

## **The battlefield as an object of interest to visitors and adaptation to tourism - an outline of the issues**

*Keywords: battlefields, military tourism, adapting to tourism*

### **Summary**

Battlefields represent, in most cases, an untapped potential for tourism. This potential is untapped due to, among other reasons, a lack of well-preserved artefacts and monuments at the sites of battlefields, but also to a common general inability by visitors to successfully read battlefield landscapes, even by more culturally aware tourists. For these reasons, it seems that few battlefields have managed to adapt to tourism and become proper tourist attractions in themselves, not just as a part of a niche form of tourism. This article will analyse in general terms the potential of battlefields for tourism, but also in material and symbolic terms how to present and adapt them as particularly "sensitive" symbols of heritage, a problem which any adaptation to tourism would need to solve, not to mention the technical problems also involved. The author proposes that being more active in local and regional education as well as encouraging historical events such as re-enactments are important ways for battlefields to become more actively involved in tourism

### **Introduction**

The history of mankind is largely a history of conflicts. In the past, as well as in the near future, political and geographical relationships have been shaped not only by diplomatic arrangements, marriages and agreements, but most of all by the sheer power of arms. The battles fought in places such as the Teutoburg Forest, Waterloo or Stalingrad have decided not only the fate of nations, but also the fate of human civilization itself.

The subject of research in this article is a theoretical analysis of battlefields in terms of their potential for tourism – their meaning and material needs, as well as their possibility for adaptation to the needs of visitors. The adaptation of historical battlefields to tourism poses many difficulties and will require many problems to be solved, not only of a purely technical nature.

### **1. Battlefields – their general importance for tourism**

Tourism has been quick to see the potential of battlefields, especially from the period of time that states began to be thought of in national terms as opposed to purely dynastic. The glory of battle, honour, heroism and sacrifice has fed feelings of popular nationalism and played an important role in the shaping of historical national identities.

Visiting battlefields has been classified as a form of military cultural tourism [Jędrzyak, Rohrscheidt, 2011], which, apart from the battlefields themselves, includes: fortifications (permanent, semi-permanent and field), military or biographical museums related to e.g. famous commanders, commemorations, graves and war cemeteries as well as all kinds of military events, including anniversary events, military parades, reconstructions and historical re-enactments. Among the motivations that play a key role for tourists in making trips to battlefields is a general interest in national history, a focus on learning about military matters and military history, or a curiosity about historical re-enactments from a military perspective. Personal or family matters are also of great importance here too, i.e. conflict-related personal experiences (e.g. direct participation) as well as so-called 'dark' tourism themes - a desire to commune with places that have been marked by individual or collective death. Battlefield

tourism, due to its control often by national institutions, can also sometimes be a part of school or educational tourism, and visiting national memorial sites can be included in the national awareness education of young people (1).

In the case of battlefield tourism, tourists may be interested in both tangible and intangible attractions. First of all, there are subjective memorials to the event (location, time, parties to the conflict, its course, combat strategies used etc) – as documented in historiography or confirmed by scientific (e.g. archaeological) research, as opposed to its popular image based on objective oral accounts, stories, literary creations etc. A visit to a battlefield allows people to combine these two types of memory, to confront personal ideas with the historical facts. As Wolski [2008, p. 160] writes, battlefields "are perceived as pantheons of military glory, where the present is intertwined with the past, and the earth hides the ashes of fallen warriors". In the case of battlefields, the aim of developing tourism could also be to combine symbolic or political dimensions with the actual history of the place.

A battlefield can be attractive to tourists because they can experience it as a specific geographical space, the physical components of which played a specific role in the course of the event (the topography, the nature of the land cover, settlement developments etc). Battlefields were often carefully selected as an obstacle to movement, or as an obstacle to observation, or as a means of concealing one's own forces from enemy fire [Clausewitz 2013]. Thanks to experiencing the physical space of the battlefield, we can get to know the anatomy of the battle. Ultimately, the battlefield can be equipped with various types of commemorations: this could be to the event itself or to the graves of the fallen, and the form of the landscape (whether that be architectural, urban or landscape), the scale, emotional charge and interpretation can all help arouse interest and attract visitors. Each of the above-mentioned battlefield themes would require different adaptations for tourism, depending on the intention of the individual tour operator.

