure 1.3 Diagram of a more encompassing multidimensional approach of conflict archaeology, using a historical-anthropological perspective



Source: Roymans and Fernández-Götz 2018, 8

without taking the cultural dimension into account: the impact of ideologies, belief systems, identity constructions and rituals.[36] Unfortunately, it goes beyond the purpose of this study to discuss all these aspects.

Social and political elites have been using warfare as an instrument of power for a long time. From the early sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century, wars were fought with dreadful regularity. As a result, Europe alone is scattered with countless battlefields of varying sizes. If one only takes into account the conflicts with the most far-reaching effects (in terms of population loss and destruction of infrastructure), the list would still be incredibly long.[37] However, although battlefields are a major area of research for conflict archaeology, the scope of this specialization consists of far more than investigating battlefields, and conflict archaeology is not synonymous with battlefield archaeology. Conflict archaeology focuses on

36 Sturdy Colls 2012, 95-96; Roymans and Fernández-Götz 2018, 8.
37 Homann 2013, 203.

conflict as a multifaceted phenomenon, with a variety of physical traces that possess multiple meanings that change over time. It is not restricted to battlefields or to large-scale wars between nations. The concept of conflict archaeology embraces other forms of conflict as well, such as industrial conflict, art historical analyses, protest activism, colonial conflict and cultural resource management, revealing the richness of the field. Its development as an important field of study is reflected in numerous publications, symposia and excavations, and in the application of new methods and technologies. Since the establishment of the *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* in 2005, numerous papers have been published on various topics in the field.[38] A wide range of methods and techniques are available for conflict archaeologists, including forensic archaeology, systematic metal detection, historic landscape reconstruction, aerial photography and excavations, to name but a few. Conflict archaeology offers powerful new methodologies and theoretical insights into the nature and experience of (industrialized) war.[39]

Unlike the United Kingdom, the Netherlands does not have a tradition in researching conflict sites archaeologically at an *academic* level. Although both WWI and WWII appeal strongly to the popular imagination, modern conflict had not been approached from an archaeological perspective to any great extent in Dutch academia until recently. Archaeology in the Netherlands is more associated with pre-modern eras and therefore has not developed much interest for twentieth-century violence at an academic level. In general, a lack of interest can be noted for military history and conflict archaeology. Archaeology of Roman Britain, for instance, is divided between the civilian south and the military north and west. This gap is hardly ever bridged. Despite its popularity among the general public, military archaeology is still unpopular in academic circles. For a start, military or conflict archaeology have acquired a poor standing among archaeologists, because violence and its origins are regarded as distasteful research topics. Secondly, it is often argued that 'we already know enough' and that there is little left to research. However, as most notably demonstrated by Douglas D. Scott's archaeological research conducted at Little Bighorn, Montana, United States, even an extensive, available historical data set can be proven incorrect.[40]

Despite the lack of organized academic interest, several Dutch archaeologists started to record traces and features from WWII and to collect

38 Banks and Pollard 2018, 1-2.

39 Myers 2008, 243; Bleed and Scott 2011, 47; Sagona and Birkett-Rees 2016, 83.

40 Cf. Scott *et al.* 1989; cf. Hingley 2008, 25; Breeze 2018, 1-2.

artefacts from this period from the 1980s onwards, albeit on an individual basis. Many scholars in the Netherlands were sceptical about excavating and researching the material remains of this recent past. The total number of Dutch academic papers on this topic is still limited, and the number of peer-reviewed academic papers on modern conflict archaeology (i.e. WWII) in the Netherlands can be counted on one hand: four so far, of which two were written or co-written by the author of this study.[41] On the other hand, the number of bachelor's and master's theses on this particular topic is steadily growing.[42] The value and urgency of conflict-archaeological research is also legitimized by the rapidly growing social interest in this subject. Increasing interest in conflict archaeology research into WWII is also notable. However, the development of a methodology and of excavation skills is limited by laws and legislation in the Netherlands. Most strikingly, there are no clear (national) guidelines on how to deal with the remnants of this relatively young era.[43]

The past two decades have notably seen a growing interest in the heritage and remembrance of the war. 'New' heritage is discovered nearly on a daily basis, for instance in attics, through the discovery of archaeological remains, through the digitization of collections and in the ever growing body of oral histories.[44] The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports[45] initiated the Heritage of War[46] programme between 2007 and 2010, distributing a total of 23 million euros in grants among 221 projects for the preservation and accessibility of some of the most important material remains of WWII.[47] The main goal of this programme was to make these dispersed collections digitally available and accessible. German remains were also prospected and evaluated.[48] Furthermore, there is a growing consensus for the integration of conflict archaeology, or to be more precise, WWII archaeology, into the Archaeological Monument Care (AMZ).[49] According to national laws and legislation, everything under the surface is now part of archaeological heritage. However, not all eras are equally important, and archaeologists

