

HOME FROM THE *DJEBEL*: THE MAKING OF ALGERIAN WAR VETERANS IN  
FRANCE, 1956-1974.

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## ABSTRACT

Anndal Narayanan: Home from the *Djebel*: the making of Algerian War veterans in France, 1956-1974.

(Under the direction of Donald Reid.)

This dissertation examines the return experiences of French veterans of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), focusing on the movement they created and its activism. Service in the Algerian War affected over one million Frenchmen during a period of rapid modernization in France, but these citizens would go unrecognized as veterans by their government for over a decade after the war's end. Analyzing veterans' return experiences, memory, and activism helps us understand the political consequences of the Algerian War in postcolonial French society—how the generation of soldiers who fought a “war without a name” brought the war back home. Drawing on state archives, veterans' association archives, press coverage, and interviews and surveys of veterans, this dissertation finds that long before the French state deigned to recognize them or their war, veterans of Algeria were already politically active, as veterans and as citizens—both to promote their group interests, and to reshape French society based on lessons they drew from the war. Using perspectives of political history, military history, and memory, this dissertation presents a case study of how decolonization affected former colonizers, and the long-term consequences of sending citizens to fight in a controversial and unconventional war with changing war aims.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Topic and rationale.....	1
Chronology.....	7
Historiography.....	7
Sources.....	12
Methods.....	17
Theory.....	21
Chapter Summaries and Argument.....	24
CHAPTER 1: THE GENERATION OF THE <i>DJEBEL</i> : AN EXPERIENTIAL HISTORY OF CONSCRIPTS IN ALGERIA AND THEIR RETURN.....	26
CHAPTER 2: ‘READY TO FIGHT’: VETERANS OF ALGERIA WAGE A WAR OF WORDS AND MEMORY IN FRANCE.....	89
CHAPTER 3: LESSONS FROM THE MOUNTAINS: THE FOUNDERS OF THE ALGERIAN WAR VETERANS’ MOVEMENT.....	129
CHAPTER 4: RIGHTS VERSUS DUTY: ORGANIZING CITIZENS IN ALGERIAN WAR VETERANS’ ASSOCIATIONS.....	164
CHAPTER 5: THE BATTLE IN THE METROPOLE: VETERANS’ ASSOCIATION POLITICS DURING THE WAR.....	194
CHAPTER 6: ELITE SPOKESMEN AND MASS ACTION: THE SECOND “DAYS OF MAY” AND THE STRUGGLE FOR VETERANS’ RECOGNITION.....	221

CONCLUSION.....	283
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO FNACA MEMBERS (ENGLISH TRANSLATION).....	290
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO FNACA MEMBERS (FRENCH ORIGINAL).....	292
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO UNC/AFN MEMBERS (ENGLISH TRANSLATION).....	294
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO UNC/AFN MEMBERS (FRENCH ORIGINAL).....	295
APPENDIX E: BREAKDOWN OF QUESTIONNAIRES BY CATEGORIES.....	296
APPENDIX F: BREAKDOWN OF INTERVIEWS BY CATEGORIES.....	298
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	299

## TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AAA: *Association des anciens d'Algérie*: Association of Veterans of Algeria.
- ACUF: *Association des combattants de l'Union française*: Association of Veterans of the French Union.
- AGMG: *Association générale des mutilés de guerre*: General Association of Disabled Veterans.
- ALN: *Armée de libération nationale*: Army of National Liberation.
- ANAA: *Association nationale des anciens d'Algérie*: National Association of Veterans of Algeria.
- ARAC: *Association républicaine des anciens combattants*: Republican Association of Veterans.
- CAANAC: *Comité d'action des associations nationales d'anciens combattants*: Action Committee of National Veterans' Associations.
- CN-CATM: *Confédération nationale des combattants en Algérie, Tunisie et Maroc*: National Confederation of Veterans of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.
- CNL: *Comité nationale de liaison*: National Liaison Committee.
- FLN: *Front de libération nationale*: National Liberation Front.
- FN: *Front nationale*: National Front.
- FNACA: *Fédération nationale des anciens combattants en Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie*: National Federation of Veterans of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.
- FNAF: *Front national pour l'Algérie française*: National Front for French Algeria.
- FNC: *Front national des combattants*: National Front of Veterans.
- FNCPG-CATM: *Fédération nationale des combattants prisonniers de guerre-combattants d'Algérie, Tunisie, et Maroc*: National Federation of Prisoners of War, and Veterans of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.
- GPRA: *Gouvernement provisoire de la république algérienne*: Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic.



GRM: *Groupement des rappelés et maintenus*: Grouping of Reservists and Soldiers Deployed Beyond the Legal Limit.

OAS: *Organisation armée secrète*: Secret Armed Organization.

ONACVG: *Office nationale des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre*: National Office of Veterans and War Victims.

PCF: *Parti communiste français*: French Communist Party.

PPF: *Parti populaire français*: French Popular Party.

RPF: *Rassemblement du peuple français*: Rally of the French People.

UCC-TAM: *Union confédérée des combattants de la Tunisie, l'Algérie et le Maroc*: Confederated Union of Soldiers of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

UDAA: *Union démocratique des anciens d'Algérie*: Democratic Union of Veterans of Algeria.

UDCA: *Union de défense des commerçants et artisans*: Union for the Defense of Merchants and Craftsmen.

UFAC: *Union fédérale des associations françaises des anciens combattants*: Federal Union of French Veterans' Associations.

UJRF: *Union des jeunesses républicaines de France*: Union of Republican Youth of France.

UNACITA: *Union nationale d'anciens combattants en Indochine, des TOE et d'Afrique du Nord*: National Union of Veterans of Indochina, External Theaters, and North Africa.

UNC: *Union nationale des combattants*: National Union of Soldiers.

UNCAFN: *Union nationale des combattants d'Afrique du nord*: National Union of Soldiers of North Africa.

UNR: *Union pour la nouvelle république*: Union for a New Republic.

USRAF: *Union pour le salut et le renouveau de l'Algérie française*: Union for the Salvation and Renewal of French Algeria.

## INTRODUCTION

### Topic and Rationale

Between 1954 and 1962, France deployed two million soldiers, over 1.2 million of them conscripts, in its effort to suppress the nationalist revolution in Algeria.<sup>1</sup> By the advent of Algerian independence in 1962, veterans of the war composed well over ten percent of the active male population in France.<sup>2</sup> Yet silence had been inscribed in France's combat from the beginning; the state would not officially acknowledge these soldiers as veterans until 1974, nor that Algeria had even been a war until 1999.<sup>3</sup> This silence resulted above all from administrative categories: since France had incorporated the settler colony of Algeria as an integral territory of France in 1848, and a century later, the colony contained over one million French citizens, the state could only acknowledge a local rebellion requiring 'pacification,' rather than a revolutionary war of independence. This convenient fiction allowed the French state to minimize the cause of the Algerian *Front de libération nationale* (National Liberation Front, FLN), and also to deny benefits

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<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Découverte, 1989), 293, 7; Jean-Charles Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie: expériences contrastées des hommes du contingent* (Paris: Autrement, 2011), 88.

<sup>2</sup>The number of conscripts deployed minus fatalities during the war (1,156,327) is provided by Jauffret, 88. The active male population according to the 1962 census (12.6 million) is found in Daniel Noin and Yvan Chauviré, *La population de la France*, 6th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002), 186.

<sup>3</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 42.

to the soldiers who had fought against it. But the silence surrounding the Algerian War continued for decades, reinforced by political and memorial taboos.

The central political taboo was erected by the ultimate French architect of Algerian independence, Charles de Gaulle. Having returned to power on the heels of a coup in Algiers in 1958 that seemed to offer the promise to ‘save’ French Algeria, President de Gaulle and his loyalists strongly resisted acknowledging the “events” of Algeria as a war. In effect, “the Fifth Republic was ashamed of its birth.”<sup>4</sup> Not only did the state seek to obscure its own foundation, but the very “conception and the conduct of the war were incompatible with the laws of the Republic,” since France had waged war against its own subjects, and oversaw the institutionalization of torture.<sup>5</sup> But the state forgave itself, those who had acted in its name, and even those who had opposed it; successive layers of amnesties beginning in 1962 obscured the violence and crimes of the Algerian War in a “climate of indifference.”<sup>6</sup>

The Gaullist political taboo surrounding Algeria translated into a rejection of memory after the war’s end. President de Gaulle refused to commemorate the end of the Algerian War or the soldiers who died for France, all while cultivating the myth of the French people united in the Resistance in World War II, “as if to compensate for the loss

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<sup>4</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 221.

<sup>5</sup>Jacques Julliard, “Le mépris et la modernité,” 135-60 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 159; Todd Shepard, *The invention of decolonization: the Algerian War and the remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 7; Raphaëlle Branche, *La Torture et l’Armée pendant la Guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 15.

<sup>6</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 215.

of the Empire.”<sup>7</sup> Indeed, building the myth of the Resistance, and, by metonymy, the mystique of Charles de Gaulle, offered “the best way to hide the origins of the Fifth Republic.”<sup>8</sup> Not only was the memory of Algeria “a humiliating defeat,” but the war had “challenged the democratic legitimacy of the Fifth Republic,” as well as the Republican principle of the indivisibility of French territory.<sup>9</sup> Recognizing the Algerian conflict as a war against another nation would have disrupted de Gaulle’s narrative of history, according to which France generously and wisely granted Algerian independence.<sup>10</sup>

Because of these political and memorial silences, and because of the growing unpopularity of the war, veterans demobilized from North Africa returned “home from the *djebel*” to France in a climate of “indifference at the best, contempt at the worst.”<sup>11</sup> This generation of veterans was expected to disappear in France during the “*trente glorieuses*,” or “glorious thirty years” of modernization after the end of World War II.<sup>12</sup> Examining the memory and activism of these veterans, who presented an inconvenient reminder of a war that the state and society alike sought to forget, offers insights into the dynamics of early Fifth Republic politics, as well as helping to illuminate the long aftermath of the Algerian War.

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<sup>7</sup>Frank Renken, “De Gaulle et l’effacement de la question coloniale,” trans. Ingebord Rabenstein-Michel, 173-177 in dir. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, *68: une histoire collective [1962-1981]* (Paris: Découverte, 2008), 177.

<sup>8</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 221.

<sup>9</sup>Martin Evans, “Rehabilitating the traumatized war veteran: the case of conscripts from the Algerian War, 1954-1062,” 73-85 in eds. Martin Evans and Ken Lunn, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 75.

<sup>10</sup>Frédéric Rouyard, “La bataille du 19 mars,” 545-552 in dir. Rioux, *op. cit.*, 548.

<sup>11</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Appelés en guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 13. “*Djebel*” is the Arabic word for “mountain,” and French soldiers used this term to refer to Algeria in general.

<sup>12</sup>Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).

This dissertation takes as its focus the return experiences, memory, and activism of the generation of French citizens that served in the Algerian War of Independence. Between the indifference of society on one hand, and the silence on the part of the government on the other hand, the only narrative available for veterans of Algeria to express in public was one of betrayal and victimhood. But the two poles of the Algerian War veterans' movement differed sharply on the nature of this victimhood. As early as 1958, competing veterans' associations emerged, attempting to speak for the "third combat generation" and convey its demands to French society and the state. In presenting claims about the virtue of citizen-soldiers and what they had experienced in the war, these associations were also by extension debating the responsibilities of the French nation, and what decolonization meant for France. The Algerian War is the source of major political references and tendencies that continue to this day, and examining the cultivation of memory within the veterans' movement allows a fuller understanding of the long-term impact of the war on French politics and national identity.

By the late 1980s, over two decades after the war's end, there remained five national veterans' associations in France that welcomed veterans of Algeria. The left-leaning FNACA or *Fédération nationale des anciens combattants en Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie* (National Federation of Veterans of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) had the highest membership, with around 300,000 adherents. Next came the nationalist UNC or *Union nationale des combattants* (National Union of Soldiers), possessing around 257,000 members, which by 1985 had merged with its Algerian War branch, the UNCAFN or *Union nationale des combattants d'Afrique du nord* (National Union of

Soldiers of North Africa).<sup>13</sup> These two associations, the antiwar FNACA and the pro-French Algeria UNCAFN, had both formed by 1958, representing opposite poles in the Algerian War veterans' movement. Eventually the FNACA, tiny and impoverished at its birth, came to overtake the UNCAFN, initially well-funded and powerful. The gradual reversal in size between these two associations suggests the growing strength of an anticolonial interpretation of the Algerian War, and the declining popularity of traditional nationalism and military pride in France.<sup>14</sup> In view of their wartime foundation, their mutually exclusive narratives of the war, their highly visible activism during and after the war, and their national importance to this day, the FNACA and the UNCAFN were chosen for comparison in this dissertation.<sup>15</sup>

The scant literature existing on veterans of Algeria has tended to focus chiefly on the FNACA, in part because of this association's vigorous educational efforts begun in the 1980s.<sup>16</sup> But it is likely that this overemphasis also occurs because the FNACA's left-leaning political orientation and antiwar stance seem reassuring to scholars—the

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<sup>13</sup>The third largest association, the CN-CATM or *Confédération nationale des combattants en Algérie, Tunisie et Maroc*, claimed about 150,000 members. The UNACITA (*Union nationale d'anciens combattants en Indochine, des TOE et d'Afrique du Nord*), a group combining veterans of Algeria, Indochina, and of "external operations" such as Lebanon, possessed around 70,000 members. After that, the ARAC or *Association républicaine des anciens combattants*—the oldest extant veterans' association in France, a Communist-oriented association founded in 1915—counted around 45,000 members. Finally, the UCC-TAM or *Union confédérée des combattants de la Tunisie, l'Algérie et le Maroc* possessed around 14,000 members. All figures provided by Rouyard, "La bataille du 19 mars," dir. Rioux, 544.

<sup>14</sup>The left-wing association took decades to overcome its rival's numerical superiority; in 1961 the FNACA could only claim around 2,200 members, while the UNCAFN boasted 80,000. Annick Sicart, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 69; "Caractéristiques des 200,000 lecteurs de Djebel," *Djebel* 19 (May 1961), 5. But by its thirtieth year of existence in 1988, the FNACA held a plurality in the "veterans' world"—40% of all veterans of Algeria who belonged to an association were FNACA members. Rouyard, 546.

<sup>15</sup>However, Chapter 2, in examining the foundation of both associations, also discusses the trajectory of a small short-lived centrist association (the UDAA or *Union démocratique des anciens d'Algérie*) that positioned itself in opposition to both the UNCAFN and the FNACA, in order to understand why the veterans' movement became so polarized before the war even ended.

<sup>16</sup>Evans, "Rehabilitating the traumatized war veteran," 78.

association appears to have been on “the right side of history” from its birth. And with its tireless emphasis on “rights and reparation,” the FNACA appears almost like a trade union for veterans, with a great coherence of purpose. Furthermore, the FNACA is logistically simpler to study, since it has always only assembled veterans from a single combat generation. The genealogy of the UNCAFN is more complex—it invited veterans of Algeria to join an association founded by veterans of World War I (the UNC), which, by the time of the Algerian War, was dominated by veterans of World War II.

But this emphasis on the FNACA has created a lacuna in scholarly understanding of the Algerian War veterans’ movement. The left-leaning Federation was politically isolated, and did not grow to become the largest association for veterans of Algeria until over a decade after the war’s end. From its wartime foundation, the UNCAFN received political access and support from the state, and its members were actively involved in the movement to return Charles de Gaulle to power. Following the logic of its commitment to French Algeria, the Union’s national leadership supported the generals’ putsch, and never publicly condemned the illegal violence of the OAS (*Organisation armée secrète*, a clandestine pro-French Algeria militia organized in 1961 in Algeria and metropolitan France).

Indeed, many UNCAFN members, allies, and at least one co-founder would go over to the OAS in this period. This extremist tendency as well as the logistical difficulties outlined above may explain why the Union has not attracted much scholarly interest. But to ignore the political engagements of nationalist veterans of Algeria is to miss the lion’s share of veterans’ activism during the war itself. To disdain the pro-French Algeria narrative these veterans cultivated is to obscure the channels of memory

that helped develop a highly receptive audience for the National Front in the 1970s and 1980s. A comparison of both poles of the Algerian War veterans' movement is necessary for a fuller understanding of veterans' political engagements during and after the war.

## **Chronology**

This investigation of the early Algerian War veterans' movement covers a coherent yet dense chronology. Analysis begins in 1956, when the earliest reservists and conscripts to serve in Algeria were returning to France, and ends in 1974, the year that the National Assembly and Senate voted to open the official status of 'veteran' to soldiers who fought in North Africa. More broadly, this timeline coincides with the era of French economic modernization after World War II. Finally, it delineates the Gaullist period—from the escalation of the Algerian War under the Fourth Republic as de Gaulle sought a way to return to public life, through the first decade of the Fifth Republic under Presidents de Gaulle and Pompidou, to the opening of the post-Gaullist era, when Independent Republican Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was elected President in 1974. The chapters of this dissertation are defined thematically—the rhetoric and memory of associations, or the fight for veterans' recognition, for instance—but each individual chapter unfolds chronologically to the extent possible.

## **Historiography**

A vast body of literature exists on the Algerian War of Independence—especially, from the French perspective, its operational history and its impact on the Army, the



experiences and memory of the war in French society, and its political consequences.<sup>17</sup>

Yet over sixty years after the end of the war, studies on the postwar experiences of French soldiers in general remain “practically nonexistent,” and this is a major gap in our understanding of the aftermath of the Algerian War.<sup>18</sup> While several scholars have used interviews and questionnaires to investigate veterans’ memory of the war itself, no academic oral history analyzing veterans’ return experiences and political engagements has been conducted.<sup>19</sup> This dissertation thus makes historiographic contributions in terms of content as well as framing and interpretation.

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<sup>17</sup>For general histories of the war, Alistair Horne, *A savage war of peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Viking, 1978), remains a reference; Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie (1954-1962)* (Paris: Découverte, 1993) offers a brief but thorough overview; and Sylvie Thénault’s *Histoire de la guerre d’indépendance algérienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005) provides a synthesis of decades of research on the war. For more specialized military and political studies, see George Armstrong Kelly’s work on changing civil-military relations, *Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis, 1947-1962* (The MIT Press, 1965); Jean-Pierre Rioux, dir., *La Guerre d’Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), a compilation of essays on the experience and memory of the war among different sectors of French society; Martin Evans, *Algeria: France’s undeclared war* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), which analyzes the French state’s handling of the war; and Todd Shepard, *The Invention of decolonization: the Algerian War and the remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), which examines how France sought to reconcile the paradoxes of an imperial Republic through the course of the war.

<sup>18</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, “La dernière génération du feu? Jalons pour une étude des anciens combattants français de la guerre d’Algérie,” *Histoire@Politique, Politique culture, société* 3 (November-December 2007): 3, doi: 10.3917/hp/003.0006.