The number of tourists visiting battlefields varies greatly, and although it is statistically difficult to separate tourists who may be visiting a battlefield inadvertently as general cultural tourists from specific fans of this type of tourist attraction, the tourist traffic generated by battlefields is significant - possibly due to other elements connected with the adaptation to tourism. The tourist centre related to the Battle of Agincourt in France is visited annually by 30 thousand tourists, the battlefield of the Civil War near Gettysburg in the United States – by many as 2 million tourists [Sutherland, Holst 2004 in: Delcusse 2002 and Babbitts 2004]. The motivation to visit battlefields or participate in anniversary events is sometimes so strong that it can prompt tourists to undertake journeys far away from their place of residence (including between continents). Although thousands of kilometres distant from Australia, Gallipoli in Turkey is visited annually by 10,000 to 20,000 Australians [Basarin 2011]. Battlefields are also frequently visited during important anniversary events and historical re-enactments. In the staging of the most famous battle in the fields in Poland, every year nearly

*1 In this context, we can consider the journeys of Australians to Gallipoli (Turkey), the place of the heroic death of 8709 Australian soldiers [Basarin 2011] in one of the battles during World War I, undertaken mainly for patriotic reasons - as part of the so-called ANZAC Day [Basarin 2011, p. 51]. The concept of patriotic school upbringing involving visiting of event venues*

*assessed as particularly important or groundbreaking in the history of Poland (including battlefields) was proposed in 2007 by Roman Giertych, Minister of Education in the governments of Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and Jarosław Kaczyński. This idea is currently referred to (2013) by the authorities of Wrocław, which are considering financing trips to Memorial Sites for Wrocław high school and middle school students - for now these would be mainly concentration camps: Oświęcim and Rogoźnica, but there are also plans for other objects of patriotic or cultural importance [http : //www.wroclaw.pl/miasto\_sf finansuje\_wyaznienia\_do\_miejsc\_pamieci,1.dhtml, 17.07.2013].*

one and half thousand re-enactors meet in battle at Grunwald, accompanied by a similar

number of supporters and several thousand spectators. On the 600th anniversary of the battle, 2,000 enthusiasts of ancient history and 15,000 tourists participated in its re-enactment. [Pstrocka-Rak, Nowacińska 2013].

Battlefields - although undoubtedly occupying an important place in the ethos of the history of nations - are subject to different degrees and forms of conservation in different countries. This can affect the degree of tourist interest in this type of heritage, for example through the greater availability of information to the public about a battlefield, its historical significance, the location, as well as material artefacts, memorials and information about the role of different elements of the physical landscape in the course of the historic event.

The American National Park Service offers an easy-to-use search engine, the National Register of Historic Places, which has 157 records related to the search term "battlefield", and includes photographic documentation, descriptions of locations, as well as what forms of conservation orders the locations are under. The register is not only of great cognitive value, but also has a significance when it comes to tourism: containing information about the facilities available, opening hours, transport accessibility and help in booking certain services. In Scotland, a belief in the importance of battlefields in shaping national remembrance has resulted in the creation of an inventory of historical battlefields - a list categorised in terms of importance, material preservation and landscape context [see *The Inventory of Historic Battlefields in Scotland. An introductory guide*, 2011]. The selection criteria for the battlefields are described in detail in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy [2011]. Currently the inventory lists 39 battlefields [<http://data.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pls/htmlldb/f?p=2500:10:0>] and provides contemporary maps showing the location of each battlefield, a description of the historical and contemporary landscape of the battlefield, any remaining physical and archaeological artefacts, and links to the relevant bibliography with up-to-date knowledge of the battlefield. In Poland, facts about battlefields in the form of an inventory have been partly included in the register of monuments available on the website of the National Heritage Institute, but it is only a residual knowledge, with information about which individual battlefields have been protected by conservation (2). Descriptions from the register do not provide any information about the present state of preservation of the sites, the importance of the battlefields, or their exact locations. The website of the Institute of National Remembrance contains information about battlefields only in the context of anniversary events or re-enactments presented in the form of "news", with no categorized or tagged information. Nevertheless, these sources of information about battlefields are important for tourism, as they mediate the transmission of information, promote events and encourage active participation.