41 Van der Schriek and Van der Schriek 2014; Wijnen *et al.* 2016; Van der Schriek and Beex 2017; Van der Schriek 2020.
42 Cf. Bosman *et al.* 2014, 17; cf. Wijnen *et al.* 2016, 26.
43 Van der Schriek and Van der Schriek 2014, 232-233.
44 Van der Laarse 2011, 33.
45 Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport.
46 Erfgoed van de Oorlog.
47 Kok and Vos (ed.) 2013, 3.
48 Arts 2017, 121; Leije and Hamburg 2014, 63; Zandhuis 2015, 9.
49 AMZ: Archeologische Monumentzorg.

have to be selective. The Heritage of War programme also encouraged the development of policies with regard to this fragile heritage.[50] However, the *archaeological* heritage of war or sites of conflict was hardly mentioned or discussed in the published report. For a long time, the scientific perspective on WWII was dominated entirely by historians,[51] and not much has changed since this programme was initiated. Archaeologists have an important task ahead of them, as they will have to introduce new perspectives and storylines.

Sites of conflict are to be considered parts of *landscapes of war* in the widest sense. Former battlefields are stirring landscapes that are often transformed into symbolic spaces through pilgrimage, memorialization and tourism.[52] The 'event' of a battle leaves physical marks on a landscape (Fig. 1.4), while warfare has major psychological and physical impact on the people. There is an important difference between conflict *landscapes* and conflict *remembrance*. On the one hand, the heritage of war is promoted by means of monuments and important anniversaries, and the cultural memory of war has been imprinted with and influenced by military cemeteries and monuments. On the other hand, the same era is largely ignored from an archaeological point of view. Only a handful of excavations have been conducted on WWII conflict sites in the Netherlands, and many important locations are still not legally protected in any way. Landscapes of memory are of great significance to our present-day world. What people remember and how it is remembered changes continuously, and history is often used to bolster particular political positions and to influence the public narrative.[53] Archaeology, however, is not necessarily an apolitical study. Due to its main role of truth-finding, archaeology has also become a tool for representation and memorialization. With regard to findings from former WWII extermination camps, archaeology turns 'rubbish' into artefacts. According to Dutch cultural historian Rob van der Laarse, archaeology is a performative act of cultural or even political significance, changing and shaping the traditional historical narrative.[54]

A main problem conflict archaeology in the Netherlands faces is that modern eras, including both world wars, have not received serious attention. As such, we must first determine the current state of conflict archaeology

50 Zandhuis 2015, 9.

51 Leije and Hamburg 2014, 63.

52 Cf. MacCannel 1976; cf. Urry 1990; Veterans Affairs Canada 2000; Van der Laarse 2011; cf. Homann 2013, 221.

53 Banks and Pollard 2018, 2.

54 Van der Laarse 2017, 144-147.

Figure 1.4 Landscapes of war. La Main de Massiges in northern France, 2014. The site saw heavy fighting in 1914 and 1915; this fighting is still clearly visible more than a century later.

Source: Author

in the Netherlands. Chapter 2 delves into the historical background of conflict archaeology. Over the past decade, the study of conflict and war has emerged as a new sub-discipline of archaeology. Its key methodologies were developed in the United States as early as the 1980s; there, specialized field techniques (such as advanced metal detecting) and methods for spatial analysis (such as Geographical Information Systems) were explored to locate specific artefacts to map and reconstruct military strategies and other war events. These key methodologies are still in use today.[55] I will argue that Dutch archaeologists need a different theoretical and methodological toolkit to be able to conduct conflict archaeology. Conflict archaeology not only produces detailed interpretations of battles and war events but also traces and contextualizes the individual historical participants in conflict situations.[56] When applied and interpreted appropriately, archaeology can play an important role in the preservation, the contemporary experience and

55 Scott *et al.* 1989; Carman 2013, 46.

56 Myers 2008, 243; Sagona and Birkett-Rees 2016, 83.

the historical reconstruction of recent conflicts. The aim of this study is to develop a Dutch approach to conflict archaeology, integrating archaeology, heritage research and history on a landscape scale. This study focuses on the challenges and limitations, as well as the potential, of conflict archaeology. The value and urgency of this research is also legitimized by the rapidly growing social interest for WWII-related landscapes in the Netherlands, a war that still occupies an important place in Dutch collective memory and annual rituals of commemoration. However, research methods other than excavations will be needed.