<sup>19</sup>Claire Mauss-Copeaux, *Appelés en Algérie: la parole confisquée* (Paris: Hachette, 1998) represents the first academic oral history on the memory of conscripts of Algeria conducted outside of military auspices, and argues that “the history and collective memory specific to a region, more than the colonialist culture of the era, structured individual memories and figured in representations of the Algerian War.” (281). Jauffret’s work, *op. cit.*, offers the results of a large-scale questionnaire investigation into conscripts’ memory of the war, and also analyzes some oral histories conducted by the Army. While he includes a chapter on conscripts’ return experience, he focuses on the immediate process of demobilization, and then veterans’ memories in the 1980s and 1990s, leaving the majority of their adult lives largely unexamined.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, two journalists published nonacademic studies of veterans’ memory. Florence Dossé, *Les héritiers du silence: Enfants d’appelés en Algérie* (Paris: Stock, 2012), analyzes interviews performed with 50 people in the Limousin region, including former conscripts and their wives and children, arguing that since conscription affected around one in four families in the Metropole, the traumas of the war were “collective” (132, 12). And while Isabelle Maury, *L’empreinte de la guerre: Paroles d’appelés en Algérie* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 2012) analyzes interviews with only five veterans, this does seem to be the first work to have investigated veterans’ lives after the war in any detail.

On the level of content, this dissertation offers close examination of a topic that historians on both sides of the Atlantic have proven reluctant to study. Raphaëlle Branche—whose career began with a dissertation analyzing France’s systematic use of torture in Algeria—notes that French historians have sometimes doubted their ability to bring “scientific objectivity” to a war whose memory remains so divisive through the generations, while Anglo-American historians have tended to focus on operational history, international relations, and French public opinion and intellectual engagements.<sup>20</sup> Thus, French and foreign historians have not examined the experiences of veterans of Algeria as a generation, and the impact of their movement in French society.

While associational life was a central feature of French society in the twentieth century, the history of the Algerian War veterans’ movement, and its long but ultimately successful fight for state recognition, have never been chronicled.<sup>21</sup> The campaign for veterans’ recognition represents a rare example of a social interest group in twentieth century France successfully organizing for novel legislation, rather than reacting against policy proposed by the state.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, this dissertation directly answers Raphaëlle Branche’s 2007 call urging historians to study the process by which the interest group of veterans of Algeria “was constituted in regard to public authorities.”<sup>23</sup>

Finally, this project devotes equal attention to the history and engagements of both the left-wing FNACA as well as the right-wing UNCAFN, which has barely been

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<sup>20</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 297, 330.

<sup>21</sup>Serge Barcellini, “Réflexions sur les associations Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre,” 25-33 in dir. Bruno Benoît and Marc Frangi, *Guerres et associations: actes du colloque de Lyon, 29 septembre 2001* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2003), 28.

<sup>22</sup>Frank L. Wilson, *Interest-group politics in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 222.

<sup>23</sup>Branche, “La dernière génération du feu?”, 6.

mentioned in the literature.<sup>24</sup> It also examines the political trajectories of the two most prominent founders of the Algerian War veterans' movement, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and François Porteu de la Morandière. While Porteu de la Morandière published several books offering his political interpretations of the Algerian War and critiques of contemporary French politics, no scholar has examined his central role in organizing the nationalist wing of the Algerian War veterans' movement.<sup>25</sup> And although a sea of ink has been spilled over Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, an iconic public intellectual of mid-twentieth century France who himself published many works, scholars have not investigated his legacy as the founder of what would become the largest association for veterans of Algeria, and remains so to this day.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Here follows a nonexhaustive but suggestive sample of the over-emphasis on the FNACA in the scant literature on veterans of Algeria. Several conference papers discuss the FNACA as if it were the only association for veterans of Algeria in dir. Benoît and Frangi. Ludivine Bantigny inaccurately reports that the FNACA was founded in 1960, and does not mention the UNCAFV at all in *Le plus bel âge? Jeunes et jeunesse en France dès l'aube des Trente glorieuses à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 376. Frédéric Rouyard's Master's thesis, "Les commémorations de la guerre d'Algérie," Université de Paris-X-Nanterre, dir. Philippe Levillain, 1989, as well as his 1990 chapter in dir. Rioux, focus almost exclusively on the FNACA. Raphaëlle Branche's *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* briefly discusses the activism of the FNACA toward veterans' recognition, yet ignores the role of the UNCAFV, only mentioning its rejection of the FNACA's date to commemorate the end of the war. Claire Mauss-Copeaux does discuss the UNCAFV and the FNACA together in her book analyzing veterans' memory, and helpfully highlights the discomfort many individual veterans felt toward the divisive polemics of the national veterans' movement. *Appelés en Algérie*, 48-50. Martin Evans, in a chapter on veterans' activism, "Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran," takes the FNACA as his exclusive subject as if it were the only association that represented conscripts, providing no explanation for this choice.

<sup>25</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière's publications on the Algerian War and its political consequences include *La Révolution en sursis: vers une République à trois ordres* (Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, 1961); *Soldats du djebel: histoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Société de production littéraire, 1979); and *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000).

<sup>26</sup>A selected bibliography of Servan-Schreiber's own publications includes *Lieutenant en Algérie* (Paris: Julliard, 1957); *Le défi américain* (Paris: Denoël, 1967); *Le réveil de la France, mai-juin 1968* (Paris: Denoël, 1968); coauthored with Michel Albert, *Ciel et terre: manifeste Radical* (Paris: Denoël, 1970); *Le pouvoir régional* (Paris: Grasset, 1971); *Le défi mondial* (Paris: Fayard, 1980); and his two-volume autobiography, *Passions* (Paris: Fixot, 1991) and *Les Fossoyeurs* (Paris: Fixot, 1993).

Books authored by others about Servan-Schreiber include Jean-Claude Vaujou, *JJSS par JJSS* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1971); Raymond Barrilon, *Servan-Schreiber, pour quoi faire? Réflexion sur quelques données de la vie politique en France* (Paris: Grasset, 1971); and an authorized biography published a year before his death, Jean Bothorel, *Celui qui voulait tout changer: les années JJSS* (Paris: Laffont, 2005).

On the level of interpretation, this dissertation also makes considerable contributions to the historical literature. While Italian historian Andrea Brazzoduro published a work of cultural history interpreting the memory of both major veterans' associations through a postcolonial lens, no scholar has examined how these associations mobilized memory toward the fight for veterans' recognition, or their political interventions in the Fifth Republic.<sup>27</sup> Aside from being the first academic study of the postwar engagements of this forgotten generation of veterans, this dissertation makes three major interpretive contributions to the historiography of modern France. First, by describing the Algerian War veterans' movement in comparison with those of previous combat generations, this dissertation frames veterans of Algeria as a central yet underestimated force in French politics in the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> Second, analyzing veterans' activism toward state recognition highlights the constraints

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<sup>27</sup>Andrea Brazzoduro's work, *Soldati senza causa: memorie della guerra d'Algeria* (Gius: Editori Laterza, 2012), cautions against exaggerating the degree of French "amnesia" of the Algerian War, and seeks instead to analyze the cacophony of competing memories (29). This book traces veterans' memory through debates between the UNCAFN and the FNACA over portrayals of the war in commemoration, literature, and film. Aside from the fact that he relies on public external sources alone, such as press coverage and the associations' newspapers, our contributions differ in that Brazzoduro's work frames veterans' memory and discourse within postcolonial French society, whereas I study veterans' memory and their associations to understand the impact of veterans' politics in France during and after the war.

<sup>28</sup>Antoine Prost, himself a veteran of Algeria, began the conversation on the role of veterans in contemporary French politics, arguing that the World War I veterans' movement formed the moral bulwark of democracy in the Third Republic. *Les anciens combattants et la société française: 1914-1939* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977), 3 vols. Chris Millington challenges Prost's long-dominant thesis with *From victory to Vichy: veterans in inter-war France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), which depicts the World War I veterans' movement as a crucible for political ideas that permeated broader society because of the moral authority conferred to veterans. Millington argues that the movement's political actions and gradual discursive shift to the right helped erode "the perceived legitimacy" of the Third Republic, facilitating public acceptance of the Vichy regime (18). My dissertation draws on the analytical model Prost established. But it accords more with Millington's thesis, as it argues a gradual but important political impact for the veterans' movement, with the caveat that since there was no consensus on the moral authority of veterans of Algeria, establishing the virtue and political acumen of this generation was the first challenge the movement faced.

that Gaullism built in French civil society, helping to explain the ruptures of May 1968.<sup>29</sup> Third, this research frames the nationalist wing of the Algerian War veterans' movement as central to the project of regrouping the far right in its "desert crossing" in the early Fifth Republic.<sup>30</sup> It thus uncovers a long trajectory of support for the extreme National Front party, which by the late 1980s had upset the bipolarity of the French political landscape.

## Sources

Unlike the aforementioned instances of scholarly discussion of veterans of Algeria, this dissertation cross-references internal and external documentation to trace the memory, institutional growth, and political engagements of the associations they formed. Since the Algerian War remains a sensitive and divisive topic to this day, and because the

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<sup>29</sup>The movement for veterans' recognition coincided with Charles De Gaulle's transformation of the Republic of parliamentary tradition into a centralized "monarchical" Republic. By 1965, "the major act of democracy was no longer the election of deputies, but that of the head of state through universal suffrage." Serge Berstein, *L'histoire du gaullisme* (Paris: Perrin, 2001). Both wings of the Algerian War veterans' movement, because their legislative aims so fundamentally contradicted the will of the head of state, experienced significant obstacles to their political action in the Gaullist period. The story of the campaign for veterans' recognition is thus an important but unexamined case study on the relationship between the Gaullist regime and civil society, an indifference verging on hostility that made the protests of 1968 seem inevitable in retrospect to many observers.

<sup>30</sup>While numerous scholars have commented on either the participation of nationalist veterans in general in the movement to return Charles De Gaulle to power, or their later receptivity to the platform of the National Front, no single work has traced this right-wing trajectory through a single organization focused exclusively on veterans of Algeria. On veterans' involvement in the death of the Fourth Republic, see for example the scholarly work, Christophe Nick, *Résurrection: naissance de la Ve République: un coup d'État démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998), and a well-researched edited volume by investigative journalists, Roger Faliot and Jean Guisnel, dir., *Histoire secrète de la Ve République* (Paris: Découverte, 2006). For discussion of veterans of Algeria as an important early demographic for the National Front, see an authoritative history of the party, Valérie Igounet, *Le Front National de 1972 à nos jours: le parti, les hommes, les idées* (Paris: Seuil, 2013); a history of pro-French Algeria nostalgia in general as a political tendency, Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d'une mémoire: de «l'Algérie française» au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Découverte, 1999); a sociological study, Nonna Mayer, *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002); and a work in political science, Alain Bihr, *Le spectre de l'extrême droite: les Français dans le miroir du Front National* (Paris: L'Atelier, 1998).

state did not “see” those who had served in Algeria as “veterans” until 1974, access to state documents corresponding to the category of “veterans of Algeria” in the period before 1974 is haphazard at best.<sup>31</sup> The archives of the Paris Police Prefecture contain ample documentation on the UNCAFN during the death throes of the Fourth Republic, yet the police did not begin to take notice of the FNACA until its nationwide recruitment and activism became more visible in the 1960s.<sup>32</sup> Association newspapers served the double purpose of communicating between national and local committees, and explaining the associations’ concerns to voters and politicians outside the veterans’ world.<sup>33</sup> Memoranda and newsletters for cadres published by both associations allow an inside view of institutional priorities and political positions that sometimes could not be stated publicly.<sup>34</sup> A paper archive of *Le Monde* at the *Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine* (BDIC) proved invaluable for tracing national press

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<sup>31</sup>My diplomatic requests (well-written and proofread by a professional translator) for access to confidential records at state veterans’ offices in the departments of Paris, Seine-Saint-Denis, the Morbihan, and Finistère—in the hopes of being able to compile statistics on measures like employment, requests for professional reeducation assistance and loans—were all refused. Arnaud Bayeux, the Director of the departmental veterans’ office in the Morbihan and one of the recipients of my requests, told me that my research was on “too fresh” a topic: because of French privacy laws, researchers are only now receiving access to the files of soldiers who fought in World War I. Conversation with Arnaud Bayeux, ONACVG Director in the Morbihan, Vannes, France, 3 March 2014. Raphaëlle Branche notes that the 1979 law codifying the system of archival access in France specifies “no official criteria” for refusing a request for a *dérogation*, leaving individual archivists much discretion to judge the intentions of the researcher, as well as the sensitivity of the subject. Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie: une histoire apaisée?*, 159.

<sup>32</sup>Archives of the Paris Police Prefecture (APP). Series B<sub>a</sub>2453 contains daily reports on the numerous protests surrounding the coup of May 13, 1958, documenting the UNCAFN’s active engagement in this period. Series G<sub>a</sub>18 contains yearly lists of organizations on the political right and left that the state found concerning, only mentioning the FNACA for the first time in 1967.

<sup>33</sup>I received access to the FNACA’s newspaper, *L’Ancien d’Algérie*, in the office of the archivist at the Paris headquarters in 2012, and it was subsequently digitized in full online. I consulted the UNC’s newspaper, *La Voix du combattant*, in which the UNCAFN regularly published an insert called “La Voix du djebel,” at the UNC headquarters in Paris. This archive also contained some editions of the UNCAFN’s short lived independent newspaper, *Djebel*, which I supplemented with the full run held at the *Bibliothèque nationale française* (BNF).

<sup>34</sup>The UNCAFN archives contained an incomplete but valuable collection of “memoranda to cadres,” and the BNF holds a complete collection of *L’Écho FNACA*, an internal organizing bulletin.

coverage of both associations' actions, as well as analyzing the narratives in their press releases that did make it into print.<sup>35</sup>

Access to sources on the internal workings of both associations remains unbalanced due to differing institutional cultures and priorities. The FNACA, proud of its opposition to the Algerian War, has published numerous pamphlets and books over the decades, attempting to control its own public narrative and the legacy it passes to its members.<sup>36</sup> Yet as an institution, it remains hesitant to open its internal archives to researchers.<sup>37</sup> To uncover the early history of the FNACA outside of how it narrated its own origins, I found recourse in documentation from other veterans' associations, especially the UDAA, a splinter group that left the FNACA in 1961.<sup>38</sup> The gatekeepers at

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<sup>35</sup>On the topic of the Algerian War, *Le Monde* was notably less biased in favor of the state's narrative than other mainstream dailies. Its journalists "made a concerted effort to understand events on the ground," and from 1957, the paper unequivocally condemned France's use of torture. Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 78.

<sup>36</sup>For instance, *Tous à jour de leur cōtisation! Témoignages sur Maurice Sicart* (Paris: FNACA de Paris, 2011), a collection of remembrances of former Secretary General Maurice Sicart, is a crucial source to understand the internal dynamics of this association in its early years. But it is also an example of institutional memory cultivation, as they are eyewitness testimonies composed decades after the events.

<sup>37</sup>Despite building the trust of internal contacts over several years of researching at the FNACA headquarters in Paris, I was unable to receive access to any internal documents, and seemed to generate some alarm when I made my request. The association is likely jealous to protect its legacy, fully aware of its central importance in the veterans' world today, and it certainly bears the scars of decades of accusations of being a Communist front organization. Moreover, since the FNACA now appears on the "right" side of history, having opposed the Algerian War from the beginning, its officials do not feel the need to "rehabilitate" its reputation in public opinion.

<sup>38</sup>UDAA documents aided in my understanding of the FNACA's origins, as well as suggesting the symbolic importance of this short-lived centrist association: "Union Démocratique des Anciens d'Algérie: Programme," UDAA pamphlet, 1961, BDIC, 4 delta 0880; Jean-Pierre Prouteau, "Les Anciens d'Algérie dans la Nation. 23,405 morts, 50,376 pensionnés, 3,000,000 hommes. Un nouveau style d'Ancien Combattant," UDAA pamphlet, 1963, BDIC, O pièce 32495; *La Tribune des Anciens d'Algérie*, UDAA newspaper (February and May 1962), BNF, FOL-JO-12655.

I also supplemented my knowledge of the FNACA with such external sources as a hybrid memoir and institutional history of the FNACA published individually by a FNACA member, Roger Lajoie-Mazenc, *La guerre de là-bas: Anciens d'Algérie: un demi-siècle de parcours du combattant* (La Primaube: Graphi Imprimer, 2009), at the BDIC; as well as the archives of UDR Deputy David Rousset, a survivor of the

the UNC, on the other hand, allowed me unconditional access to the association's archives.<sup>39</sup> In the archives of the UNC and the UNCAFN, I discovered papers discussing the foundation of the UNCAFN, the association's engagements in the "days of May" in 1958 and 1968, and its ties with other far-right and pro-French Algeria groups.<sup>40</sup>

Researching the founding Presidents of both associations was an uneven affair as well. Concerning UNCAFN co-founder and twenty-seven year National President François Porteu de la Morandière, I discovered, as the French expression terms it, an embarrassment of documents. I received access to the entirety of his UNCAFN papers as well as some of his personal archives, and conducted three long interviews with him.<sup>41</sup> Researching Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber presented a challenge from the other extreme, however. "Servan-Schreiber, founder of the FNACA" is an analytical category that neither archivists nor scholars have used before, which underscores one of the original contributions of this dissertation.<sup>42</sup> I supplemented my knowledge of Servan-

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deportation and an anticolonial militant, whose correspondance with the General Secretary of the FNACA is included in his papers held at the BDIC.

<sup>39</sup>I strongly suspect this happened because the UNC is today led by conservative nationalists who generally regret the outcome of the Algerian War, and now feel eager for outside validation of their point of view. Opposing decolonization has ultimately placed this association on the side of the "vanquished" of history after 1962. Yet those who had supported French Algeria possessed a "coherent and tenacious" memory of the war, and they craved acceptance of this memory in broader society. Paul Thibaud, "Génération algérienne?" 608-616 in dir. Rioux, 611.

<sup>40</sup>UNC and UNCAFN archives, UNC headquarters, Paris.

<sup>41</sup>He showed me some "uninteresting" documents from his personal archives, including correspondence with Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Chaban-Delmas, and loaned me a full run of the UNCAFN's cadres' magazine from the 1970s, *Les Cahiers du djebel*, which I could not locate anywhere else.

<sup>42</sup>The BDIC contains archives of Servan-Schreiber's work at *l'Express* from 1955 to 1974, but nothing at all on his work for the FNACA, for which he was National President between 1958-1965. Collection "L'Express et le groupe JJSS, 1955-1974," F delta res 0372, BDIC. Furthermore, Servan-Schreiber's biographer, Jean Bothorel, received the authorization of the Servan-Schreiber family, as well as access to private archives, yet Bothorel does not once mention the FNACA as part of Servan-Schreiber's engagements against the war or his legacy. No results came of my attempts to contact Bothorel, despite being invited to send him a personal letter through his publisher.



Schreiber's work in the FNACA with two excellent primary sources: a book of interviews conducted after he became head of the Radical party in 1970, and an edited collection of private correspondence between Servan-Schreiber, Pierre Mendès-France, and Françoise Giroud through their lifetimes.<sup>43</sup> In the end, I achieved a balance between the words of these two rival association founders, an especially sensitive concern since Servan-Schreiber died in 2006 while Porteu de la Morandière is alive to this day.

Finally, this dissertation relies on other voices—interviews with twenty-five veterans, and questionnaires filled out by nineteen. All of the questionnaire respondents were identified through the FNACA and the UNC: 16 in Finistère and the Morbihan in Brittany, 1 in the Orne in Normandy, and 2 in Paris. Consult Appendices A-D for verbatim transcripts of the questionnaires in French and English, and Appendix E for categories of responses.