## **2. Adaptation of battlefields for tourism**

### **The problem of scale, space and the blurring of borders**

Even in the cases where historiography has accurately defined the location of a battle, it is difficult to precisely define the boundaries of the space in which the clash of opposing forces took place. Sometimes it is also difficult to determine whether we are already dealing with a real "battle" or with, for example, a skirmish. It is easiest to determine when the battle was decisive. As Clausewitz [2013, p. 122] states, "(...) a decisive battle is a clash of the main forces, it should always be considered to be the true centre of gravity of the war (...)." Wolski [2008] notices that the very term "battlefield" is associated with an open space. However, the material nature, scale and spatial scope of battlefields have been different at different stages in the development of civilization and resulted from the generally implemented military

*2 Part of the battlefields protected as areas of archaeological observation, less often as monuments in the register of monuments (Grunwald fields, Raclawice, Maciejowice, Ossów, Westerplatte), cultural parks (Battle of Warsaw, Ossów - Cultural Park Wrota Bitwy Warszawskiej 1920), historical monuments (Westerplatte, Grunwald, Raclawice) [according to the National Heritage Institute].*

strategies of the time. In ancient times, when often it took only one decisive battle to decide

the outcome of a war, a search was made for an area large enough to include the numbers of both enemy forces and to enable the combatants to fight in hand-to-hand combat. The spaces of ancient battlefields (especially when they were of a general character), however, compared with later times, were usually not too large. This is because the relatively immobile, difficult to manoeuvre human masses that made up the forces most often met frontally, with each army trying to outflank and encircle their enemy. In the Middle Ages, cavalry became the main force used on the battlefield. Battlefields were of various sizes, sometimes numerous different clashes took place over vast areas: e.g. the Battle on the Marchfeld (also known as the Battle of Suchý Krutý, August 26, 1278, today Dürnkrut in Austria), took place between two towns, a few kilometres apart. Similarly, the Battle of Grunwald (15/07/1410) was actually fought between several towns. Wolski [2008, p. 73], similarly to Rajewski, defines the size of the rather broadly understood area of Grunwald Fields as about 250 km<sup>2</sup> (along with the facilities where the events of the battle took place), in which the actual battlefield covers a large area between the villages of Dąbrówno - Ulnowo - Mielno - Stębark - Łodwigowo - Gardyń. However, another equally significant medieval battle - the Battle of Agincourt (10/25/1415), took place in conditions where both armies were only 900 meters apart. The front of the English army – in order to eliminate the advantage of the French army's numerical superiority (3), was narrowed to as little as 750 m [Tod Carey et al. 2008]. With the introduction of firearms, especially artillery, to battlefields, the theatre of war became stretched, giving the possibility to engage an enemy even from a great distance. This is particularly evident in the example of the First World War. Defensive devices in the form of barbed wire entanglements and machine gun positions were often set up along the entire front of a battlefield. Battlefields were entwined with networks of trenches, between which there was a strip of land known as "No man's land". The Battles of Verdun, Somme and Ypres covered vast areas. During the Second World War, battlefields included both vast, strategically important areas (e.g. the Battle of the Bulge, Ardennes, December 1944), as well as whole large cities which were transformed into fortresses e.g. the Battle of Stalingrad 1943, the Battles for Berlin or Festung Breslau in mid-1945. In the case of the latter two, traces of important history have been all but lost due to successive reconstructions of the cities. As Olejnik [2006] claims, the Second World War brought about significant changes in the traditional notions of war and battle. The whole land line of the front, stretching over many tens (if not hundreds) of kilometres, became a single battlefield, and at the same time battles were fought not only on land or water, but also in the air (e.g. the Battle of Britain). The coastal waters of the American Pearl Harbor base in Hawaii became a battlefield. Sunken vessels resting at the bottom of the bay, the wrecks of American ships destroyed during the Japanese attack are commemorated and visited by crowds of tourists (4). In the contexts just described, it is difficult to talk about battlefields in the traditionally understood way, but we can assume the motivations of the tourists visiting these materially different places are quite similar. In some cases, we have to deal with the fact that an entire region is a battlefield, such as in the case of the Pacific island of Iwo Jima, where there is practically no place on the island free from traces of an extremely bloody clash between the Allies and the Japanese who were defending the island. Just as war became total during the Second World War, so the battlefield took on a different meaning than previously.