This study will discuss the theoretical background of conflict archaeology, but this is not its principle aim. Much has been published on the rapidly changing theoretical paradigms that underly conflict archaeology, but the essence of this study is to both analytically and technically explore the potential of conflict archaeology in the Netherlands. Basically, there are no archaeological research questions available. The main research question in this study focuses on the foundation of conflict archaeology: (1) Is conflict archaeology in fact possible, at any level, in the Netherlands? Further, (2) how can we identify sites of conflict? (3) How essential is the availability of historical sources and should they always be validated? (4) Do we need a special heritage policy for (modern) conflict-related sites? For many years, the archaeological remains of WWII found during excavations or construction were regarded as curiosities at best and were exhibited as such.[57] At the academic level, researching modern conflict archaeology is still a pioneering job in the Netherlands. Although older warfare will be addressed as well, the main topic is recent conflict. This study will not address any other research topics that are particularly popular at the moment, such as archaeology at sites of present-day conflict, for example, the demolition of archaeological heritage in war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

WWI and WWII also raged on and beneath the water. Many ships, submarines and aircraft sunk within Dutch territorial waters.[58] The ocean floor is populated by about 7800 shipwrecks that were involved in WWII, with 3800 ships in the Pacific Theatre of War alone.[59] However, underwater archaeology is outside the scope of this study due to the specialized methods and techniques it requires.

This research uses an approach derived from the field of landscape archaeology, because conflict sites are to be considered cultural landscapes,

57 Cf. Homann 2013, 205-206.
58 Cf. Bosman *et al.* 2014, 21.
59 Monfils 2005, 1049.

influenced and shaped by people. As will be explained in Chapter 3, landscapes are multivocal and multilayered, and they accommodate a complex landscape biography. Landscapes of war never develop in a historical vacuum, but are always composed of and situated in landscapes with a long history. Hence, the historical backgrounds of local landscapes and trajectories of path dependence must also be taken into account to better understand the idiosyncratic nature, functions and social implications of particular landscapes of war. This perspective can provide innovative new means of dealing with the material culture of conflict, heritage management and commemoration, and it is important that these archaeological monuments are not viewed in isolation.[60]

In Chapter 4, the state of the field is compared with that in other countries. This chapter has a descriptive character with a strong archaeological focus in order to reflect on international developments. How did conflict archaeology develop? What are the similarities and differences in approach and the narratives created in various countries? This study is not meant for a Dutch audience only. Although the Netherlands is the main research field in this study, the arguments it introduces have wider significance. The material remains of WWII are unique compared to older eras due to issues of sovereignty, jurisdiction and ownership. Though Dutch excavation protocols and legal procedures are nation-specific, the challenges facing archaeological research with regard to modern looting through illegal metal detecting, the discussion on how to deal with these remains, and the ongoing improvements to applied conflict archaeology are of international importance. Ethics will be addressed in Chapter 5. Most modern conflicts belong to living memory, and their investigation and presentation requires a sensitive touch. Conflict archaeologists are often confronted with political interventions, media pressure or unexpected reactions by local communities, and this study will ask how archaeologists should deal with such ethical questions.

In many countries, material culture is regarded as the main source of archaeological information. In this study, the approach of entire landscapes of conflict is presented. As will be demonstrated in several case studies in Chapter 6, the archaeological remains of modern conflict should not be studied in isolation. All cases adopt an explicit heritage perspective, assessing the availability, condition, management and presentation of relics that are still visible on or remain buried under the surface. This approach will present a broader perspective. Furthermore, the application of new techniques in

60 Cf. Deeben *et al.* 1999, 178; Sturdy Colls 2012, 89; cf. Stichelbaut and Cowley (eds.) 2016.

the study of conflict archaeology is relevant for archaeologists worldwide, because methodologies in the field and the subsequent analyses are continuously evolving. How can proper choices be made? How can archaeologists assess the potentials and limitations of the different analytical methods?

With regard to the interaction of heritage, archaeology and spatial developments, this study can be regarded as *fundamental* research. For a relatively young specialization, conflict archaeology has an impressive degree of interdisciplinary collaboration. It is expected that an applied multidisciplinary approach, which connects approved methods of conflict archaeology research with new concepts for landscape archaeology, will be innovative and profitable for both international conflict archaeology and the Dutch research tradition itself. This field of study is prominently present in the media and is the playground for many new techniques and debates.[61] This study integrates archaeology, heritage research and history at the landscape scale. In assessing and validating the added value of modern conflict archaeology for the Netherlands, it has also been a *valuation* study. Finally, by verifying and administering a non-invasive technique, it also includes *methodological* research.[62] Light Detecting And Ranging (LiDAR) is a new tool for archaeologists that provides a convenient scale for delineation, management and protection of some (iconic) sites. When we look at complete landscapes instead of isolated sites, we see they are full of archaeological features, even though, individually, they would not have merited protection. The results, therefore, have implications for further research and preservation. Should there be a focus on iconic rather than average sites? In addition to the practical reasons for using LiDAR-based Digital Elevation Models (DEMs), such as their low cost, they are also an ideal way to avoid endangering any archaeologists in the field as well as to evade conflicting laws and legislation on the topic. It is important that a research agenda be drafted to preserve some of the key sites in the Netherlands. LiDAR can therefore be used as an archaeological prospecting tool to study forests and heathlands in particular.[63]

61 Moshenska 2008, 161.

62 Cf. Witsen (ed.) 2014, 27.

63 Cf. Hesse 2010; cf. Pollard and Banks 2007, viii; cf. Sutherland 2009, 115; cf. Demoule 2011, 10.