Between December 2013 and May 2014, with the organizational help of local FNACA and UNC officials, I interviewed 3 veterans in Annecy, capital of the department of the Haute-Savoie, 10 in the small village of St-Anne-d'Auray in the department of the Morbihan in Brittany, and 12 in the department of the Île-de-France, which includes Paris and some close suburbs. Former conscripts predominated among these interviewees, but there were also former reservists, one Legionnaire, and several volunteers. See Appendix F for statistical analysis of these interviews.

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<sup>43</sup>Jean-Claude Vajoux, ed. *JJSS par JJSS*. Paris: La Table Ronde, 1971; Éric Roussel, ed., *Pierre Mendès-France, Françoise Giroud, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber: la politique soumise à l'intelligence: correspondances croisées (1953-1981)* (Paris: Laffont, 2011).

## Methods

My project combines oral history with archival research. The major questions I brought to print archives were institutional, political, and cultural. They concerned the origin and self-definition of both associations; their internal organization and recruitment methods; their attitudes and tactics toward the state, and how the state viewed them; their narratives of what the Algerian War and military service had meant; what they demanded of society and through what sorts of appeals; and with whom they allied toward these goals. As much as possible, I sought confirmation of accounts between archival sources, especially concerning the associations' activism, since each had the motivation to exaggerate the weight of its own actions, and downplay the contributions of its rival.

To obtain veterans' testimonies, I established contact with national UNC and FNACA officials during my pre-dissertation research trip, and then asked them to help me organize interviews and send out questionnaires during my year of research.<sup>44</sup> As a function of the interests and abilities of each organization, as well as some chance, I ended up with a higher proportion of UNC interviewees, and more UNC questionnaire respondents as well, so the interviews and questionnaires are not representative for an analysis of association membership.<sup>45</sup> But my samples are representative on other axes. Service in the Algerian War, whether as a conscript or a remobilized reservist, affected the majority of a generation regardless of economic class, and the sample of interviewees

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<sup>44</sup>I received Institutional Review Board approval for oral histories and questionnaires in May 2012.

<sup>45</sup>Sometimes the categories were confused, however, as several veterans had belonged to both associations at some point. One of the veterans interviewed did not join any association, and he was even more an outlier because he was an educated reservist from a wealthy  *pied noir*  family. I met him through a Parisian friend. All other veterans interviewed were encountered through associations.

does reflect this broad experience.<sup>46</sup> With veterans interviewed in three distinct geographic regions in France—the Île-de-France, Brittany, and the Haute-Savoie, as well as with most having been employed in agriculture, industry, or trades, and only a small minority having access to higher education and employment in white-collar professions, this sample is representative of the demographics of France during the Algerian War.<sup>47</sup> The most obvious bias in my sampling method is that almost all veterans encountered were members of associations. However, one questionnaire reached me filled out by a veteran who had never joined any association, and I was able to interview one such veteran as well. Another built-in bias was that I only interviewed veterans who felt capable of discussing their experiences with an historian—they numbered among the least traumatized members of their cohort, although some bore a great deal of anger or sadness.<sup>48</sup> But the veterans who agreed to meet with me also felt able to talk with a foreigner and a student, and these class and cultural differences might have proven too intimidating for some.

Oral history is a challenging endeavor, and remains somewhat less legitimate in France than in the United States today.<sup>49</sup> The collection of oral testimonies from rank and file soldiers on their experiences returning from the Algerian War is one of the central

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<sup>46</sup>Bantigny, 15.

<sup>47</sup>Jauffret, 13.

<sup>48</sup>Mauss-Copeaux, 282.

<sup>49</sup>In particular, for the topic of the Algerian War, Raphaëlle Branche argues that most of the established French scholars of the Algerian War—still a sensitive subject today, for which it is difficult to avoid an obvious bias—have shied away from the use of oral history because of its “militant origins.” *La guerre d’Algérie*, 237.

contributions of this dissertation.<sup>50</sup> But the pitfalls of selective memory, and the disynchronicity between the ‘self’ who remembers in the present and the ‘self’ in the past being narrated, were nowhere more apparent than during my interviews with UNCAFN co-founder François Porteu de la Morandière.<sup>51</sup> He was older than the majority of my interviewees, and his chronology of events was not always quite accurate. Furthermore, as a longtime leader in the veterans’ movement, he had greater possible motivation to exaggerate his importance and effectiveness, so his testimony demanded heightened scrutiny. Before citing any claims he made, I therefore sought external confirmation in primary sources and secondary literature. When I could not find direct documentary evidence supporting his claims but felt they were important to discuss nonetheless, I clearly indicated so in footnotes, as well as how plausible I judged the claim based on my knowledge of the period. These difficulties of memory were not the main concern in the majority of my interviews, however.

Most of my interviewees were rank-and-file association members—former conscripts and reservists who often felt they had not done anything special during the war, who thus did not have the same potential motivation to heighten their importance in the eyes of an historian. The major challenge I faced interviewing these veterans was to frame the discussion in a way that made them feel they even had a story to tell. Many

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<sup>50</sup>Claire Mauss-Copeaux notes that “[in French culture], where the written word is of supreme value, the use of oral sources is often looked down upon [...]” Yet she argues that “to deprive history of oral sources would be to impoverish it; it would also mean privileging the point of view of those who have command of the written word.” *Appelés en Algérie*, 10. This is particularly true in the case of conscripts of Algeria, the overwhelming majority of whom only received education to the level of junior high school. When veterans of Algeria began publishing memoirs to express their perspectives on the war to the public, most of them were professional soldiers or middle and upper-class conscripts, their task facilitated by adequate education and wealth. *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>51</sup>Philippe Carrard, *The French Who Fought for Hitler: Memories from the Outcasts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 110.

were prepared to say something about their military service or at least their time in training, but they were not accustomed to thinking of the periods before and after their mobilization as “historical” as well. This element of surprise—the fact that I was asking them to compose a narrative that they had almost certainly never been asked to tell before—heightened the authenticity of the reactions I elicited.

I began interviews with a set of specific questions on veterans’ memories of mobilization and demobilization, their family situation before and after the war, their careers, and their sense of veteran identity and reasons for joining associations. However, to gain the trust of my interlocutors, once I posed these preliminary questions, I allowed them to take the conversation in directions that made them feel comfortable, redirecting or doubling back at certain points if I needed more clarification. Many times they ended up revealing more useful information than if I had tried to get the same responses with a direct approach.

Many interviewees showed some sense of “a determination to ‘set the record straight,’” whether that was to convey an anticolonial, pro-French Algeria, or reconciliatory narrative, and it often seemed like they were hoping to ultimately address a French audience rather than an American historian.<sup>52</sup> Here, the cultural distance between us, and the infantilizing view French people tend to hold toward students, served to my benefit—because it led many interviewees to explain “what it was like” in great detail, often revealing their own biases or perspectives they would not state directly.<sup>53</sup> With the

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<sup>52</sup>Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 10, 8.

<sup>53</sup>Martin Evans comments on the “immensely reassuring” factor of his cultural outsider status, and the impact of his “relative youthfulness” as he interviewed French activists who had opposed the Algerian War. These variables proved an important advantage for me as well. *The Memory of Resistance*, 8.

distance of time and the benefit of higher education, I had a better global understanding of the Algerian War itself and the politics of the period than most of these veterans, and I drew on this knowledge when necessary to elicit their trust. But learning veterans' perceptions and memories of their return to French society after the war was the real aim of my oral history investigation, and I succeeded in this goal.<sup>54</sup>

Aside from institutional, political, and oral history, this dissertation is also a work of military history, falling into the "war and society" subfield. On the level of associations, it demonstrates veterans' engagements with "events in civilian society [...] during and after the period of the war itself," highlighting the importance of veterans' activism in the Gaullist period of the Fifth Republic.<sup>55</sup> And this work also analyzes the "effect of service and war on the individual soldier and the veteran" as well, for social questions such as the return to work, and for cultural questions such as veterans' identity, memory, and masculinity.<sup>56</sup> Throughout this dissertation, the narrative navigates between large scale military, political, and social considerations; the experiences and perceptions of individual soldiers; and the responses of associations.

## Theory

This project relies above all on theoretical invocations of memory. It begins with Maurice Halbwachs' definition of all "memory" as a "collective" body of representations

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<sup>54</sup>Martin Evans notes that while "[of] course all oral testimonies must be viewed as retrospective accounts," these "retrospective reconstructions also involve a recovery of the past which even if it cannot be presented as infallible can nonetheless be richly suggestive." *The Memory of Resistance*, 14.

<sup>55</sup>Michael S. Neiberg, "War and Society," 42-60 in Matthew Hughes and William J. Philpot, eds., *Palgrave Advances in Modern Military History* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2006), 43.

<sup>56</sup>Peter Kartsen, "The 'New' American Military History: A Map of the Territory, Explored and Unexplored," *American Quarterly* 36 no. 3 (1984): 389-418, 389.

through which societies define themselves, that links the individual to a larger “affective community.”<sup>57</sup> But the framework must go beyond Halbwachs’ conception. From its origins in the 1958 moment, the Algerian War veterans’ movement sought to build a narrative of the war and of veterans’ experiences that conveyed universals about the French nation, and the duties and rights of citizenship. However, no such universal narrative could be developed, polemicized as the war was by this time—debated on the home front and in the United Nations.

Thus, even before the ambiguous “partial defeat” of 1962, the veterans’ movement fragmented into competing “memory communities,” by which I mean rival sub-groups in society that demarcate themselves through conflicting interpretations of a shared experience.<sup>58</sup> These memory communities represented themselves and their narratives of the war through artifacts of “cultural memory” including street names and plaques, mourning rituals, and even the opposing legislative texts they proposed for veterans’ recognition.<sup>59</sup> The stakes of these “competing memories in the public realm” could be quite high: the UNCAFN offered a narrative of veterans who had done their duty and deserved political respect to argue for symbolic recognition and political

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<sup>57</sup>Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1950), 12.

<sup>58</sup>John Horne establishes a typology of different memories of military defeat, describing “partial defeat” as occurring when “a state suffers a military and diplomatic setback without being threatened in its territorial or political integrity.” He notes that, as was the case for France’s defeat in Algeria, partial defeat “acts as a catalyst for the modification of domestic or foreign policy and of broader cultural horizons.” However, nationalist veterans who had supported French Algeria to the end bore a memory akin to that of “internal defeat” in a civil war, leaving them “[frozen...] in an eternal re-enactment designed to reverse the fatal moment.” John Horne, “Defeat and Memory in Modern History,” 11-29 in ed. Jenny MacLeod, *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat in the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 16, 14, 15.

<sup>59</sup>Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective memory and cultural identity,” *New German Critique* 65 (Spring/Summer 1995): 125-133, 128.

authority, while the FNACA deployed a narrative of veterans who served in the war against their wills to demand material compensation.<sup>60</sup>

One of the central design decisions behind this project was to investigate the memory of the veterans' movement as it developed, rather than solely describing its appearance through the distance of decades.<sup>61</sup> This methodological emphasis is especially warranted given that political stances on Algeria changed dramatically through the course of the war, while both competing associations from their very origins cultivated distinct and mutually exclusive narratives explaining the Algerian War and its impact on soldiers.

The low level of education and political culture which the overwhelming majority of conscripts brought to their military service gave an outsized impact to the narratives transmitted by veterans' associations. And these rival memory communities became more stable and self-referential over time, which is why, for instance, the antiwar FNACA began small-scale commemorations of the cease-fire in 1963, but by the early 1970s, the association defined itself in large part through its observance of "March 19," a victory for peace. Through the same period, the UNCAFN increasingly came to define itself through fierce resistance to commemorating "March 19," a ritual that implied that the end of the war had been a victory for France. This dissertation thus investigates not France's collective memory of the Algerian War, but the refraction of memory between competing

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<sup>60</sup>Konrad H. Jarausch, "Living With Broken Memories: Some Narratological Comments," 150-199 in ed. Christoph Klessmann, *The Divided Past: Reuniting Post-War Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 172.

<sup>61</sup>As Pieter Lagrou notes in his comparative history of the collective memory of World War II in France and Holland, "Awareness of and explicit research into representations of a historical event immediately afterwards generally help the historian to avoid the bias implicit in many of his or her sources, and to avoid the pitfalls of partisan accounts or carefully constructed self-serving narratives that might otherwise impose themselves as ready-made interpretations." *Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 2.



“memory communities” that could barely communicate with each other, so violently opposed were their frames of reference.

The troubled memory of the Algerian War in France has long nourished discussions of “memory wars,” a politicized “competition of memories.”<sup>62</sup> In retrospect, this process may appear yet another example of recurrent “franco-French” conflicts dating to the Revolution.<sup>63</sup> Yet it is important to remember that the debate over the Algerian War could not be neatly reduced to an “assault” between “two Frances,” such as the political “antagonism” between the right and the left.<sup>64</sup> This is because the political sands shifted greatly through the course of the war; in 1956, even the Socialist and Communist parties supported the defense of national territory in Algeria, while by 1961, only far right groups sought to preserve a colony that had once been a matter of national consensus. The irrelevance of traditional labels to define political stances on the war suggests “that it was an entire system of values that had broken” during France’s war effort, and this crisis of French values heightened the stakes of memorial debates after the war ended.<sup>65</sup>

## **Chapter Summaries and Argument**

This dissertation thus combines cultural, social, political, military, and institutional perspectives to offer a history of the Algerian War veterans’ movement in

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<sup>62</sup>Benjamin Stora, “Préface,” 7-13 in dir. Pascal Blanchard and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson, *Les guerres de mémoires: La France et son histoire: Enjeux politiques, controverses historiques, stratégies médiatiques* (Paris: Découverte, 2010), 10.

<sup>63</sup>Robert Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 601-607 in dir. Rioux, 607.

<sup>64</sup>Jean-Pierre Rioux, “La flamme et les bûchers,” 497-508 in dir. Rioux, 500.

<sup>65</sup>Paul Thibaud, “Génération algérienne?,” 608-616 in dir. Rioux, 614.

France. The first half of the manuscript examines the components that went into the movement. Chapter 1 offers a generational history of French veterans of Algeria, from their childhood and education, to their deployment, to their postwar integration into France, drawing heavily on oral histories and questionnaires. Chapter 2 examines the wartime competition of the UNCAFN and the FNACA to elevate the Algerian generation as worthy of political power, as well as these associations' memorial politics after the war's end. Chapter 3 compares the political trajectories of two founding members of the Algerian War veterans' movement, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and François Porteu de la Morandière, to highlight the formative impact they brought to their associations.

The second half of this dissertation examines how the veterans' movement functioned, and with what effects. Chapter 4 provides an institutional history of the FNACA and the UNCAFN, comparing their mobilizing ideologies and the mutually exclusive legacies they drew from the World War I veterans' movement. Chapter 5 examines the political engagements of both associations during the war itself, and Chapter 6 offers a thorough analysis of the movement's fight for official state recognition during and after the war. Through this study of the Algerian generation and the associations that spoke on its behalf, my dissertation demonstrates that years before the state that had asked them to serve deigned to recognize them, veterans of Algeria actively engaged in political action *as* veterans, both to promote their group interests, and to reshape French society based on lessons they brought from the war.

## CHAPTER 1: “THE GENERATION OF THE *DJEBEL*”: AN EXPERIENTIAL HISTORY OF CONSCRIPTS IN ALGERIA AND THEIR RETURN.<sup>66</sup>

The Algerian War took place at the crossroads of great political, social, and economic changes in France, and this crucible would form a generation. In 1954, as the French government scrambled to respond to the opening salvos of what seemed like a local rebellion in a distant territory, the notion of ‘youth’ as a separate demographic was just beginning to emerge.<sup>67</sup> National military service was widely accepted in France as a rite of passage into adulthood for young men, and a duty of Republican citizenship.<sup>68</sup>

The Algerian War was the last time that France would send citizen-soldiers into a conflict—they were the last native inheritors of the *levée en masse*, and the last unified combat generation. Between 1955 and 1962, 80% of French twenty-year olds served in Algeria; this was a generationally-defining event for French men.<sup>69</sup> But the young citizens sent to fulfill their national military service in Algeria participated in a war whose necessity was not universally self-evident—unlike the World Wars, in which their

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<sup>66</sup>Xavier Grall, *La génération du djebel* (Paris: Cerf, 1962), an essay based on surveys conducted by *La Vie Catholique illustrée*, was one of the earliest publications by a French veteran that attempted to explain what the Algerian War had done to veterans. Grall, also a poet and Breton nationalist, argued that the “generation of the *djebel* [...] has suffered at a time in life made for laughing,” but that it would eventually accede to political power in France, moving beyond bitter political divisions engendered by the war to create a more just and inclusive country. 125.

<sup>67</sup>Ludivine Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge: jeunes et jeunesses en France de l'aube des Trente Glorieuses à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 383.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 279; Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 225-6.

<sup>69</sup>Bantigny, 17.

fathers and grandfathers had served. Service in the Algerian War was the foundational coming of age initiation for over one million young Frenchmen, but, upon returning home, they discovered that their rite of passage was not valued in society as French patriotic tradition had led them to expect.

The Algerian War and its aftermath coincided with a period of post-World War II economic transformation in France commonly referred to as *les trente glorieuses*, or the “glorious thirty years.”<sup>70</sup> Historical narratives of this period tend to follow either internal developments, such as the modernization of agriculture, industry, and culture, or international affairs—in particular President Charles de Gaulle’s attempts to reassert France’s great power status. Yet the active male population that experienced these rapid transformations also served in the war that facilitated them. In a way, this generation would be a “sacrificed” in pursuit of Charles de Gaulle’s plans for France.<sup>71</sup> Rediscovering the “greatness” that Charles de Gaulle saw in the country—elevating her role on the world stage—eventually required that France relinquish Algeria. In the very period when France was preparing to enter capitalist modernity—an entrance delayed by two World Wars—its young men were discovering colonial contradictions in a foreign corner of the world they had been taught was French.<sup>72</sup>

French memory and history have obscured this generation of Frenchmen by focusing on more storied generations—those who experienced World War II as adults,

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<sup>70</sup>Jean Fourastié, *Les trente glorieuses, ou la révolution invisible de 1946 à 1975* (Paris: Fayard, 1979).

<sup>71</sup>Martin S. Alexander, “The War Without a Name,’ the French Army and the Algerians: Recovering Experiences, Images, and Testimonies,” 1-39 in eds. Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger, *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1964: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2002), 16.

<sup>72</sup>Henri Mendras with Alisair Cole, *Social Change in Modern France: Toward an Anthropology of the Fifth Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5.

and those who lived the days of May 1968 as young people. Examining the trajectory of the generation of French men who served in Algeria in their youth helps us understand why the memory of the Algerian War has been so difficult for French society to assimilate. This chapter addresses two key questions: What was the specificity of the “Algerian experience,” and how did the “impossible collective memory” of Algeria affect the generation of French citizens who served there?<sup>73</sup> After discussing the social world that produced this generation, we will examine the nature of conscription and combat in the Algerian War, before analyzing veterans’ return experiences to the circles of family, the city, and work. Then we will evoke how veterans “brought the war home” to diverse kinds of political struggles, before examining the impact of the war on veterans’ masculinity, relationships with family, their identity as veterans, and their participation in veterans’ associations.