*3 French forces ranged from 20,000 to 30,000 soldiers, English forces only 6,000. The number of fallen was reversed: from 3 to 5 thousand. French (mainly the flower of French cavalry) and 300-400 English [Grant 2007, p. 114].*

*4 This is favoured by the fact that the wrecks lie at a shallow depth and are visually accessible due to the high transparency of the water. The USS Arizona wreck off the shores of Ford Island in Southeast Loch (Oahu, Hawaii) was commemorated with the construction of a floating memorial / museum / memorial (USS Arizona Memorial), celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2012.*

The very concept of battle is complex and a battlefield cannot always be fully equated with the location where the actual fighting simply took place. Zawadzki [2010] draws attention to a number of elements of space that should be analysed in the context of a battle: these include the marching routes of troops, the locations of the camps of the forces involved in the conflict,

any fortifications erected on the battlefield (ramparts, trenches, etc.), field hospitals as well as the actual location of the fighting itself. After the fighting is finished, its material traces are the graves of the fallen, the transformed natural landscape (e.g. depleted vegetation and changes to the land surface) (5), changes to the cultural landscape (i.e. damage to architecture and the urban tissue of towns and villages), and changes to retreat routes (often marked with graves). Identification of a battlefield should not be too difficult spatially (most traces of a battle are preserved in the place where the fighting was conducted), but it should also be borne in mind that this is not a clearly homogeneous space. Battles were not always general in nature, they may consist of a series of skirmishes, clashes, and other connected events taking place in varyingly more or less distant locations.

Determining the anatomy of a battle in its spatial dimension is difficult, needs investment and is often labour-intensive. Proper archaeological research on the battlefield should be preceded by detailed historical and cartographic studies as well as with field research. This research should consist of making a clear determination of where in the contemporary landscape there are characteristic elements remaining that are related to the topography, hydrography or road networks that can still be associated with the historical events [Wrzosek 2008].

All of these factors mean that today, especially in the light of new and changing administrative and legal circumstances, the battlefield can be a difficult space for comprehensive development and adaptation to tourism purposes. Knowledge of the actual appearance of the historical, natural and cultural landscape as well as the spatial scale of the battlefield is important, not only from the point of view of the authenticity of the factual historical messages communicated to visitors and the efficacy of tourism development, but also from the point of view of the organization of historical re-enactment events [Rochala 2007].