Because of the nature of national military service in France, the draftees who served in Algeria formed a generationally distinct contingent.<sup>74</sup> The great majority was born between 1932 and 1942. They belonged to the “shallow cohort” [*classes creuses*] resulting from low birthrates after World War I, after much of a generation of young men perished.<sup>75</sup> They had lived through World War II as children or teenagers. In its infancy, thus, this generation was exposed to diverse traumas: the exodus of refugees from the

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<sup>73</sup>Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Découverte, 1989), 242.

<sup>74</sup>Ludivine Bantigny distinguishes a “generation” from a “demographic cohort” thus: “history is required, principally an event, and more so a receptivity to this event,” and continues, “If several generations live the same historical events concurrently, the ‘young’ generation is confronted with an essential stage in its formation, often as a first experience. The perception, the appreciation of the importance of the event and its interpretation are not therefore the same as those of other witnesses.” 15.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 24.

combat zone, the German occupation, the genocide of French Jews, the specter of bombardments, the deportation of forced laborers, clandestine action of Resistance groups and summary retribution from the Nazis, and finally the combats for the Liberation and the purges in the Resistance.

Later observers in the 1950s postulated a crisis of authority, resulting from children who had watched their parents resist the state in various ways during the war, deal in the black market, or collaborate with the Nazis.<sup>76</sup> At an early age, these children had been exposed to the perfidy of military and political authorities, and the arbitrariness of suffering and death.<sup>77</sup> Most of the nine hundred thousand or so French POWs in German captivity were fathers and heads of the family, and their absence had disrupted family dynamics as well as paternal authority.<sup>78</sup> Food rationing continued until 1949, and children had been the most affected by malnourishment during the war, many suffering from restricted growth.<sup>79</sup>

The privations of a childhood in World War II—and the premature education in anxiety and uncertainty it offered—meant that this generation was very different from the post-war ‘baby boom’ generation that followed, born into a world of peace and relative plenty.<sup>80</sup> Numerous surveys of “the youth” performed in France after World War II indicate that this generation had much the same values as its elders, cherishing the

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<sup>76</sup>Bantigny, 37.

<sup>77</sup>One veteran of Algeria, who experienced the war as a young teenager in occupied Paris, watched his twenty-year old cousin die in his front yard from an errant American bomb. She and her mother had been appreciating the beauty of the tracers of anti-aircraft munitions, which ““looked like fireworks.”” Interview RO17, Sèvres, 15 February 2014.

<sup>78</sup>Bantigny, 36.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 20.

security of family and work, and not seeking to disrupt the status quo, which distinguishes it from the generation of “sixty-eighters.”<sup>81</sup> But the Algerian generation was destined to live through great disruption. Even after the end of World War II in Europe, these youths faced the new reality of living in the atomic age, and the constant specter of conflict in a demarcated world.

In 1954, the year the Algerian revolution broke out, France still faced material difficulties in the long recovery from World War II. About half of all young married couples still lived with their parents, following tradition and also obliged by the severe housing shortage caused by bombing raids and artillery.<sup>82</sup> Childhood or adolescence during the Second World War generally entailed a truncated or disrupted education, but there were also problems in national education after 1945. At the start of every school year, schools turned down large numbers of students, lacking the material resources and teachers to welcome all applicants.<sup>83</sup> At the beginning of the Algerian War, education was only required until the age of fourteen, hopefully leading to a “diploma of primary studies” [*certificat d'études primaires* or CEP], but a Ministry of Education reform in 1959 extended obligatory schooling to sixteen years, which would be too late for the young men conscripted from 1956 onward.

Regardless of the specific requirements, access to schooling was very uneven for this generation, and foremost determined by economic class and whether the family could afford for its children to continue school rather than beginning work as soon as

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<sup>81</sup>Bantigny, 385.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 81.

possible.<sup>84</sup> For instance, as of 1962, farmers and farm workers composed about twenty percent of the French population, while only about eleven percent of their children had the level of a junior high school education. Yet the classes of middle managers and those in the liberal professions, making up only 11.5% of the population, represented 33% of children attaining the same level of education. Workers, who made up fifty percent of France's population, represented only 29% of those to make it this far in school.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, high school was "reserved for the social elite."<sup>86</sup> Even in 1960, only eleven percent of the age cohort received the vaunted *baccalauréat*, signaling completion of high school.<sup>87</sup>

Following from the restricted access to high school, university was generally only conceivable for those from a certain class background. University students numbered only 180,000 in 1957 and 215,000 in 1960.<sup>88</sup> Deferments were available to university students until the age of twenty-five, with a requirement of good grades, and a possible addition of an extra two years for certain fields of study.<sup>89</sup> Thus, most of the military-aged men who were able to avoid or delay service in the Algerian War came from positions of relative ease. Public debate centered on the social privilege inherent to

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<sup>84</sup>Bantigny, 102-103.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 304; Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014. However, because the French state did not categorize the Algerian conflict as a war, older reservists who had already fulfilled their military service and were now pursuing studies could be remobilized, whereas they could have received a deferment in an official "war." Bantigny, 305.



student deferments in 1959, when the government briefly considered reforming the system.<sup>90</sup>

Primary education presented an unduly positive image of the situation in the colonies, and of a “prosperous Algeria born of French generosity.”<sup>91</sup> Schoolbooks mentioned nothing of French violence inflicted during the conquest of Algeria—the villages burnt, the *razzias*, the livestock and harvests destroyed. In describing the current state of Algeria, some schoolbooks did evoke the poverty of the native population, which French administration would eventually alleviate, given enough time. But the narrative always centered on “exalting the French mission” offering Algerians ““peace, order, security, justice, education, health and medical care.””<sup>92</sup> France’s overseas “crown jewel” was thus portrayed with little nuance—without mentioning settlers’ success in expropriating the best land for themselves, creating segregated and inferior schools for Algerian children after destroying indigenous schools, and denying Algerians basic political rights.<sup>93</sup> Finally, young conscripts’ education about the Army itself was very minimal—textbooks often only mentioned the role of the Army in protecting national territory, or explained the differences between ranks.<sup>94</sup> But the Army tasked itself with continuing the education of these youths, as will be discussed below.

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<sup>90</sup>Bantigny, 304-305.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>93</sup>David Prochaska, *Making Algeria French: Colonialism in Bône, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 64.

<sup>94</sup>Bantigny, 234.

Most young men who would be drafted to serve in Algeria were already part of the world of work at the time of their call. The conscripts fully reflected the demographics of France, which, in this period, was primarily composed of agricultural and industrial workers.<sup>95</sup> In 1959, the average age of beginning work was fifteen years and six months for single-child families, but fell to thirteen years and seven months for families of five children or more.<sup>96</sup> Regions that were either predominantly rural or industrial—especially Brittany, Normandy, and the Nord—saw youths beginning work the soonest.<sup>97</sup>

Growing up in World War II and its aftermath incontestably forms part of the specificity of this generation.<sup>98</sup> Events had obliged these young men to take on adult responsibilities early, and living under the Occupation had imprinted many of them with a lasting sense of humiliation.<sup>99</sup> This led to a particular eagerness among some young men to serve when their country called them; they left with the patriotic combats of “1914-1918 in mind,” feeling that Algeria would be their war, perhaps their way to avenge the Fall of France in 1940 and the defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.<sup>100</sup> Yet later classes of conscripts, who had been able to observe the progression of the war, were often “anguished,” fearing what they were being sent into, especially if young men from their

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<sup>95</sup>Jauffret, 13.

<sup>96</sup>Bantigny, 97.

<sup>97</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>99</sup>Bernard W. Sigg, *Le Silence et la honte: névroses de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Messidor, 1989), 61-62.

<sup>100</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

village had already died “down there.”<sup>101</sup> Overall, the cultural formation, myths, and expectations that conscripts brought with them ensured that the great majority was woefully unprepared for the conflict ravaging Algeria.

Since Algeria was never declared a war, the first and second reserves were never called up, which made this a young man’s war in a way that the Second World War had not been for France. Conscription into national military service was a broadly accepted rite of passage into manhood.<sup>102</sup> The gradually expanding nature of French troop deployment in North Africa, as well as the government’s attempts to suppress what it minimized as a ‘rebellion,’ meant that the conscripts in Algeria were consistently underprepared and underequipped, and that more was constantly asked of them. The law of November 30, 1950 had set active service to a period of eighteen months, followed by three years of readiness, then seventeen years in the first reserve and seven and a half years in the second reserve.<sup>103</sup> However, as the war escalated and the military manpower shortage occasioned by the “shallow cohort” became more severe, tours of duty were progressively increased from 18 months to 27 months, and finally to 30 months.<sup>104</sup> Until the dates began to be published in 1960, conscripts often did not know the precise day of their “liberation.”<sup>105</sup>

National military service represented the last stage of adolescence for French males. Many soldiers were minors at the time of conscription and could not vote, since

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<sup>101</sup>Interview IA01, Paris, 14 May 2014.

<sup>102</sup>Bantigny, 279.

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>104</sup>Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie*, 13.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.*, 336.

the age of majority was twenty-one. Indeed, the oldest conscripts were young newlyweds, and most still lived at home with their parents.<sup>106</sup> The Army “presented itself as a second family” because “the young conscripts were viewed as adolescents.”<sup>107</sup> For many young men, military training offered their first opportunity to escape from “countryside isolation,” and discover their fellow countrymen.<sup>108</sup> Especially in rural parts of France, the rituals of conscription integrated into village tradition, presenting a true rite of passage in the anthropological sense.<sup>109</sup>

Until 1954, young men had to pass through a review council [*conseil de révision*], the goal of which was to be deemed “good for service,” which candidates and their families also took to mean “good for the girls.”<sup>110</sup> The review council consisted of the prefect or his delegate, as well as an officer representing the recruiting office, and sometimes also the sub-prefect, mayor or town council members; its deliberations were public.<sup>111</sup> Candidates for conscription had to present themselves before this grave assembly stripped down to their underwear or naked.<sup>112</sup> In 1954, the review councils, judged as too archaic and humiliating, were abandoned in favor of more modern

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<sup>106</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, “Clémentines et bifteck, ou le retour d’un appelé d’Algérie vu par ses frères et soeurs,” 67-81 in dir. Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty, *Retour à l’intime: au sortir de la guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009), 67.

<sup>107</sup>Ludivine Bantigny, “Jeunes et soldats. Le contingent français en guerre d’Algérie,” *Vingtième siècle revue d’histoire* 3 (83): 2004, 97-107: 98.

<sup>108</sup>Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>109</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 282.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.*, 279.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>112</sup>Robert Le Goff, *Soldats bretons en Algérie* (Brest: Éditions le Télégramme, 2011), 19.

“selection centers,” although the process of passing through the “*conseils de révision*” was so culturally ingrained that the use of that phrase continued.

In the selection centers, candidates received a more detailed medical examination, as well as tests on the ability to manipulate symbols, such as Morse code and figures.<sup>113</sup> Candidates were judged “fit to serve,” “fit for auxiliary service,” “adjourned,” or “exempted.”<sup>114</sup> But the maw of the Algerian War would prove hungry for men from this “shallow cohort.” In 1953, a year before the rebellion broke out, fifty-three percent of candidates had been accepted by the selection centers, whereas between 1954 and 1965, the acceptance rate was at eighty-five percent; exemptions became much more difficult to obtain during the war that was not a war. Doctors eventually even turned a blind eye to obvious cases of tuberculosis.<sup>115</sup>

Although the massive mobilization of French troops began in October 1956 following the vote of “special powers” for the government, ten infantry battalions of conscripts had already been deployed in Algeria as early as December 1954, a month after the initial attacks on All Saints’ Day.<sup>116</sup> With the “special powers” vote in 1956, all conscripts were required to be stationed in French North Africa as soon as possible, and before they had reached fourteen months of service.<sup>117</sup> They joined recalled reservists [*rappelés*], who had been mobilized beginning in August 1955.<sup>118</sup> The necessity to

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<sup>113</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 285.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 282.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>118</sup>*Idem.*

mobilize large numbers of troops for pacification and counter-guerilla actions sometimes led to a “certain improvisation.”<sup>119</sup> Thus, some conscripts were “directly incorporated,” meaning that they were sent to Algeria and received their military training there, and some recalled reservists were deployed in branches for which they had not been trained—for instance, proud Air Force or cavalry officers, or technicians trained in radiotransmission, hastily redeployed as foot soldiers: “We were all grunts.”<sup>120</sup>

The improvisation required by the undeclared war in Algeria and changing war aims caused a certain ambivalence in soldiers’ motivation. It may be most accurate to class conscripts’ and reservists’ participation in the war under “contingent consent,” which describes citizens’ compliance with state demands “only if [they perceive the] government as trustworthy and [they are] satisfied other citizens are also” subject to the same demands.<sup>121</sup> Globally, young Frenchmen did not show enthusiasm to serve in the war, but “accepted” their fate, acculturated as they were by a “long tradition” portraying military service as a duty of citizenship, and knowing it was a trial specific to their age group.<sup>122</sup> Sometimes they enlisted themselves—to be able to start their adult lives with their sweethearts as soon as possible, for instance—or to indulge a sense of adventure and

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<sup>119</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 288.

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, 289, 290; Interview EO09, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>121</sup>Margaret Levi, “Consent, Dissent, and Patriotism: A Summary,” 337-346 in eds. Mjøset and Van Holden, *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, 338.

<sup>122</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 297.

see the French Empire after getting “bitten by the travel bug.”<sup>123</sup> Some students even broke their military deferments out of feelings of patriotism.<sup>124</sup>

The great majority of soldiers did not resist the call, but this was not primarily due to an ideological commitment to preserving French Algeria.<sup>125</sup> Most soldiers fought out of a “tacit patriotism” acquired through Republican schooling—although they were not politicized, they more or less adhered to a “latent ideology” that the state that sent them to fight was just, and therefore so must be its war aims.<sup>126</sup> Against broad cultural consensus on national military service as a duty of citizenship, even conscientious objection seemed heretical to many, and indeed, there were no legal provisions to request this status until after the war’s end.<sup>127</sup> Because this was a citizen army, discipline relied “above all on an intellectual adhesion following from civic spirit,” and thus morale could be damaged by soldiers’ sense of being abandoned or ignored by the homefront, which explains why civic associations supporting the Algerian War considered propaganda a priority.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>Interview IA16, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014; Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>124</sup>Interview LE05, Paris, 11 April 2014.

<sup>125</sup>Around 1% of conscripts resisted, including approximately 11,000 *insoumis* or absent without leave, 900 deserters, and 400 conscientious objectors. Catherine Brun and Olivier Penol-Lacassagne, *Engagements et déchirements: les intellectuels et la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), 142.

<sup>126</sup>Peter S. Kindsvatter, *American Soldiers: Ground Combat in the World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003), 138.

<sup>127</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 280. A public discussion on conscientious objection developed in France after the Algerian War, and the government established an official procedure with a law passed in 1963, but the state “did not really allow” conscientious objection “on any scale until after 1968.” Lars Mjøset and Stephan Van Holde, “Killing for the State, Dying for the Nation: An Introductory Essay on the Life Cycles of Conscription into Europe’s Armed Forces,” 3-94 in Lars Mjøset and Stephan Van Holde, eds., *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces* (Amsterdam: JAI, 2002), 82.

<sup>128</sup>Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie*, 257.

What resistance soldiers did level at the war unfolded in four phases, not all of it marked by ideological or political critique. In 1955-56, recalled reservists protested their imminent departure from numerous cities including Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Perpignan, Nantes, and Brest.<sup>129</sup> Some politicized reservists made their ideological dissent known, but most had no critique of a war of decolonization, and only resented being hastily remobilized after they had completed their military service and begun their adult lives.<sup>130</sup> Between 1957 and 1958, soldiers and some officers publicly revealed and opposed the systematic use of torture. And in 1960, a movement backed by prominent intellectuals in favor of desertion garnered national attention.

Finally, during the short-lived “generals’ putsch” of April 1961, the great majority of conscripts refused to obey the orders of the generals revolting in Algiers. This resistance revealed their distaste for blind obedience to the military hierarchy, and, likely, their hope that under the reins of Charles de Gaulle rather than fierce partisans of French Algeria, France would end the war sooner rather than later.<sup>131</sup> At this point, independence seemed a foregone conclusion; the end of the war was in sight. The putsch was “planned and executed almost entirely in disdain for the civilian milieu,” and thus attracted professional soldiers and Legionnaires who identified with the Army, rather than citizen-soldiers serving time in it.<sup>132</sup> Even though General Challe addressed conscripts directly by radio, promising the immediate liberation of all those who had served at least eighteen

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<sup>129</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie (1954-1962)* (Paris: Découverte, 1993), 18-19; Le Goff, 26-27.

<sup>130</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 53.

<sup>131</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 387.

<sup>132</sup>George Armstrong Kelly, *Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis, 1947-1962* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), 310.



months, conscripts rallied behind de Gaulle, whom they considered “the head of the Republic to save,” rather than a military figure.<sup>133</sup> One former conscript interviewed expressed hostility toward “the generals, who almost led us to catastrophe.”<sup>134</sup>

The putsch revealed the important distinction between career soldiers, who were more invested in the Army and its mission, as opposed to conscripts and reservists, who were only temporarily passing through its tutelage. This divide proved a “chronic defect” of the French forces in Algeria throughout the war: the professionals and the citizen soldiers did not have a shared military culture and were not used to fighting together.<sup>135</sup> Many of the professionals had fought in World War II and Indochina, and some were former Resistance members and concentration camp inmates.<sup>136</sup> Some of the earliest professional soldiers and Legionnaires to be deployed in Algeria at the outbreak of the revolution had only made a very brief stopover in France on their way back from Indochina, since the war there had just ended in May 1954.<sup>137</sup>

Many of these career soldiers perceived the Algerian rebellion as another front in the combat against global Communism. They subscribed to the French theory of “revolutionary warfare,” which was a perspective that conflated the tactics of a

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<sup>133</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 359, 360. Between 1961 and 1963, 800 officers, 800 policemen, and 400 civilian administrators lost their positions for having supported the putsch. Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 85.

<sup>134</sup>Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>135</sup>Jauffret, 91.

<sup>136</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, “La dernière génération du feu? Jalons pour une étude des anciens combattants français de la guerre d’Algérie.” *Politique, culture, société* 3 no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 2007): 6. doi: 10.3917/hp/003.0006, 2; Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 73.

<sup>137</sup>Stephen Tyre, “Defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the Defence of French Algeria,” 214-232 in Jenny MacLeod, ed., *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat in the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 223.

nationalist revolution with Communist ideology, and called for a politicization of the war effort in response, using psychological operations on civilians based on Maoist tactics.<sup>138</sup> But the conscripts did not share this politicized, anti-Communist worldview, having had neither the political background nor the combat experience to develop it. They forged a separate culture from previous wartime generations based on their “distinctive language, attitudes and feelings,” and their shared dilemma of being asked by the nation to serve in a war of which most had only a rudimentary understanding.<sup>139</sup> Moreover, because new cohorts of conscripts were called up every two months, conscript culture evolved and was transmitted very quickly.<sup>140</sup>

The cultural and experiential divide between the professional soldiers and conscripts meant that the French Army was not united in a common ideal, unlike their adversaries in the Algerian National Liberation Army [*Armée de libération nationale*, ALN]. The great majority of French officers did not take the nationalist ideology of the Algerian independence movement seriously; their anti-Communism and “revolutionary war” perspective led them to believe that Algerian nationalists “were either agents of Communism or dupes.”<sup>141</sup> Among reservists and conscripts, only a minority of true believers fought to keep Algeria French. Most served out of a sense of duty, resignation, or perhaps adventure at most. Many were just serving time, illustrated by the persistent

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<sup>138</sup>Tyre, 224; Kelly, *Lost Soldiers*, 9.

<sup>139</sup>Jean-Charles Jauffret, “The War Culture of French Combatants in the Algerian Conflict,” 106-116 in Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J. F. V. Keiger, eds. *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962: Experiences, Images, Testimonies*. (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2002), 101.

<sup>140</sup>Le Goff, 76.

<sup>141</sup>Kelly, 111.

conscript fetish of the “*quille*,” a bowling pin that symbolized the glorious day of demobilization.

The Army, ever cognizant of the need to study and improve morale, performed numerous psychological surveys that revealed conscripts’ general attitudes toward the Army and officers. Even after six months of military training, conscripts still tended to regard the Army with “incomprehension” of what seemed like a foreign world.<sup>142</sup> Surveys also found that conscripts were inclined to respect uniforms more than the character of those wearing the uniforms—although they reserved their most “pejorative” criticisms for the battle-hardened veterans of Indochina.<sup>143</sup> When conscripts did seek promotion to become officers, a sense of duty and honor generally came after material considerations, the search for social mobility, and the quest to distinguish oneself from the mass of rank and file troops.<sup>144</sup> Sometimes superiors encouraged soldiers whom they identified as particularly intelligent to attend reserve officer training school.<sup>145</sup> An oral history and survey investigation undertaken by Jean-Charles Jauffret reveals that relations between soldiers and officers were largely satisfying, although this varied greatly between different sectors: there were some notorious absentee officers, while others “gave themselves utterly to their tasks.”<sup>146</sup>

Relations with junior officers, such as corporals and sergeants, were more ambiguous, as they could conflict with the social divisions of the civilian world. For

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<sup>142</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 312.

<sup>143</sup>*Ibid.*, 314.

<sup>144</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>145</sup>Interview EO09, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>146</sup>Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie*, 257, 255.

instance, sometimes these junior officers were younger and less well educated than the troops they commanded, who might have a high school diploma or even a university degree. On the ground in Algeria, some conscripts resented being led by native North African commanders.<sup>147</sup> In the hopes of instilling “feelings of equality and trust between conscripts of different origins,” the Army promoted an official discourse of “mixture” in Algeria, which conflicted in practice with the maintenance of segregated dormitories and mess halls for Muslims of North African origin.<sup>148</sup> But European conscripts could find themselves commanding units that were predominantly North African, and sometimes this increased their attachment to the cause of French Algeria.<sup>149</sup> Along with the 20,000 or so Algerian Muslims in the professional Army, and around 58,000 auxiliary forces (generally grouped under the term *harkis*), about 100,000 conscripts of North African origin served through the course of the war. The conscription law of 1912 concerned all male French citizens, although only a tiny minority of native Algerians could access French citizenship.<sup>150</sup>

Beside ethnic origins, geography played a key role in soldiers’ outlook and experience. Conflicts could arise between units of Metropolitan conscripts and their  *pied noir* commanders.<sup>151</sup> Metropolitan conscripts generally hoped to end the war as soon as possible, while conscripts from North Africa were fighting to preserve French

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<sup>147</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 314.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>149</sup>Interview LU03, Paris, 3 May 2014.

<sup>150</sup>Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie*, 80; Branche, “La dernière génération du feu?”, 2.

<sup>151</sup>Le Goff, 31. The term “ *pieds noirs*” refers to the descendants of European colonists in Algeria; initially a mildly pejorative term, it was soon reclaimed as a mark of pride. Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire: de «l’Algérie française» au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Découverte, 1999), 55.

sovereignty in their settler colony.<sup>152</sup> This is the major reason that so many recently demobilized  *pied noir*  veterans would join the terrorist OAS militia upon their return home to Algeria.<sup>153</sup>

Besides the conscript versus career military distinction and the question of origins, the most important lines dividing the French Army in Algeria were social and intellectual. Among conscripts and reservists, those who had benefitted from education—“students, school teachers, seminarians, members of youth movements, politically active or unionized youth”—formed their own world.<sup>154</sup> They brought political opinions and organizing experience, knowledge of history and international events, and moral conviction to a largely ignorant cohort of young conscripts, some of whom were illiterate, and most of whom had “no political culture,” as one former conscript confessed.<sup>155</sup> Indeed, military commanders observed that conscripts “for the most part were scarcely interested in current political questions, except for the repercussions that they could have on the duration of service.”<sup>156</sup> In an era when most military-aged men were workers or farmers with, at best, a junior high school education, those few reservists and conscripts

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<sup>152</sup>Interview UO23, Paris, 17 January 2014. One Metropolitan conscript, while home on leave in 1959, told his father that the solution to the Algerian problem was to “line everyone up on both sides and shoot. Cut up the pear,” showing a flippant disregard for the land of Algeria and the peoples who laid claim to it. Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>153</sup>Interview RO17, Sèvres, 15 February 2014.

<sup>154</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 323.

<sup>155</sup>*Idem*; Interview EE21, Paris, 30 January 2014. One of the questionnaire respondents had very labored handwriting, and he had trouble spelling words like “célibataire” (single), “agriculteur” (farmer), and “maladie” (sickness). Questionnaire PN14.

<sup>156</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge*, 337.

who were educated or politicized could sometimes command “a higher authority than that of noncommissioned officers.”<sup>157</sup>

Continuing a long Republican tradition, the Army considered the civic education of its young charges a primordial mission. This task involved about 30 hours of instruction: seven hours of civic lessons, four and a half of moral education, eight hours of education on Algeria, and nine on the action of the Army in Algeria.<sup>158</sup> The education was systematized, yet presented in the simplest and most unambiguous ways possible, given the uneven schooling of this cohort.<sup>159</sup> Beyond exotic images of the Casbah from films, most conscripts knew only that Algeria consisted of three French departments, as they had learned in school.<sup>160</sup> Indeed, some of the pamphlets destined for conscripts almost resembled schoolbooks in register and content, addressing soldiers in the informal “*tu*” and attempting to connect on a personal level: “Yesterday...it was July 5, 1830: the soldier DuPont [the French everyman’s name, like Smith], maybe one of your great-grandparents, entered the Casbah. [...] Turning this page, you will travel through more than a century of French history and all of a sudden you will understand: [...] that Algiers and Algeria are a French creation and you have the right to be proud.”<sup>161</sup>

The earliest educational materials were created for recalled reservists: as one pamphlet put it, since they were “torn away from their work and families and [...] often in

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<sup>157</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 315.

<sup>158</sup>*Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>159</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>160</sup>*Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>161</sup>“Guide pratique à l’usage des militaires servant dans les formations du Corps d’Armée d’Alger,” pamphlet, UNC archives, “Punch Box,” 1. Undated, but most likely published in 1957, around the time of the battle of Algiers, since it seems specifically destined for soldiers serving in this city.

a difficult material situation,” it was urgent to explain to reservists “why they are fighting [...] and tell them all the threats facing Algeria, and, consequently, France and the Western powers.”<sup>162</sup> Army propaganda developed by the Cold Warriors in the military hierarchy sought to deflect responsibility from France for the Algerian rebellion and blame instead pan-Arabism and Marxism, citing “above all external factors that tend to separate Algeria from France: the call of Islam and the Orient on one hand, anti-colonialist propaganda on the other hand.”<sup>163</sup> Government propaganda presented reasons to be cautiously optimistic about the challenges facing French sovereignty in Algeria, noting the state’s “economic efforts, social reforms, and administrative reorganization” which “should assure the evolution of the French Muslims of Algeria,” thus denying the FLN its pretext for revolution.<sup>164</sup> This systematized but cursory education was intended to “sensitize the recruits in their role as defenders of the Nation,” but it often frustrated instructors, who would have liked more time to spend on military training.<sup>165</sup>

The conscripts also received targeted psychological action, viewed as essential by anti-Communist Army officers who had fought in Indochina.<sup>166</sup> Army brochures designed for instructors explained that in this new kind of combat being waged, “action on the morale of the troops, as well as that on the civilian populations, is

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<sup>162</sup>“Connaissance de l’Algérie” pamphlet, Xème Région Militaire Service Psychologique, UNC archives, “Punch Box,” 3. This document was not dated, but it was almost certainly published in 1955 or 1956, since it specifically mentions “*rappelés*” [recalled reservists], who were deployed sooner than most conscripts.

<sup>163</sup>“Connaissance de l’Algérie,” 34-35.

<sup>164</sup>“Action du Gouvernement en Algérie: Mésures de Pacification et réformes,” *Service de l’Information du Cabinet du Ministre de l’Algérie*, October 1957, UNC archives, “Punch Box,” 121.

<sup>165</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 326.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*, 327.

preponderant.”<sup>167</sup> This psychological action centered on presenting the Army as a family with a division of roles, to replace the family that conscripts had just left, as well as developing military camaraderie.<sup>168</sup> These attitudes could lead commanders to act in a “rather paternalistic” way toward their young charges.<sup>169</sup> Conscripts were invited into a “patriotic genealogy,” which tied them to their ancestors who had also defended the fatherland.<sup>170</sup> Army instructors attempted to instill a culture of heroism through stories and historic visits, addressing “these youths in particular, whose fathers and brothers had been or could have been Resistance heroes.”<sup>171</sup> Axiomatic in this psychological action was the notion that “France has always had the best soldiers in the world,” and that these conscripts were but one link in the chain extending all the way back, in the words of some instructors, to the First Empire.<sup>172</sup>

Psychological action also emphasized the responsibility soldiers bore for winning over the homefront: “when you return home, people will ask you questions. [...] You can tell them that FRANCO-MUSLIM Community is not a vain word. You can tell them that if Algeria needs the Metropole, the Metropole also needs Algeria.”<sup>173</sup> From 1958 onward, civic education as well as psychological action emphasized the contributions and loyalty of veterans of North African origin who had served France in the World Wars, which was

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<sup>167</sup>“Connaissance de l’Algérie,” 3.

<sup>168</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 328.

<sup>169</sup>Questionnaire FE18.

<sup>170</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 330.

<sup>171</sup>Bantigny, “Jeunes et soldats,” 100.

<sup>172</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 328.

<sup>173</sup>“Guide pratique,” inside back cover.



intended to generate sympathy for the cause of French Algeria, as well as develop hatred for the FLN and its brutal treatment of fellow Muslim Algerians.<sup>174</sup> Until 1961, when the French government openly pursued negotiation, “military instruction attempted to persuade the conscripts that France was going to save Algeria and that all advantages were on its side to win.”<sup>175</sup>

Not the least because of such changes in political currents, conscripts’ experience in Algeria was extremely diverse, based on the time, location, and branch of service.<sup>176</sup> Nothing could fully prepare them for the kind of war they were destined to serve in, “neither the history of other wars, nor lessons on the colonial empire, nor even the military instruction received in the bases of Germany or the Metropole.”<sup>177</sup> Combat primarily occurred in the Atles and Aurès mountains and in the plains, as a geometric operation known as “quartering” [*quadrillage*] sought to isolate highly mobile ALN detachments from their supply lines. But in these regions as well, soldiers were tasked with winning the “hearts and minds” of the Algerians, and proving that France was there to stay—running medical clinics and schools, for instance, or protecting farmers’ fields from terrorism.<sup>178</sup> Duties of “pacification” also included “regrouping” entire villages into camps surrounded by barbed wire so that they could not supply or host the ALN; over

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<sup>174</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 331.

<sup>175</sup>*Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>176</sup>Martin S. Alexander, “The ‘War Without a Name,’ the French Army and the Algerians: Recovering Experiences, Images, and Testimonies,” 1-39 in eds. Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger, *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962 Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2002), 12.

<sup>177</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 341.

<sup>178</sup>Interviewee AO12 served as a doctor in a clinic in Minia; IA01 served as a schoolteacher for about 80 children near Bougie; IA04 protected civilians’ harvests from sabotage and fire.

two million Algerian farmers would be displaced in this manner.<sup>179</sup> Operations in the cities were generally along the lines of policing, counterterrorism, and guard work.

As for the timeline of operations, the Algerian War is generally divided into four temporal phases; “even [France’s] consciousness of being in a war only installed itself progressively.”<sup>180</sup> In 1955-6, reservists and conscripts, alongside police forces, primarily participated in “hunting rebels.”<sup>181</sup> In 1957-8, the FLN brought the war to the city of Algiers with terrorism, and French troops responded with police operations; this was the era of revelations of widespread systematic torture. In 1959-60, as the new Fifth Republic sought a position of military dominance from which to pursue eventual negotiations, the Challe Plan proceeded to “steamroll” ALN companies and cut off materiel lines with electrified fences on the borders with Morocco and Tunisia.<sup>182</sup> And lastly, in 1961-62, French troops were paving the way for the government’s chosen policy of Algerian “self-determination,” and they were equally vulnerable to attacks from the anti-independence OAS as from the FLN.<sup>183</sup>

The geographic and temporal diversity of different phases in the war meant that no two soldiers, except those deployed in the same sector at the same time, fought the

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<sup>179</sup>Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie*, 54.

<sup>180</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 342.

<sup>181</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>182</sup>By spring 1960, “the French Army believed it had won the war.” Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie*, 56. Numerous veterans interviewed—both officers and simple soldiers—most of whom were deployed in the period in question, insisted that Algeria had been “pacified” and the French Army had won the war by 1958 or 1959. Interview UO19, Annecy, 10 March 2014; Interview RO17, Sèvres, 12 February 2014; Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014; Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014; Interview OE18, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>183</sup>Martin Evans, “Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran: The Case of French Conscripts from the Algerian War, 1954-1962,” 73-85 in eds. Martin Evans and Ken Lunn, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 74.

“same” Algerian War, and this was a strong factor behind the personalization of the war’s memory. Because of the great diversity among war experiences as the conflict progressed, perhaps it is appropriate to speak of “generational sub-groups.”<sup>184</sup> Conscripts mobilized in 1961 or 1962 had had years to observe the evolution of the war and the declining support of the homefront, while those mobilized in 1956 or 1958 often had few political opinions to frame their service.

The idea of combat was well engrained in French mentalities at this point in the twentieth century, but conscripts had to be introduced to an entirely new kind of combat. Republican schooling had not prepared them for the “singular” nature of the counter-guerilla war in Algeria; this combat “had nothing to do with a classic military campaign, with its well-identified belligerents, its circumscribed battlefields, its established tactics.”<sup>185</sup> The majority of combat consisted of ambushes and skirmishes, with bored or anxious soldiers sometimes initiating “monkey business” themselves to “show that we were there.”<sup>186</sup>

Conscripts often experienced their “baptism of fire” with an ambush and the desire for revenge that came afterward; as one former conscript explained, “you become a true soldier after the death of a buddy. After that, you harden.”<sup>187</sup> Along with learning to handle firearms and artillery in their military instruction, conscripts also studied counter-guerilla combat: how to kill with knives, with their bare hands, and by strangling with a

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<sup>184</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 308.

<sup>185</sup>*Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>186</sup>*Ibid.*, 362; Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>187</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014. Claude Liauzu confirms that it was common for fearful conscripts to “toughen up” after the death of a friend or a commander. “Le contingent entre silence et discours ancien combattant,” 507-516 in dir. Rioux, *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français*, 510.

cord.<sup>188</sup> Indeed, much of the combat was close-range, as opposed to the trench warfare of World War I and the massive frontal assaults of World War II.<sup>189</sup> However, involvement in regular combat proved to be extremely uneven; under “10 percent of French forces did much fighting,” with most troops either involved in police actions in cities, escorting convoys, or performing “static duties” such as guarding isolated villages or infrastructure.<sup>190</sup> At any time, however, they could fall prey to terrorism and ambushes, and the sense of constant insecurity wore on many soldiers.<sup>191</sup>

Despite the uneven exposure of conscripts to combat itself, the Algerian generation as a whole experienced the power imbalances and contradictions inherent in settler colonialism. The Army encouraged soldiers to establish as much contact as possible with the civilians inhabiting the villages and towns where they were stationed, all while instilling suspicion of all “Muslims” in general, since terrorized or *attentiste* civilians often supported France by day and the FLN by night.<sup>192</sup> The extreme poverty of the mass of Algerians, juxtaposed with their often deep generosity toward French soldiers, “moved and scandalized most conscripts,” and put France’s “civilizing mission” into question.<sup>193</sup> And French conscripts, many coming from a peasant background themselves, might feel they had more in common with Algerian farmworkers than with

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<sup>188</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 321.

<sup>189</sup>Bantigny, “Jeunes et soldats,” 103.

<sup>190</sup>Alexander, “The ‘War Without a Name,’” 23.

<sup>191</sup>A Breton conscript witnessed his first ambush soon on arriving in country; thirteen soldiers who had been working on a construction site had been killed. One of them was due for demobilization. Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>192</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 351.

<sup>193</sup>*Ibid.*, 352.

the colonists who owned the land, or might refuse an officer's orders to slaughter a village's livestock, knowing how devastating that would be.<sup>194</sup> Such power disparities led some conscripts to question the axiom that "Algeria was France," after spending time in country—and sometimes, the doubt came as soon as they arrived in the port of Algiers or Oran.<sup>195</sup> Through the course of their deployment, numerous conscripts would develop the nauseating suspicion that their role more closely resembled that of Nazi occupiers than of the heroic partisans of the Resistance.<sup>196</sup>

Despite the Army's efforts to instill the idea of a patriotic lineage of combat, conscripts soon realized that "their task was more difficult than that of their elders."<sup>197</sup> The tactics the FLN used in its revolutionary war, and the policies the French Army pursued in response, posed deep moral challenges to French soldiers. The FLN used bombings, arson, and assassination and mutilation—against Algerian civilians and *notables* who served the French state, against European colonists, and also against French soldiers—to provoke an extreme response from the French authorities, which would increase anger and hatred on both sides. The FLN's tactics worked extremely well. In this sense, the downward spiral of the war itself and France's repression, affecting ever-wider swathes of the Algerian population, further developed sentiments of Algerian nationalism.<sup>198</sup> Without any explicit orders from the state, the Army used torture in Algeria at the "heart" of "a repressive system [...] conceived of as necessary to win [the]

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<sup>194</sup>Le Goff, 34; Sigg, 30.

<sup>195</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 353; Interview AO12, St-Anne-d'Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>196</sup>Bantigny, "Jeunes et soldats," 104.

<sup>197</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 330.