### **The problem of historical credibility**

Locating the sites of famous battlefields can be difficult in many cases. Due to often scarce information, or facts that may have been written many years after the event took place, or sometimes deliberate politicking of the event [e.g. Battle of Dobromierz 1745, see Chylińska, Kosmala 2011, p. 42] - together with landscapes that may have changed over the centuries - the exact location of a battlefield may remain in doubt if not confirmed by archaeological research. Uncertainty as to the correct location of a battle relates primarily to ancient or medieval battles, due to often poor sources of information or messages about the event that may have become symbolic or iconographic over time. This problem not only concerns less significant events, but also those recognised as turning points, to which history has assigned special significance today. Until the 1980s, the exact location of the battle in the Teutoburg Forest where the Romans suffered defeat at the hands of Germanic tribes, and which prevented their expansion east of the Rhine, was unknown. The final location of the battle was eventually possible thanks to extensive archaeological work (including numismatic finds such as coins, medals, bone material etc), which was preceded by thorough research. The research also included studies of the historical topography and historical land use, allowing for the identification of potentially favourable places for an ambush [Rochala 2007]. Similarly, in France, as reported by Olivier [2010], the actual location of the Battle of Alesia (6), located in Alise-la-Reine in Burgundy, also thought by some historians to have taken place in Alaise in Jura, remains uncertain until today. Recalling a once overheard comment; "The Battle for Alesia continues", this author can state [p. 51] that "In the politics of memory, a battle that has yet to be set in a specific place, is a battle that has never ended." There are similar discussions around the location of the Battle of Chibi (Red Cliff) in ancient China (208 AD)

*5 A particularly suggestive trace of a former clash are the blast craters located on the battlefields of Verdun, preserved as evidence of a bloody 300-day battle (Zone Rouge).*

*6 Place of the defeat of the Roman army, in which, according to Julius Caesar's account, it succumbed to the*

- discussions which have been going on continuously since the 7th century. Recently, these discussions have become important again, due to growing interest in the history and the location of the battle on the part of the tourism industry. The industry has expressed a desire to develop the actual battle site, but due to uncertainty around the location, competition has sprung up between competing sites associated with the battlefield. [see Xiugui 2006, p. 215]. Apart from discussions around location, in some cases it is also questionable whether the military or political significance of a battle remains. In Poland, the best example of this is the contentious battle of Hundsfeld, near the Polish city of Wrocław (also known as the Battle of Psie Pole). The famous Battle of Grunwald is presented mainly in terms of the military triumph of Władysław Jagiełło's troops over the troops of the Teutonic Order, however issues relating to his political defeat and his inability to take advantage of the victory in the fields of Grunwald are less frequently raised. Another problem that can be encountered when conducting research into specific battlefields is the fact that sometimes we have to deal with what can be called "overlapping" of archaeological traces from different periods, especially in places which, for strategic reasons, have been the theatre of military operations many times throughout history. Such a situation can be observed near Cedyń, where, apart from the famous battle in the 10th century, there are remains of battles from World War II [Rochala 2007]. Similarly in Ujście, at the site of the crossing of the Noteć River, a battle during the Polish-Swedish wars (1655), there were earlier conflicts at that location that had been fought at the time of Bolesław Krzywousty. Outside Poland, another example is the Shipka Pass in Bulgaria, where, due to the strategic importance of the site, a number of battles were fought at or near that location during the 10th Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878).

Archaeological research of battlefields, although desirable, however requires a lot of work and is costly, often yielding less than spectacular results. Places of battle are often places that have been continuously and intensively used over time. Most post-battle artefacts are relatively shallow, in the top, arable layer of soil (with the exception of battle graves), and with continued agricultural use of the area, they can be successively destroyed or removed. The small number of artefacts found is also often related to the plundering of battlefields both by the local population, and of course by the victorious troops who remained at the site during and after their triumph. The location of the graves of those killed in combat is also often a mystery - the burials of lower-ranking combatants are usually mass and virtually unmarked. For centuries, history has granted only the nobly born with memorials or individual places for their burials. A good example of how difficult it is to find unambiguous and obvious traces which can confirm the location of a battle is evidenced by the relatively modest results of many years of research into the battlefield in Grunwald. So far, graves associated with the battle have only been found during excavations in the ruins of a chapel and at the Jungingen Stone [Wolski 2008, pp. 79, 85]. Discoveries of battle graves can confirm whether an event took place and its specific location, but they cannot be used to fully identify the size or extent of the battlefield. From the point of view of tourism, the presence of confirmed and identified graves of the fallen within the battlefield allows not only for a deeper interpretation of the battlefield, but it also humanizes the space, giving it not only a military or historical dimension, but a human one which can intensify interest in the subject on the part of visitors. In this way, the battlefield can become a "magnet" attracting not only military tourists, but also those interested in dark tourism and even, under certain circumstances, those interested in themes of martyrdom, or heroism (7).