<sup>198</sup>Kelly, 152.

war.”<sup>199</sup> Preferred methods of making suspects speak included electric shocks, simulated drowning, and beatings.<sup>200</sup> Because there was no official war, only efforts to “pacify” a territory that was administratively French, these acts were “implicitly authorized,” even while being illegal with regard to French law.<sup>201</sup> In fact, the Army adopted torture following the precedent set by the police forces.<sup>202</sup>

In a climate where both sides felt entitled to use any means necessary to win the war, conscripts “whether as officers or soldiers,” commonly employed torture, although the media has focused much of the blame on professional soldiers and especially outspoken and unrepentant generals like Massu and Aussaresses.<sup>203</sup> Conscripts in particular “neither wanted to see nor hear [about torture], in an era where the majority of French tolerated [it...] as a lesser evil in response to terrorism,” but many conscripts were directly involved or complicit with torture, and most were at least vaguely aware that it was happening—if not in their sector, then elsewhere.<sup>204</sup> Out of the minority of veterans interviewed who brought the topic up voluntarily, only one, a reservist and junior officer, implicated justified the use of torture in the battle of Algiers as an effective response to

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<sup>199</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l'Armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 15.

<sup>200</sup>Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d'Algérie*, 25.

<sup>201</sup>Branche, *La torture et l'Armée*, 109; Sigg, 38.

<sup>202</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 30.

<sup>203</sup>Branche, *La torture et l'Armée*, 315; Raphaëlle Branche and Jim House, “Silences on state violence during the Algerian War of Independence: France and Algeria, 1967-2007,” 115-137 in eds. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, Ruth Ginio and Jay Winter, *Shadows of War: A Social History of Silence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 110; Le Goff, 56-57.

<sup>204</sup>Branche, *La torture et l'Armée*, 279; Le Goff, 183. Torture was not central to my oral history inquiry, and indeed, bringing the topic up on my own would have been a good way to shut down my subjects immediately, since many veterans still fear that this is the only lens through which the media and academic historians care to portray them.

terrorism: “these interrogations were very brutal, in this kind of war. [...] Obviously it was hard, because it was necessary to neutralize the networks of bombers.”<sup>205</sup> A former conscript insisted that he “was never a witness, neither from close up nor far away, of acts of torture”; one former officer denied that anyone in his intelligence unit “interrogated in a brutal manner.”<sup>206</sup> Another former conscript, without directly implicating himself, blamed the French state for “sending us to do things she was ashamed of,” adding that after conscripts “saw torture, everything,” they were expected to disappear in silence.<sup>207</sup>

The state turned a blind eye to torture committed by men acting in its name, and protected itself from repercussions through censorship and imprisonment for those who spoke out, as well as with amnesties after the war that erased all crimes committed on Algerian soil.<sup>208</sup> Officers had the option to publicly criticize torture—although very few did, including General Jacques Paris de Bollardière, who would be imprisoned and then relieved of his duties. But ordinary conscripts had to choose between their internal moral code, and the rules “imposed by their hierarchy.”<sup>209</sup> For some veterans, it is less painful to deflect the blame onto officers in the professional Army than to recognize the complicity of citizen-soldiers: “Of course we did not torture. But it was used in Algiers,

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<sup>205</sup>Interview RO17, Sèvres, 12 February 2014.

<sup>206</sup>Questionnaire OR16; Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>207</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>208</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 31.

<sup>209</sup>Sigg, 27. See also Jean-Charles Jauffret, *Ces officiers qui ont dit non à la torture, Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris: Autrement, 2005).

and the officers never denied that.”<sup>210</sup> The tendency of every soldier in Algeria to think that *his* war was the only war, means that veterans still disagree vehemently on how widespread torture was.

Summary executions were another of the war crimes committed by the French Army in Algeria, described euphemistically as “*corvée de bois*” [woods duty], in which a prisoner would be released and then shot while fleeing.<sup>211</sup> The French Army also committed massacres of civilians. Sometimes, professional soldiers or more experienced conscripts initiated the ‘green’ (or, in the French parlance, ‘blue’) conscripts into such behavior. For example, the Indochina veterans and Legionnaires in the unit that replaced the reservists who had been killed and mutilated at Palestro in May 1956 led the new conscripts on a rampage against Algerian civilians.<sup>212</sup>

French soldiers encountered a strikingly different gendered order when they arrived in what they had been taught was French territory. The “natives” had long been gendered feminine in the French imagination, and Algerian women were portrayed as sexually available to Europeans. Some young conscripts would have their first sexual experience in one of the military’s official brothels.<sup>213</sup> This offered a sad coming of age initiation for some young Frenchmen.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, sexual violence was an intrinsic

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<sup>210</sup>Interview LE05, Paris, 16 April 2014.

<sup>211</sup>Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie*, 25; Sigg, 38. One interviewee hinted that after witnessing a *corvée de bois* (or, perhaps, participating in one), he was so sick he could not sleep for a week afterward. Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>212</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014. Raphaëlle Branche, *L’embuscade de Palestro: Algérie 1956* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 12.

<sup>213</sup>Stora, *Appelés*, 77. Only one of the veterans interviewed mentioned the brothels, and only in passing as an exotic feature of life in deployment. Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>214</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 347.



aspect of this war; rape of women, children, and sometimes men occurred on patrols and during “interrogations.”<sup>215</sup> Arguably, the presence of official Army brothels in Algeria, when prostitution was illegal in France, facilitated the “degradation of the image” of North African women for many soldiers, and accelerated the turn to rape.<sup>216</sup> While French society’s knowledge of torture was widespread by the middle of the war, sexual violence would long remain concealed by the perpetrators, their superiors, and the victims.<sup>217</sup>

Because of the nature of combat, the impact of the Algerian War on the French troops was different from that of European wars. The death toll was lower; the Army lost 23,716 men and the Air Force 898. A surprisingly high proportion of deaths (32%, 7,917 total) was due to accidents—sometimes caused by mechanical errors or “foolishness” and poor training, but also due to confusion occasioned by the fact that the ALN and French uniforms closely resembled each other except for the color of their scarves.<sup>218</sup> Families were never notified that their sons had died from accidents, which would have hurt support for the war effort on the home front. There is no literature on widespread incidents of “fragging” such as occurred during the Vietnam War, but it is likely that some friendly-fire incidents or ‘accidents’ were the result of personal disputes.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>215</sup>Sigg, 33.

<sup>216</sup>Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie*, 304.

<sup>217</sup>*Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>218</sup>Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie*, 89; Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 336; Interview EO09, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014. One interviewee, an official at a veterans’ association who has undertaken a study of deaths during the war, is convinced that most of the total French deaths were industrial workers, especially from the Nord and Nord-Pas-de-Calais, who tended to be less “sturdy” than those coming from farming backgrounds. Interview ER24, Paris, 12 December 2013.

<sup>219</sup>One former conscript recalls being threatened by a colleague during a heated argument in the barracks: “‘bullets can be lost in an ambush.’” Interview UO19, 10 February 2014.

More than 27,000 men had been wounded in combat; the mortality rate from wounds tended to be much higher than in conventional wars, since injuries from explosions often led to shock, which favors infection.<sup>220</sup> Conscripts also suffered numerous tropical illnesses, including malaria, dysentery, typhoid, and viral hepatitis—to which they were less resistant than the hardy veterans of Indochina.<sup>221</sup> Finally, the uncertainties and shocks of guerilla combat and terrorism left at least nine thousand soldiers with psychological trauma, usually characterized by “mental confusion, troubled sleep and nightmares, and even psychomotor impairments” or lasting anxiety.<sup>222</sup> War traumas could also be somatic, including intestinal ailments or extreme fatigue.<sup>223</sup> None of these symptoms was abnormal given the war conditions French soldiers had experienced. But during the war and for many decades thereafter, the French state “did not want to hear” about these consequences of the Algerian conflict; no state institution “attempted to take care of the young veterans and give them psychological support.”<sup>224</sup> As one former conscript explained, “We were sent without our opinion being asked, to do things we were not prepared for. Afterwards, we had to sort it out on our own.”<sup>225</sup>

Following from the great diversity of combat experiences, veterans’ return experiences were quite varied. To begin with, there was no massive demobilization, as

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<sup>220</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 364.

<sup>221</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>222</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 365; Bantigny, “Jeunes et soldats,” 104.

<sup>223</sup>Sigg, 44.

<sup>224</sup>Sigg, 43, 45; Bantigny, “Jeunes et soldats,” 106. Two veterans interviewed, as well as the wife of one veteran, emphasized that “there were no psychologists to take care of us,” and one mentioned, “I am still depressed. But one does what one must.” Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014; Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>225</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

there had been at the conclusion of the World Wars, and thus, no demobilization celebrations.<sup>226</sup> Soldiers simply returned when their tour of duty was over.<sup>227</sup> For some, the day of return was not even a noteworthy transition; perhaps they had already “lost the taste” for the military after previously coming home on leave.<sup>228</sup> Compared with the patriotic mood concluding previous wars, the moment of demobilization felt a bit peremptory: “you gave your gear to the Army; they gave you a little money; that was it.”<sup>229</sup>

The disjointed nature of soldiers’ return, and the invisibility it created around them, was an impetus behind the creation of veterans’ associations, which emerged as early as 1957. These were a “response to isolation”: newly returned veterans knew that they were passing the torch to future cohorts, and felt responsible for helping them when society seemed unconcerned.<sup>230</sup> Solidarity and mutual aid were required of this combat generation; Prime Minister Guy Mollet himself had half admitted early into the war that given budgetary constraints, charity was required to support the soldiers.<sup>231</sup> While each association bore a particular political standpoint on French Algeria and the war, they

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<sup>226</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 73; Branche, “Clémentines et bifteck,” 67.

<sup>227</sup>Numerous soldiers remained deployed well beyond the official cease-fire of 19 March 1962, including among my interviewees one former conscript who was assigned to “maintain order” in Constantine until August 1962, and remembers the settlers throwing rocks at French soldiers, and the OAS “making everything explode.” Questionnaire CI11. And those soldiers imprisoned for joining the putsch or going over to the OAS generally remained in prison until De Gaulle’s amnesties in 1968; one of my interviewees alluded to being in this situation. Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>228</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>229</sup>Interview UO23, Paris, 17 January 2014.

<sup>230</sup>Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

<sup>231</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 319.

shared a common concern for mutual aid and uplift for mobilized and returning soldiers, against a backdrop of lagging support on the homefront.

The primary return experience for most veterans was coming home to their families—which, for conscripts, generally meant their parents and siblings, or for reservists, their wives and children. Although most veterans hoped to continue the lives they had left behind, this was only possible for a select few; overall, there was no “return to normalcy,” since “the post-war reinvents its [own] norms.”<sup>232</sup> Returning to France was generally an enormous “relief,” but even for those without physical or mental wounds, “the shock was great.”<sup>233</sup> This was no more true than for *pied noir* conscripts, for whom Algeria was the only home they had ever known; for them, being “repatriated” to France at the war’s end felt like an “ending” rather than a return.<sup>234</sup> For many Metropolitan soldiers, deployment had been the first time they had traveled outside of their native region at all, and coming home from a war that was not officially recognized as such led to many ambiguities. Soldiers had usually avoided writing about the “moral and material” details of their deployment, fearing to worry their families, who thus understood even less what it had been like “over there” in Algeria.<sup>235</sup>

After years of worry and scant communication, being reunited with family was an occasion for “joy and relief.”<sup>236</sup> Yet some demobilized conscripts did not receive the

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<sup>232</sup>Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty, “Introduction,” 11-33 in Bruno Cabanes and Guillaume Piketty, dir., *Retour à l'intime: au sortir de la guerre* (Paris: Tallandier, 2009), 29; Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

<sup>233</sup>Interview IA01, Paris, 11 May 2014; Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>234</sup>Interview EA25, Paris, 8 December 2013.

<sup>235</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 348.

<sup>236</sup>Questionnaires HA13, PN14.

family welcome they had expected—such as a farmer who found no one waiting for him at the train station and had to walk home two kilometers, because his family did not know the date of his demobilization.<sup>237</sup> For others, the return to family was the only time they felt a “welcome” at all on returning to France; otherwise, it was not an “event.”<sup>238</sup> But coming back to the “intimate” site of the family could heighten “the feeling of fragmentation that many veterans experienced upon their return home to the Hexagon.”<sup>239</sup> For instance, it was not uncommon for returning conscripts to encounter condescension and infantilization from elders in their families who had served in the World Wars.<sup>240</sup>

Often, families “felt distressed by the veteran’s inability to express his sentiments.”<sup>241</sup> And “almost uniformly,” veterans’ wives or parents observed that “he is not the same since he went there.”<sup>242</sup> Sometimes veterans’ families observed changes in their son more than the veteran did himself, for instance, that it took one conscript a year to “pull himself together” after the war.<sup>243</sup> Young conscripts were eager to begin their own families; demobilization felt like a “fresh start,” and they sought to build a future, and chase “new horizons.”<sup>244</sup> Some veterans married “she who would be my wife”

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<sup>237</sup>Interview EO15, St-Anne-d’Auray, 4 March 2014.

<sup>238</sup>Questionnaire CC12; Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 377.

<sup>239</sup>Branche, “Clémentines et bifteck,” 67.

<sup>240</sup>Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie*, 289.

<sup>241</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 377.

<sup>242</sup>Sigg, 88. The wife of interviewee RO02 (Paris, 6 May 2014) told me that “The man I married [before the war] was completely different.” Before, he had been “well-mannered and gentle,” but when he came back, he had “lost his taste for music and poetry.” He drove wildly, and killed dogs and chickens for fun. The interviewee hastened to add that he did not do these things anymore, but stated that he has always been depressed since his time in the war.

<sup>243</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014; Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>244</sup>Questionnaire EV19.

immediately on their return, while others discovered to their sorrow that “all the girls in my town were already married.”<sup>245</sup> Returning from a war that France had largely ignored and sought to forget quickly, many veterans felt like “intruders in their own families, strangers in their own village.”<sup>246</sup>

The next sphere of return was to the neighborhood and the village or city. This entailed the return to French society after being “cut off from civilian life,” and here the ambiguities of the Algerian War, as well as the impacts of returning during different phases of the war, became most apparent.<sup>247</sup> One former conscript demobilized in August 1962 recalls that the people of his town “cared more about their vacation than the fact [that] Algeria [had just become] independent.”<sup>248</sup> Conscripts and reservists returned to a country that traditionally bore great esteem for the military, yet the state did not recognize their status as veterans, and society sought to move on from the war.<sup>249</sup> One former conscript summarized this atmosphere as “total lack of consideration from citizens and politicians.”<sup>250</sup>

Sometimes returning conscripts did find their neighbors open to hearing about their experiences in North Africa and the current “situation down there,” especially if they had served themselves, or had relatives deployed.<sup>251</sup> But even veterans who ended

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<sup>245</sup>Interview IA16, St-Anne-d’Auray, 4 March 2014; Interview AU06, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>246</sup>Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie*, 340.

<sup>247</sup>Interview EE21, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>248</sup>Questionnaire C111.

<sup>249</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 374.

<sup>250</sup>Questionnaire AO07.

<sup>251</sup>Questionnaire C111.

up reintegrating fairly easily could experience “several months disconnected from civilian life.”<sup>252</sup> Some veterans perceived “no reaction” whatsoever from their neighbors, perhaps only the casual observation: ““Oh, you’re back.””<sup>253</sup> Others felt a “manifest disinterest, even hostility” from their neighbors, leading them to “turn in” on themselves.<sup>254</sup>

It was difficult to “relearn how to live as a civilian.”<sup>255</sup> The return to one’s village, town, or big city, for those deployed for two years or more in the mountains or plains of Algeria, represented a return to Western civilization. One veteran had completely forgotten how to order an appetizer-main plate-dessert, and had to copy a neighboring customer’s formula his first time dining in a restaurant after his return.<sup>256</sup> The backfiring of cars—common in the era—could cause a veteran to drop to the ground; “one keeps the instincts” learned in war.<sup>257</sup> Sometimes passing an Algerian or North African in the street raised feelings of fear and mistrust.<sup>258</sup> Finding oneself unarmed and in a crowd could bring anxiety, a heightened alertness that could have meant the difference between

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<sup>252</sup>Questionnaire FE18.

<sup>253</sup>Questionnaire WA09.

<sup>254</sup>Questionnaire DM15.

<sup>255</sup>Le Goff, 188.

<sup>256</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>257</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>258</sup>*Idem.*

surviving and dying in Algeria.<sup>259</sup> Some veterans never succeeded in the transition back to civilian life, committing suicide quickly, with firearms, or slowly, with alcohol.<sup>260</sup>

French culture had trained young men to see conscription as the rite of passage toward adulthood, and many veterans considered their time in the war as a threshold “that marked the rupture between youth and the seriousness” of adult life, but there was a general consensus that the youth of the Algerian generation had been amputated.<sup>261</sup>

Numerous veterans felt they had “aged by ten years, not two.”<sup>262</sup> Conscripts had spent the final years of the “intensity and fragility” of adolescence confronting dangers and moral dilemmas that their peers could not understand.<sup>263</sup> When they came back, they often found that their “friends were not the same”—the younger ones were still serving time in Algeria, and the older ones were busy with family obligations, or had already left to pursue careers elsewhere.<sup>264</sup>

One veteran mentioned that he felt completely rejected by the youths in his neighborhood who had not served in the military: they refused to speak to him when he returned from Algeria.<sup>265</sup> Another veteran discussed his disorientation with the rapid evolution of youth culture: “I felt like I no longer belonged to the same generation when I

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<sup>259</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>260</sup>Sigg, 41.

<sup>261</sup>Questionnaire FE18.

<sup>262</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 379.

<sup>263</sup>Sigg, 59.

<sup>264</sup>Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>265</sup>Interview EA14, St-Anne-d’Auray, 4 March 2014.



came back.”<sup>266</sup> Some veterans returned with a strong aversion to adolescents in general.<sup>267</sup> Yet others felt great affection for children, both because of the Algerian children they had worked or played with, and because of the near-children they themselves had been on their mobilization.<sup>268</sup> But spending two or more years in Algeria as young men during the very period when the public began to take notice of “the youth” in France had led numerous veterans to conclude that their youth (or that of their entire generation) had been “ruined.”<sup>269</sup>

Unemployment during the late 1950s and early 1960s was “practically nonexistent,” and there was a “boom” in housing that made construction-related trades especially viable, but this does not mean that all veterans had an easy return to work.<sup>270</sup> “Professional reinsertion” was probably easier for those deployed earlier in the war; for a reservist recalled in 1954, for instance, his company simply took him back when he returned, which might not have been the case in later years of more significant demobilizations.<sup>271</sup> And sometimes, through careful planning or family connections, conscripts had been able to secure a promise of future employment before they were even mobilized.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>266</sup>Interview IA01, Paris, 11 May 2014.

<sup>267</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 386.

<sup>268</sup>Interview ER24, Paris, 12 December 2013.

<sup>269</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014; Interview IA01, Paris, 14 May 2014; Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>270</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 386; Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014; Questionnaire MN10.

<sup>271</sup>Interview EO09, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>272</sup>Questionnaire WA09.

But in a modernizing economy, qualifications became a major concern. At the beginning of the 1960s, 60% of rural youths and 30% of working-class youths had no professional qualification beyond a diploma indicating they had completed primary school.<sup>273</sup> Veterans could feel there was no longer a place for them—for instance, a Breton peasant who returned home to discover that “the farm did not work anymore,” or another who spent “several years of misery” with his wife, trying to enter another field before deciding to return to what he knew, farming.<sup>274</sup> One veteran returned to discover to his surprise that he had been passed over for inheritance of the family land in his absence.<sup>275</sup> Growing up in a traditional society where sons generally entered their father’s profession, veterans could feel great anguish on realizing they had to “create a new job” or “build a trade” in a modernizing economy.<sup>276</sup>

Some veterans did gain in their career prospects after the war. Those who were trained as officers, for instance, could be entrusted with “responsibilities that surpassed [their] competence,” which they never would have received in the civilian world at twenty-three years old.<sup>277</sup> They learned to command and organize men, which might help in career advancement after the war, or even just give enough confidence to change careers.<sup>278</sup> In addition, officer training afforded many conscripts more education than

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<sup>273</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 54.