*7 An example is the battle in the Thermopylae Gorge (a heroic fight by the Spartans against the overwhelming forces of the Persians) or the heroic defense of Wizna by Polish soldiers against the German forces of Gen. H. Guderian.*

## Location and character of the focal point of battle

When organizing the site of a battlefield for visitors, we can also encounter the problem of which 'focal points' should become the main 'markers' at the location. 'Markers' refers to which parts of the location should be given special importance and we have to consider how the choices could affect the overall perception of the place for visitors. 'Focal points' can be understood in military terms as the locations where the battle was resolved, for example, or when an enemy's formation was broken. In more human terms, these may be the places most heavily drenched with blood, which are not always the places of the greatest strategic importance. For example, particularly commemorated is "Bloody Lane" (before the battle of The Sunken Road), which is the site of the deaths of several thousand soldiers who fought at the Battle of Antietam (1862, Maryland), one of the most important battles of the American Civil War. Also considered 'focal points' could be locations documented as having been the site of particular heroism by combatants or their commanders.

If there are already historical monuments on the battlefield, the matter is probably sealed – the space and the existing organization of the location may reflect the most mythologized memories of the victorious. Commemorating the Battle of Waterloo, the Lion's Mount with its statue of a lion looking proudly towards the French border allows you to not only freely view the landscape of the former battlefield, but also without knowing the history of the place allows you to feel intuitively the seriousness and significance of the event that happened there. Cemeteries located directly on the battlefield are rather rare (8), although their location, especially in relation to modern conflicts, do often have some correspondence to the location of battlefields, especially when the battle lasted a long time (sometimes months) and took place over a large area. Sometimes the memories of the location of mass graves have become faded (9), while individual (though often unmarked) graves of those who died in more minor clashes, during marches or behind the front lines have been preserved. Locations of graves have sometimes been preserved more in the memory of local inhabitants (10) than in historical archives. Nevertheless, places associated with the graves of combatants tend to focus the attention of visitors - as in the case of Grunwald Fields, where, apart from the modern-day museum, the most important site today on the battlefield is the ruins of the chapel, where recent excavations have revealed the burials of some of those killed during the clash of 1410. The focal points and how they are exhibited to visitors (through site development, availability to visitors, tourism promotion etc) will largely determine the overall interpretation of the events during the battle. Will the battlefield tell only the well-known story of the battle, a story of dry facts, or a more human one, told through the prism of the experiences of individuals or easier to imagine smaller groups of combatants? It is no coincidence that the Battlefield of Gettysburg is one of the most popular battlefields in the United States - as already mentioned, 2 million tourists visit it annually [Chronis 2002]. The battlefield is commemorated by a number of monuments [see <http://www.hscl.cr.nps.gov/insidenps/summary.asp>, 24/07/2013, Chronis lists over 1,400 battlefield monuments], and the commemorative sculptures and content of the monuments more often refer to the bravery, honour and sacrifice of individual combatants than to military successes (11).

*8 Especially in relation to pre-modern battles.*

*9 The described situation took place even when thousands or tens of thousands of people were killed in the clash, basically until the 20th century, the fallen rank-and-file soldiers were buried anonymously or in unmarked places.*

*10 See Zawadzki (2007). Single military burial sites were subject to special, spontaneous or more or less institutional care, an example of this is the place marked with a cross with an inscription known as the grave of Cossack soldiers from 1813 in Jeżów Sudecki. The inscription on the sandstone cross reads: THERE WAS THERE THERE THERE WERE 3 KILLED BY THE ENEMY Cossacks BROUGHT ON AUGUST 22, 1813. The cross surrounded by a cast-iron fence from 1913 is a small material trace of the region's military (battle) history.*

The sites commemorating the battlefield may also include civilian buildings (e.g. farms) within their immediate surroundings. These facilities were perhaps used in the heat of battle, sometimes serving as a shelter for the wounded or the burial of the fallen. Commemorations

and monuments play a very important role in the perception of the history of the battlefield, not only through the content and message they represent. They represent not only a material representation of the past, but they are also markers of the geography of the battle, allowing for proper orientation in space and enabling visitors to better read the strategies used during the battle.