<sup>274</sup>Interview EE13, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014; Questionnaire PN14.

<sup>275</sup>Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>276</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014; Questionnaire PN14.

<sup>277</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>278</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014; Questionnaire HA13.

their socioeconomic status would have granted them in civilian society.<sup>279</sup> Men who had voluntarily enlisted could use their eight years in the professional military as a reference for employers.<sup>280</sup> Veterans who had worked closely with Algerian civilians—as the leader of an intelligence unit, for instance—often picked up some Arabic, which might help them later in business or a trade.<sup>281</sup> For some conscripts, service in the war gave them skills and qualifications that they might not have acquired in the civilian world—things as seemingly simple as a driver’s license, which remains prohibitively expensive for many in France to this day.<sup>282</sup> For others, demobilization was an opportunity to change professions, as for the former carpenter who decided to apply to be a policeman when he went to drop off his military gear in town.<sup>283</sup>

Yet some veterans were disappointed to find that their newly acquired skills meant little. A Breton who had earned two certificates in radar detection in the Army learned they did not transfer into the field of civil aviation; he eventually emigrated to the U.S. to work in construction for decades before returning to France to retire.<sup>284</sup> For those soldiers who had entered the war with higher education or some degree of family wealth, demobilization seems to have been less disruptive.<sup>285</sup> They had more flexibility to change careers, such as a conscript who had studied psychological nursing, served as a doctor

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<sup>279</sup>Interview EO09, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>280</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>281</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>282</sup>Interview EE13, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014; Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>283</sup>Interview EE13, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>284</sup>Questionnaire OR16.

<sup>285</sup>Interview RO17, Sèvres, 15 February 2014; Questionnaire CII1.

during the war, and returned home to begin a career in commerce, or an aspiring law student who lost the taste for studies “after this interruption,” but became a school teacher.<sup>286</sup> While service in the Algerian War did provide some avenues of social mobility, in general, the socioeconomic status and educational qualifications soldiers carried with them to the war determined the ease of their return to the world of work.

An individual veteran’s reintegration also depended significantly on the economy of his home region. In rural regions like Brittany, demobilized veterans faced the disruptions caused by de Gaulle’s efforts to rationalize agriculture. Decolonization both encouraged and enabled the French state to devote more resources toward the modernization of agriculture, the expansion of industry, and the proletarianization of former peasants.<sup>287</sup> Veterans returning to industrial or white collar work in regions like the Île-de-France might need to seek professional training to keep up with necessary qualifications. In regions with a mixed economy like the Haute-Savoie—where men usually worked for a business during the day and tended a family farm or pursued cottage industries in the evening—veterans might have had an easier time reinserting themselves into the economy.<sup>288</sup> Indeed, veterans in the Haute-Savoie were often able to return to work two or three days after demobilization.<sup>289</sup>

During and after the Algerian War, a generation of military-aged farmers and workers brought the war home in dramatic ways. The period of the Algerian War coincides with the “beginning of the modernization of [French] agriculture” under an

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<sup>286</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>287</sup>Nicole Eizner and Bertrand Hervieu, *Anciens paysans, nouveaux ouvriers* (Paris: Harmattan, 1979), 8.

<sup>288</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

<sup>289</sup>Interview EA20, Paris, 31 January 2014.

interventionist state, and the acceleration of the postwar rural exodus, and the economic dislocation of veterans plays a major role in this story.<sup>290</sup> In 1962, 20.5% of the total French population was involved in agriculture, but only 9% would remain so in 1975.<sup>291</sup> In 1961, “a general revolt of peasants against the state” of unprecedented size and violence began in Bretagne and spread through all of France.<sup>292</sup> Bretagne was a model of economic development under the early French Fifth Republic, which meant that its farmers were highly susceptible to grievances stemming from a sense of “relative privation,” as France was modernizing and general standards of living elsewhere were visibly increasing.<sup>293</sup> Peasants nationwide saw the Breton movements as successful, and used similar methods in their protests until around 1974, when sociological and tactical considerations changed and encouraged farmers to use less violent means.<sup>294</sup>

The Algerian War strongly informed the farmers’ movement in Brittany.<sup>295</sup> Not only did peasant activists consciously mimic the FLN’s methods, including attacking government buildings and cutting telephone poles, “creating an atmosphere of diffuse and permanent rebellion,” but some organizers explicitly identified with the Algerian nationalists, as both Algerians and Breton peasants were represented as “backward” in French modernizing discourse.<sup>296</sup> Some scholars even argue that discourse involving the

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<sup>290</sup>Pierre Miquel, *La France et ses paysans: Une histoire du monde rural au XXe siècle* (Paris: Archipel, 2001), 273.

<sup>291</sup>Eizner and Hervieu, 43.

<sup>292</sup>Nathalie Duclos, *Les violences paysannes sous la Ve République* (Paris: Economica, 1998), 16, 217.

<sup>293</sup>*Ibid.*, 57, 56.

<sup>294</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>295</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>296</sup>*Idem*, 103.

Algerian War was central to the regionalist character of social conflicts in Bretagne.<sup>297</sup> The peasants' movement that began in Brittany in 1961 and spread to a national scale was collective, very aggressive, and confrontational, and it is likely that a coming of age initiation in a brutal colonial war combined with longstanding Breton nationalism coalesced to fuel "the most important farmers' protest movement under the Fifth Republic," one of remarkable violence.<sup>298</sup>

Through the 1960s and 1970s, industrial workers constituted the largest socio-professional group in France, around 37% of the active male population.<sup>299</sup> The collective power of labor had been on the decline immediately after World War II, but rose again in the early 1960s, and important workers' protests began in 1963.<sup>300</sup> The year 1968 saw a "generalized [workers'] insubordination" spreading from the local to the national level, which employed an "expanded repertoire of action."<sup>301</sup> These workers' actions appeared both in old industrial bastions, such as the Île-de-France, as well as recently industrialized areas, including Bretagne.<sup>302</sup> Workers' movements in this period demonstrated "a resurgence of the strongest forms of opposition between workers and management," combining "illegality and violence" in actions such as sabotage, the sacking of offices,

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<sup>297</sup>Alain Guillerme, "À propos de mouvements sociaux en Bretagne...régions ou minorités nationales?," *Sociologie du travail*, April-June 1975, 177-181, cited in Vincent Porhel, *Ouvriers bretons: Conflits d'usines, conflits identitaires en Bretagne dans les années 1968* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2008), 70.

<sup>298</sup>Duclos, 79.

<sup>299</sup>Xavier Vigna, *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 12.

<sup>300</sup>*Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>301</sup>*Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>302</sup>*Ibid.*, 68, 89.

and confinements.<sup>303</sup> Many of the actors in this labor agitation had been conscripts in Algeria, and some historians note workers' references to Algeria at the time.<sup>304</sup> The Algerian War "constituted a negative reference point for a generation of young workers," and it is likely that this generational experience "helps to explain the particular virulence of the antagonism in the factories" around 1968.<sup>305</sup>

Historian Benjamin Stora finds that the Algerian War "destroyed the idea of a harmonious society" for many in the generation who served in it; and indeed, veterans brought the war home to diverse kinds of political struggles.<sup>306</sup> Psychologist and Algeria veteran Bernard Sigg describes the "determining characteristic" of the war for French soldiers as "a conflictual and even paradoxical relationship to the Law. Crimes were committed against the laws of the Republic, and in her name."<sup>307</sup> In light of the unprecedented and violent farmers' and workers' revolts in the decade after the end of the Algerian War, perhaps it is accurate to speak of the "brutalization" [*ensauvagement*] of much of a generation of conscripts.<sup>308</sup>

The experience of serving in a war that was either derided or ignored by the French public, and one that was ultimately lost, could have important effects on veterans' sense of masculinity as they returned to France. For generations, military service had represented "the way in which men demonstrated their adherence to the national

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<sup>303</sup>Vigna, 97.

<sup>304</sup>Porhel, *Ouvriers bretons*, 70.

<sup>305</sup>Vigna, 192.

<sup>306</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 223.

<sup>307</sup>Sigg, 40.

<sup>308</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge?*, 374.

community” in France.<sup>309</sup> Some veterans felt their virtue constantly in question because of civilian society’s tendency to associate all veterans with war crimes; one former conscript recalls a *pied noir* friend jokingly asking him, “Maybe you were a rapist?”<sup>310</sup> For the officers who had worked in close concert with Algerian civilians or soldiers—giving their word that France would stay and protect them—the end of the war resulted in feelings of shame and dishonor, wounds left by a “fictional bullet.”<sup>311</sup> Perhaps out of a sense of masculine honor, hoping to spare their loved ones distress, many veterans tended to cover their memories with silence, not discussing their combat experiences with their families.<sup>312</sup> Indeed, well into the twenty-first century, some veterans have never discussed their wartime experiences with their children or grandchildren.<sup>313</sup>

Because of the pressures of society and collective memory, many veterans of Algeria took years if not decades to come to think of themselves as veterans, like their fathers or grandfathers. Because of the diversity of combat exposure, numerous veterans felt that they had only experienced a “so-called war,” or that they served in a “conflict, not a war.”<sup>314</sup> Those who did not see regular combat—convoy escorts or prison guards, for instance—might have returned feeling like they had not done anything particularly

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<sup>309</sup>Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 225.

<sup>310</sup>Interview LE05, Paris, 11 April 2014.

<sup>311</sup>Interview LU03, Paris, 3 May 2014.

<sup>312</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>313</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>314</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.



heroic during the war.<sup>315</sup> Many of these veterans minimized their combat experience compared to the World Wars: “we did not feel like veterans of 14-18 or 39-45.”<sup>316</sup> Metropolitan veterans without ideological commitment to French Algeria might think of what they did not as “defending the fatherland, but [only] a corner of it.”<sup>317</sup> Many simply felt that “it was my military service and I did it,” or that it was merely a “hole” carved out of their lives rather than a defining experience.<sup>318</sup>

Despite the recruitment efforts of veterans’ associations, and their success in winning veterans’ recognition in 1974, by the late 1980s only about 33% of surviving veterans had received their veterans’ card from the state veterans’ office.<sup>319</sup> This seems to suggest a coherent lack of veteran identity in this generation, but it may also indicate lack of interest in the material benefits that state recognition offered, as well as the deterrent factor of combat requirements for veteran status, or even disinterest in obtaining state recognition for an unwanted status.<sup>320</sup> Many veterans “felt they had been betrayed by a State which constrained them to make war uselessly for a cause that was lost to begin with, and which was not their own.”<sup>321</sup> To this day, many veterans remain “bitter,”

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<sup>315</sup>Interview AO08, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014. And those who guarded high-ranking officers imprisoned for supporting the putsch or the OAS might have felt like they were in fact doing something wrong.

<sup>316</sup>Interview OE18, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>317</sup>Interview EE21, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>318</sup>Interview EA25, Paris, 8 December 2013; Paul Thibaud, “Génération algérienne?”, 608-616 in dir. Rioux, 608.

<sup>319</sup>Sigg, 21. And now, veterans with a high degree of military pride, such as Legionnaires, can discount the value of the veterans’ card, since “[t]hey give it to everyone now.” Interview IA04, Paris, 16 April 2014.

<sup>320</sup>Because of requirements to define a “combat unit” and a “combat action,” which were based on the qualifications for veterans of the World Wars, many veterans of Algeria were unable to qualify for the veterans’ card for years. See Chapter 6 for more details.

<sup>321</sup>Sigg, 106.

jealous of younger generations who did not serve, and feeling that they “sacrificed” their youth for a state that would not recognize them.<sup>322</sup> But it is inaccurate to characterize the entire generation as embittered: many have moved on, feeling it is “not in [their] nature” to hold resentment.<sup>323</sup> One veteran emphasized that he “is full of life, except when we talk of this period.”<sup>324</sup> It is safe to conclude that the veterans who tended to be attracted to veterans’ associations early on—which recruited in part through depicting veterans as citizens who had been wronged by the state—either possessed feelings of bitterness at their experience already, or cultivated them following the associations’ lead.

Social and cultural pressures also made it difficult for veterans to feel capable of expressing any feelings of pride in their service to the nation. Previous generations of combat veterans in France could feel that they had accomplished a “sacred duty to the nation,” but veterans of Algeria were left without a coherent narrative to frame their service.<sup>325</sup> As journalist Philippe Labro, himself a veteran of Algeria, reflects, “Paris and France gobbled them up like a bull eats flies: in packets of ten. They were swallowed, absorbed, because they had no identity.”<sup>326</sup> The soldiers conscripted from the Nation to safeguard French territory overseas seemed an archaic relic after French society came to see decolonization as an inevitable historical wind.<sup>327</sup> Tainted by association with the cause of “French Algeria,” veterans were also identified with the extreme violence of the

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<sup>322</sup>Interview ER24, Paris, 12 December 2013; Questionnaire EV19.

<sup>323</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>324</sup>Questionnaire CI11.

<sup>325</sup>Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 225.

<sup>326</sup>Philippe Labro, quoted in Jean-Pierre Rioux, “La Flamme et les bûchers,” 497-508 in dir. Rioux, 504.

<sup>327</sup>Shepard, 2.

OAS. Despite all these associations, some conscripts managed to feel military pride: “Our manner of waging war, it was a model for the whole world. That’s something to be proud of.”<sup>328</sup> Others took pride in their efforts to protect and organize Algerian civilians against the FLN, recalling that most of the FLN’s victims were their fellow Muslim Algerians.<sup>329</sup> Some common conscripts resented the notion “that any colonization was a moral error,” and felt that it had been their duty to protect the work of France in Algeria.<sup>330</sup> Almost taking ahistorical moralization for granted now, some veterans insist that there was no reason for them to feel “any guilt”—they were not to blame for the political outcomes of the war, and all of its attendant damage.<sup>331</sup>

Those coming from distinct memory communities with a strong tradition of group identity, such as the professional Army or the Foreign Legion, have perhaps had the fewest qualms about expressing their pride of “belonging” to the French endeavor in Algeria, a pride that is both “individual and collective.”<sup>332</sup> But without colonial ideology or professional *esprit de corps*, it remains difficult for conscripts to express collective pride in their service. “Even if society does not have much of a place for us,” one former conscript explains, “we feel that we represent something.”<sup>333</sup> This sentiment of melancholy, almost apologetic pride is understandable, given the patriotic expectations

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<sup>328</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>329</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014. Although this appears a politically unpopular stance in France today, Todd Shepard confirms that “FLN forces killed far more ‘Muslim’ civilians (over 16,300 in Algeria through 19 March 1962) than ‘European’ civilians (over 2,700 in Algeria [...])” during the same period. *The invention of decolonization*, 44.

<sup>330</sup>Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

<sup>331</sup>Interview EE21, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>332</sup>Interview IA04, Paris, 16 April 2014.

<sup>333</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

with which this generation of men viewed military service, and the indifferent welcome they received in France.

Regardless whether former conscripts and reservists considered themselves veterans, many were struck by the rejection they faced in society. A junior officer demobilized in 1957 recalls that he was “revolted” by the indifference he encountered on the homefront.<sup>334</sup> “Paradoxically,” many veterans felt the largest rejection came from veterans’ associations, and in particular veterans of the Second World War.<sup>335</sup> A common sermon from older veterans was that ““You were not capable of holding onto Algeria.””<sup>336</sup> Faced with such reactions from public opinion and even their own families, it is little wonder that most veterans responded with “self-censorship,” and a minority with activism.<sup>337</sup> Fighting societal indifference and convincing this combat generation of its specificity were among the primary tasks of veterans’ associations.

But it took a long time for most veterans to join veterans’ associations.<sup>338</sup> For a large part, this was because veterans had “other priorities” on demobilization—getting married and finding work.<sup>339</sup> It did not even occur to many veterans to seek out associations for a decade or longer—they considered veterans’ associations a hobby for old men, or simply did not care to mingle with former conscripts in a war they preferred

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<sup>334</sup>Interview EO09, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>335</sup>Interview IA16, St-Anne-d’Auray, 4 March 2014.

<sup>336</sup>Interview ER24, Paris, 12 December 2013.

<sup>337</sup>Sigg, 12, 25.

<sup>338</sup>Aside from an association co-founder, out of the 25 veterans whom I interviewed, and the 19 respondents to the questionnaire, only one joined a veterans’ association less than a year after demobilization (in his case, 1962). He might have been among the more politicized veterans, since he served in the final phase of the war and may have developed political opinions before his deployment. Questionnaire CC12.

<sup>339</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

to forget.<sup>340</sup> But sometimes the hesitation to join associations was out of a sense that they were not veterans like their fathers and grandfathers—a common explanation was that Algeria “was not Verdun.”<sup>341</sup> But in this era, civic engagement and associational life were commonplace: it was rare for veterans to “stay in their own corner.”<sup>342</sup>

Before the state’s official recognition of veterans in 1974, there were two principal reasons to join veterans’ associations: ideological or concrete concerns, and the concrete reasons predominated. Veterans joined associations to seek out comrades, or to rediscover the inside-group solidarity and fraternity they felt in their military units, “a togetherness that I consider exceptional,” as one association leader explained.<sup>343</sup> Indeed, most veterans’ associations began as “*amicales*” for soldiers from particular regiments, or from a certain specialty, like intelligence units.<sup>344</sup> It felt safer to gather with fellow veterans and “communicate between ourselves,” before trying to navigate veteran identity “outside” the fold of the association.<sup>345</sup> And associations tended to present themselves foremost as mutual aid societies—supporting wounded soldiers, children orphaned by the war, and widows.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>340</sup>Interview EA14, St-Anne-d’Auray, 4 March 2014.

<sup>341</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>342</sup>Interview ER24, Paris, 12 December 2013.

<sup>343</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>344</sup>Interview OE18, Annecy, 11 February 2014; Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014.

<sup>345</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014. And even then, local association officials report that trading war stories is very rare in association meetings—that is not why they gather. Interview RU02, Paris, 6 May 2014; Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>346</sup>Interview OE18, Annecy, 11 February 2014. Questionnaire respondent CI11, the son of a widower, has worked since 1974 to help widows of veterans and veterans “in difficulty” through his veterans’ association.

Veterans joined associations for other reasons before 1974, sometimes out of military pride or because they wanted to “play soldier.”<sup>347</sup> There is a high correlation between former officers and junior officers becoming veterans’ association officials; these veterans were used to organizing and leading men, and had the confidence to speak and convince others. Aside from that, officers were better educated, which often implied the socioeconomic security to be able to devote long volunteer hours to running the associations.<sup>348</sup> Recruitment to veterans’ associations proceeded through friends, coworkers, family, and sometimes even business ties, like one’s car mechanic.<sup>349</sup> Veterans’ associations were central to the struggle to obtain state recognition of this combat generation, but not all of their activity was political. Associations also participated in charity, as well as team sports and games—these “affirm our presence in society.”<sup>350</sup>

Some veterans did not seek out associations until their retirement, when they had more spare time to fill with social pursuits.<sup>351</sup> There still remain, however, veterans of North Africa who never joined any association, well into the twenty-first century.<sup>352</sup> Some were doubtless repelled by the polemics dividing the Algerian veterans’ movement: feeling it did nothing to honor the dead, they “ABSOLUTELY did not want

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<sup>347</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>348</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

<sup>349</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>350</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>351</sup>Interview AO12, Annecy, 5 March 2014.