'Focal point' places focus the visitor's attention in the physical space, but the central characters of the event are equally important when it comes to interpretation of the location and its reception to visitors. The central characters do not always have to be only famous commanders, they can also be rank and file combatants, whose behaviour on the battlefield may have become a model for others and has gone down in history. An example of this is the figure of Adnan Saidi, an officer in the Malay regiment who led his men against the Japanese in the Battle of Pasir Panjang (Opium Hill / Bukit Chandu Battle in Singapore). The battlefield, which the entire island of Iwo Jima is, has captured the imagination of many tourists, attracting tourists who have become interested in the war in the Pacific (u) thanks to a famous photograph (and of course the story behind it) of five US Marines planting the American flag on the island as a sign of their victory (12). The soldiers taking part in this event, captured in a characteristic pose in the photograph, have become an embodiment of the ethos of strength, perseverance and honour of the American soldier.

When considering the problems that any organizer or investor hoping to attract tourists will face, it is worth paying attention to one important technical fact: that development of battlefields for tourism will require adoption of an appropriate perspective of access for visitors. Specifically, the question will the battlefield be "presented" to tourists from outside (e.g. viewing points located around the site with views of the battlefield), so giving a passive form of observation of the historical landscape for the visitor? Or will the battlefield be 'presented' more from the inside, where the visitor is allowed into the interior of the battlefield site (e.g. is able to follow battle trails, or visit places significant on the battlefield itself) or even can become a participant in the events (by participating in historical re-enactments). Sharing the battlefield from the latter perspective, from within the site itself, would seem to have greater cognitive and educational potential, given the right tools and facilities.

## **Interpretation**

From the point of view of organizers concerned with tourism, battlefields can be attractive due to the multitude of levels of interpretation available, but also, the same property can make them problematic in many respects. Battlefields are locations not only of the conflict between the opposing forces that they have become famous for, but also of the systems and interests behind them. Some of these interests can still be alive today and may sometimes arouse negative emotions. Olivier [2008, p. 47] cites the example of Kosovo Pole, a battle whose 600th anniversary in 1989 was celebrated with one of the most nationalist speeches by Slobodan Milošević on the eve of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Battlefields are often considered symbols or sources of not only military pride but also of national pride (13). On this subject, this author would also like to note that "On the battlefield there is a violent clash between the memory of the winner and the memory of the loser": Waterloo, Stalingrad, Iwo Jima to mention just three, are places of glory for some and defeat for others.

*11 Although there are also some that commemorate specific battle episodes, e.g. the capture of two cannons by the 62nd New York Infantry Regiment or the attack on the Codori farm by the 106th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment (106th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment).*

*12 The history of the closing of the American flag (in fact two flags placed one on top of the other) is described by Hammer [2008] and the soldiers participating in this event were portrayed by Clint Eastwood in the Hollywood production of "Banner of Glory" [2006].*

*13 To mention here only Gallipoli (Turkey) as a place where, thanks to the sacrifice of thousands of Australians during the First World War, a nation was born [Basarin 2011], or Vimy Ridge in France, which is one of the*



*most important Canadian National Memorial sites outside the country.*

The situation is complicated by contemporary geographical and political relations, when the battlefields may have become part of a so-called difficult heritage, or are part of an uncomfortable, unwanted, often even marginalized or superseded collective memory (14). The way the battle is commemorated and the battlefield is adapted for visitors (e.g. by highlighting specific themes) must therefore be particularly carefully considered, especially in cases when the veterans of the conflict concerned are still alive. Sometimes commemorations of a battle are controversial even within a nation. Over time, it can often be mythologized, becoming more and more fiction than fact. Using the example of the Battle of Gettysburg, Chrosis [2012] illustrates the conflict between the common image of the place, e.g. what it now represents in the nation's collective memory, and its actual history.

### **Importance of battlefields for tourism**

As has been illustrated, battlefields contain significant material and non-material potential for tourism, although their possibilities for adaptation to tourism are not, as it may at first seem, simple or obvious. Only a few battlefields have the chance to become true tourist attractions, with the possibility to be professionally adapted to tourist purposes. Other places of military clashes, more or less significant, despite their historical or symbolic importance, will continue to remain unexplored territory for most tourists. Considering the niche nature of battlefield tourism, both as a part of cultural tourism in general or even military tourism itself, it may be that educational tourism, for example school visits, may be of greater importance. However, according to this author at least, this must be in a different form than has been previously practised. Battlefield tourism based only on visiting a site with a passive perception of its history is neither attractive to students (older and younger included), nor interesting. Meanwhile, battlefields - especially those that have been designed to unfold to visitors dynamically in time and space, along with a varied topography – could become the subject of interdisciplinary cross-curricular paths, requiring students to apply historical, political and geographical knowledge. Understanding the anatomy of a battlefield, or reconstructing the historical landscape of the battlefield, would require students to use theoretical knowledge in various fields, as well as more practical skills too, such as reading topographic maps, historical maps or other cartographic sources. The analysis of the course of the battle in real space in conjunction with knowledge of human behaviour such as decisions made by the battle commanders, teaches logical thinking such as analysis of the military tactics and strategy used, and prompts the drawing of conclusions and self-assessment of historical events. Other benefits of lessons carried out on the battlefield could include getting to know the historical realities of a specific period, not only on the battlefield, but also the material and spiritual culture of everyday life. It can also shape students' imagination, including spatially, teach empathy and create a sense of connection between the past and the present.

The second area of use for most battlefields that are beyond the general interest of tourists is historical re-enactments. Similarly to the educational use of battlefields, permanent preparation of the area for tourism is not required here. Historical spectacles, such as re-enactments or staging of a battle, are attractive both to the participants of the event (for whom going to the enactment and participation in it is also often part of the tourist experience), but also for the spectators and other passive observers of the spectacle. Tourist infrastructure created for the needs of historical shows such as re-enactments needs only be temporary. Thus, it could be concluded that the use of battlefields for the purposes of historical re-enactments does not have to conflict with any current uses of the battlefield site.

*14 The Japanese change of the name of the island of Iwo Jima to Iō Island (in 2007) can be considered an attempt to "domesticate" or marginalize memory.*

When mentioning the benefits of using battlefield spaces for the purposes of historical

spectacles - for example the greater power of communication at the actual location where the original event took place, as well as drawing attention to the values of the battle heritage and the need for conservation to protect the site, etc - we must not forget there are dangers to undertaking such activities. The organizers or initiators of the event may prefer to favour visual attractiveness of the event over its compliance with historical truth. However, this is largely a problem for tourism which is based more on the material or spiritual heritage of the past. Another problem may seem imaginary, but in some cases it may have real and serious consequences for the historical credibility of a battlefield. Imitation historic fortifications such as earth fortifications, built for the duration of a performance, may leave visible archaeological traces many years later, and during a re-enactment of a battle, the battlefield may become "contaminated" with historical artefacts which don't belong there, especially if the participants of the show have used authentic elements of weapons or arms.

## Summary

Battlefields undoubtedly possess great and varied potential for tourism, but in material terms they may be sensitive from the point of view of heritage and difficult to adapt to make them more attractive to visitors. This should not, however, discourage their use for tourism, but rather inspire exploration into finding more modern methods to narrate the history of the place and how best to present the material relics of the battle preserved in the landscape to make the historical location easier to read. In the case of battlefields, it seems that the participation of this kind of heritage in tourism should be based not so much on equipping battlefields with traditional more 'passive' infrastructure, but should involve more active events such as historical re-enactments as well as involving more active regional education in visits to the site.

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