<sup>352</sup>Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

to join any association.”<sup>353</sup> But others state that the sense of belonging in the movement was an inspiration to those outside of it: “Some of the men of my generation have spoken almost with regret at not having been veterans of Algeria—because they see how strong our solidarity and friendship are.”<sup>354</sup>

Although most veterans did not join a veterans’ association for years or decades, many participated in other civic associations soon on their return to France, usually out of a sense of giving back: “Our generation was made to give,” one conscript explained.<sup>355</sup> Groups like *Souvenir Français*, *Soldats de France*, and *Secours de France* aided young people and inspired patriotic values.<sup>356</sup> Naturally, some of these men joined associations to pursue personal hobbies, such as literature or scuba diving.<sup>357</sup> Others even created associations attempting to promote Franco-Algerian reconciliation, to help Algerian immigrant youth, and to foster conversation on immigration and diversity in France.<sup>358</sup> For some veterans, “the war never ended,” and these civic engagements represented an attempt to find a positive conclusion to their war experiences, and perhaps exorcise some ghosts.<sup>359</sup>

For many veterans alive today, the “duty of memory” toward lost comrades and war victims is primordial, especially in light of the “non-recognition” that their

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<sup>353</sup>Questionnaire CI11.

<sup>354</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>355</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>356</sup>Interview EO07, St-Anne-d’Auray, 6 March 2014; Interview AO12, St-Anne-d’Auray, 5 March 2014; Interview IA04, Paris, 16 April 2014.

<sup>357</sup>Interview LE05, Paris, 11 April 2014; Questionnaire CI11.

<sup>358</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>359</sup>*Idem.*

generation suffered for so long.<sup>360</sup> Many veterans joined civic or patriotic associations like the *Comité de la Flamme*—which organizes the re-lighting of the Eternal Flame at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the *Arc de Triomphe*—to honor the memories of friends.<sup>361</sup> Believing that “there is no society without memory,” veterans involved in civic and veterans’ associations feel that they must bear witness with their presence at “patriotic manifestations.”<sup>362</sup> Some veterans devoted years of their lives to researching all of the dead from their region and publishing beautiful books in their honor.<sup>363</sup> Sometimes the duty of memory impelled veterans to try to broker peace between warring veterans’ associations in their towns, or to attend the commemoration ceremonies of both rival associations.<sup>364</sup> “We must not forget anyone,” a veteran insisted, with tears in his eyes, explaining why he worked to organize the creation of a monument to his region’s soldiers lost in Algeria.<sup>365</sup>

Historians have observed that veterans of this generation were distrustful of politics, “invest[ing] themselves little in the state, [...] and greatly in civil society.”<sup>366</sup> Yet the high barrier for entry to politics—wealth and education—might have deterred some veterans more than disinterest itself. A former conscript and reserve officer with access to higher education, who attended the *École nationale d’administration*, became an adjunct

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<sup>360</sup>Evans, “Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran,” 76.

<sup>361</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>362</sup>Interview EA20, Annecy, 10 February 2014.

<sup>363</sup>*Idem*.

<sup>364</sup>Interview RO02, Paris, 6 May 2014.

<sup>365</sup>Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>366</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 224.



to the mayor in an arrondissement of Paris.<sup>367</sup> Numerous veterans sought positions at the state veterans' office, the *Office national des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre* (ONACVG), or its departmental branches; one explained his thinking: "I came back whole; I should help."<sup>368</sup> Former conscripts also commonly served on town councils and as mayors.<sup>369</sup> But some veterans returned "embittered by politics in general," or "disgusted by politics and its practitioners," and with or without a specific political critique, they resolutely avoided party politics.<sup>370</sup> Many veterans returned feeling that "politicians [had] condemned a whole generation to waste the best years of their lives in a hopeless conflict. Then, in refusing to face up to the legacy of the war, they left the same generation to carry an intolerable burden of shame and guilt."<sup>371</sup>

As individuals, and through associations, some veterans attempted to explain the meaning of their war and the nature of their generation. At the time of their return, many veterans were conscious of belonging to a specific generation; the extended duration of their military service as well as the silence around the war itself created an initial group identity.<sup>372</sup> Numerous veterans took up the pen to express "the memories denied at a public level by an indifferent mother country," but only a "tiny minority" of all veterans had access to this route, via an education and the financial means to write and publish a

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<sup>367</sup>Interview UO23, Paris, 17 January 2014.

<sup>368</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014.

<sup>369</sup>Questionnaire WA09; Questionnaire CE03.

<sup>370</sup>Questionnaire CI11; Questionnaire EV19. One respondent did not share any feelings about politics except to cross out the phrase "political parties." Questionnaire PN14.

<sup>371</sup>Evans, "Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran," 83.

<sup>372</sup>Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge*, 386.

book.<sup>373</sup> Almost none of these memoirs were written by conscripts.<sup>374</sup> Before the 1980s, the great majority of veterans' memoirs had been written by officers and professional soldiers with an axe to grind, often to justify torture during the war, or to blame President de Gaulle for the "abandonment" of French Algeria. Progressive amnesties of crimes during the war, beginning with those proclaimed in the Accords of Évian of March 18, 1962, and continuing through a rehabilitation of the putschist generals in 1981, obscured contentious memories of the war "in a climate of indifference."<sup>375</sup> The conjuncture of these amnesties with the political divisions of the veterans' movement itself left veterans with only a collective memory of victimhood to share in common. The absence of a national collective memory of the Algerian War, as well as conscripts' often limited understanding of the global history of the war, left a generation to struggle to sort out a narrative on its own. One veteran explained his understanding of these paradoxes: "I often say, I fought the war against Algerians, and with Algerians!!"<sup>376</sup>

These men were born during the Great Depression, and lived through the Second World War as children—very early in their lives, therefore, they learned deprivation and sacrifice. It stands to reason that the majority did not complain of having had to perform national military service. Having grown up in an era where surviving veterans of the

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<sup>373</sup>Evans, "Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran," 76.

<sup>374</sup>Claire Mauss-Copeaux, *Appelés en Algérie: la parole confisquée* (Paris: Hachette, 1998), 9.

<sup>375</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 215. The 1962 amnesty contained in the cease-fire agreement covered all crimes committed on Algerian soil. De Gaulle's 1968 amnesties forgave former OAS members and putschist generals, giving his greatest enemies free rein to criticize him. The 1974 amnesty from President Giscard d'Estaing was mostly symbolic, restoring decorations and legal fees to soldiers and civilians who had joined or aided the generals' putsch. And in 1981, President Mitterrand fully rehabilitated Army officers who had been sanctioned, including the leaders of the generals' putsch. Stéphane Gacon, *L'Amnistie: de la Commune à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), 256, 286, 289, 299.

<sup>376</sup>Questionnaire LG17.

World Wars were very visible in life, it also makes sense that most veterans of Algeria should minimize their military service in comparison: they are just grateful to have returned alive and mostly intact. Now, very conscious that their generation is in the process of disappearing, many are concerned about their legacy, and what their grandchildren learn about their service in school.<sup>377</sup> Many seem to still suffer from feelings that the media has painted them with a broad brush as a generation of sadistic criminals and colonialist oppressors. Perhaps conscripts' memory of the Algerian War only has a place in the timeline of "'traditional' French society"; their experience marked the end of a colonial era that today seems utterly foreign.<sup>378</sup>

The specificity of the Algerian war generation lies in a crossroads of expectations—the confrontation of a traditionally patriotic, but undereducated and unpoliticized cohort of conscripts with the ambiguities of a brutal war, at once a conflict of decolonization and a civil war.<sup>379</sup> If a country prepares for each new war as it fought the previous war, then these young Frenchmen had scant preparation for the guerilla combat, terrorism, and state-sponsored torture apparatus they would encounter.<sup>380</sup> Since the period when young men called to serve in Algeria could think of the conflict as “their war,” as the Great War had been for their grandfathers, European society has been

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<sup>377</sup>Interview ER22, Paris, 30 January 2014. One veteran said that he does not want his grandchildren to think he was a “scoundrel” because he participated in the war. Interview UO19, Annecy, 11 February 2014.

<sup>378</sup>Claude Liauzu, “Le contingent français entre silence et discours ancien combattant,” 507-516 in dir. Rioux, 515.

<sup>379</sup>Sigg, 31.

<sup>380</sup>This situation reproduced that of France in World War II; the “diversity of paths travelled” by soldiers and victims of the Second World War, compared to the universal model of the “*poilu*” in World War I, led to the fragmentation and politicization of the war’s memory. Olivier Wieviorka, *Divided Memory: French Recollections of World War II from the Liberation to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 5-6.

thoroughly demilitarized.<sup>381</sup> This combat generation thus presented an “untidy [reminder] of outdated colonial values.”<sup>382</sup>

In a decolonized and resolutely forward-looking France, “[c]olonial violence [...] seemed wasteful, anachronistic, and illegitimate, part of a vanished world in which the ability to wage war had been centrally important to what it meant to be a state,” and indeed, a vanished world in which military service had been central to the definition of male citizenship.<sup>383</sup> Although the French state would only abolish compulsory national military service in 1996—under President Jacques Chirac, who had served as a conscript in Algeria himself—the bitter memory of the Algerian War helped to provoke a “crisis in the social legitimacy of compulsory military service” in France in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>384</sup> And this loss of acceptance toward national military service means that the “contingent consent” that most conscripts manifested during the Algerian War renders them alien to younger generations today in France, who cannot understand why they simply did not refuse to serve in a “dirty war.”

An international comparison to the life trajectory of this combat generation confirms a pattern resulting from the confrontation of traditional patriotic values with the ambiguities of post-1945 unconventional wars. Similar to French veterans of Algeria, American veterans of the Korean War had been formed by a childhood on the homefront of World War II, then were sent to fight “their war” in a maelstrom that had nothing to do

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<sup>381</sup>James L. Sheehan, *Where have all the soldiers gone? The transformation of modern Europe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 171.

<sup>382</sup>Evans, “Rehabilitating the Traumatized War Veteran,” 75.

<sup>383</sup>Sheehan, 171.

<sup>384</sup>Rafael Ajangiz, “The European Farewell to Conscription?,” 307-333 in eds. Mjøset and Van Holde, *The Comparative Study of Conscription in the Armed Forces*, 307, 309.

with the patriotic combats for national preservation they had admired as schoolchildren.<sup>385</sup> And just as American veterans of Korea were often considered “passive” in comparison with the highly vocal veterans of Vietnam, veterans of Algeria may appear passive if compared with the generation of the Resistance, or of the students of 1968 in France.<sup>386</sup> But veterans of Algeria did not have as strong a group veteran identity as did veterans of Vietnam, and they did not assemble into one united movement—their engagement in society was diffuse, in both poles of the veterans’ movement as well as in farmers’ and workers’ protests, diverse civic associations, and sometimes party politics. Also like American veterans of Korea, many French veterans of Algeria resented the idea that their conflict had ended in a defeat, were often looked on with disdain by the veterans of World War I and World War II dominating the veterans’ associations, and were expected to quietly and uncomplainingly assimilate back into society. In general, veterans of Algeria and of Korea largely withdrew into themselves in a society that did not honor their sacrifices as it had for previous generations of combatants.<sup>387</sup>

To understand why the memory of the Algerian War has been so difficult for France to assimilate, we must not overlook the citizen-soldiers who served in this war. Armies are the “critical instrument whereby the individual, collective, and national levels of the experience of defeat are mediated,” arguably even more so for citizen armies in the

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<sup>385</sup>Melinda L. Pash, *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation: The Americans Who Fought the Korean War* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

<sup>386</sup>*Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>387</sup>*Idem.*

nation that originated the *levée en masse*.<sup>388</sup> Furthermore, the extreme variation in combat exposure between conscripts meant that there was no central experience around which to generate a memory of the war. After the war, veterans could not even agree whether the cease-fire was a victory—because the oppressed Algerian nation received its independence and French soldiers could return home—or whether it was a defeat—since French soldiers had died protecting a territory they knew to be French, and then their government negotiated with the enemy to grant independence.<sup>389</sup> Indeed, “for some veterans the loss of Algeria did not even represent a military defeat,” and historians agree that at least militarily, France had all but defeated the ALN by 1961.<sup>390</sup> However, these veterans failed to understand—or resented—that the FLN won this war by diplomatic and political means rather than military ones. The escalation of the French war effort, and the Army’s use of torture to fight terrorism, had alienated the Algerian people, intellectuals on the homefront, and France’s allies on the international stage.

To this day, veterans who regret the political outcome of the war reject the date of the cease-fire, March 19, as the end of the war, and tend to “refuse” the idea of “colonial repentance.”<sup>391</sup> Other veterans decline to take sides in the polemicized “war of memories,” yet still believe that “the war could have ended differently,” without the

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<sup>388</sup>Jenny MacLeod, “Introduction,” 1-10 in Jenny MacLeod, ed., *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat in the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 4.

<sup>389</sup>The two main competing veterans’ associations for veterans of Algeria in France promoted these two mutually exclusive narratives of the war’s ending.

<sup>390</sup>Tyre, 229; Martin Alexander and J. F. V. Keiger, “France and the Algerian War: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy,” 1-23 in eds. Martin S. Alexander and J. F. V. Keiger, *France and the Algerian War, 1954-1962* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 18.

<sup>391</sup>Interview UO23, Paris, 17 January 2014.

state's abandonment of tens of thousands of Algerian auxiliaries, for instance.<sup>392</sup>

Regardless of politics and ideology, however, most veterans feel the “vague need for recognition of what [really happened], with its shadows and its dark stains, in all its complex realities.”<sup>393</sup>

On a broader scale, the memory of the Algerian War has been so difficult to process because it involved an entire generation of Frenchmen. The French government would not even recognize veterans of Algeria as “real” veterans until 1974; the absence of recognition of an entire generation of veterans signaled the state's desire to quash France's collective memory of the war. After a “partial defeat” in Algeria—international and domestic politics, instead of a full military defeat, leading to diplomatic negotiations—veterans were “an awkward reminder of an earlier state of mind in a world that now [thought] differently” about the fight to preserve French Algeria.<sup>394</sup> Defeat after a national mobilization had “cancelled the collective enterprise in which much of society had been engaged,” and required reconceptualizing the nation, indeed, the very one that had innovated universal male conscription.<sup>395</sup>

Intellectuals, political activists, and the media have tended to focus the responsibility for atrocities, torture, and war crimes on prominent officers and the state, but 80% of the young men born between 1932 and 1942 served in this “dirty war.” Juxtaposed with the “civilizing mission” narrative that France had told about itself for a century, the idea that citizen-soldiers had also engaged in torture and atrocities seemed to

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<sup>392</sup>Interview AO12, St-Anne-d'Auray, 5 March 2014.

<sup>393</sup>Sigg, 106.

<sup>394</sup>Home, “Defeat and Memory,” 23.

<sup>395</sup>*Idem.*, 17.

indict all of France, and, in a country desperate for positive national myths after World War II, this was too much to contemplate. The Algerian War, especially because it was waged with a citizen army, continued longstanding debates about the virtue of the French nation, and fractured any unitary self-image that France might have had in the years following World War II—especially when the war brought to mind unsavory comparisons with the Resistance and the German occupiers. For decades, memories of that earlier state of mind that got France into war—when French society had viewed colonial Algeria as indisputable—remained “crystalized, as if at the interior of an invisible fortress.”<sup>396</sup>

The rudimentary education and relative political naïveté of most conscripts, coupled with the reticence of most of veterans on returning to a society that preferred to forget Algeria, highlights the importance of the veterans’ associations that claimed to speak for the Algerian generation.<sup>397</sup> Because of the silence surrounding the war and the rejection by older generations of veterans, both poles of the Algerian War veterans’ movement recruited with aggressive appeals to veterans’ identity, as wronged citizens who deserved rights and recognition for their military service—although they differed sharply on what recognition entailed. These associations—the founders of which were educated and politically aware—cultivated specific narratives of the war and structured veterans’ understanding of what the war had meant, why defeat had occurred, and what

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<sup>396</sup>Serge Berstein, “La peau de chagrin de «l’Algérie française»,” 202-217 in dir. Rioux, 208; Stora, *Histoire de la guerre d’Algérie*, 93.

<sup>397</sup>Stephen Tyre describes a very similar process concerning the memory developed by French veterans of Indochina, writing that “against a background of indifference or ignorance among the majority of the French population,” a small cohort of veterans of Indochina and their supporters on the political right developed a collective memory of the defeat that evolved “from having personal to national significance,” and that this memory became so politicized due “to the lack of more widespread consensus on the reasons for and the scale of the defeat [...]” “Defeat at Dien Bien Phu,” 216-217.



society owed veterans in return for their service. They were mediators of veterans' memory as well as instigators of their political engagement in France. Therefore, understanding the Algerian War veterans' movement allows us to evaluate the memorial and political afterlives of the war in France. Toward this end, Chapter 2 examines the rhetoric of veterans' associations toward positioning veterans as political actors, and their debates on how to commemorate the war.

## CHAPTER 2: “READY TO FIGHT”: VETERANS OF THE ALGERIAN WAR WAGE A WAR OF WORDS AND MEMORY IN FRANCE.<sup>398</sup>

In 1958, four years into what would become known as the Algerian War of Independence, the faltering French Fourth Republic called on General Charles de Gaulle to return to power, sharing the widespread conviction that he would “fix” the Algerian situation. But de Gaulle’s Algerian politics evolved toward withdrawal, and by 1962, French society and the state were eager to move on. After the war, the state continued to cultivate the memory of the Resistance in World War II, and proceeded as if Algeria had never happened. Gaullist memorial politics tended to favor “abstract and elitist” commemorations rather than promoting “the cult of veteranism as a social movement.”<sup>399</sup> Yet even as the Fifth Republic sought to forget Algerian War, young veterans back from North Africa cultivated their own narratives, forging rhetorical space for their political engagement. And the indifference of much of French society to the memory of the war allowed veterans’ group memories to gain in intensity and power over time.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>398</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, co-founder and President of the UNCAFN, 1958-1985; interview, Sèvres, France, 12 February 2014.

<sup>399</sup>Pieter Lagrou, *Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge UP, 1999), 38.

<sup>400</sup>Stephen Tyre, “Defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the Defense of French Algeria,” 214-232 in ed. Jenny MacLeod, *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat in the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 229.

During the war itself, French veterans formed associations to harness the vitality of the generation serving in North Africa and give meaning to its sacrifices. The months surrounding de Gaulle's return to power saw the creation of the pro-war UNCAFN (*Union nationale des combattants d'Afrique du Nord*) and the antiwar FNACA (*Fédération nationale des anciens combattants en Algérie, Maroc, et Tunisie*).<sup>401</sup> Three years later in 1961, the UDAA (*Union démocratique des anciens d'Algérie*) emerged, presenting itself as a third way between the "Communist dominated" FNACA and the "fascist" UNCAFN.<sup>402</sup> The FNACA and the UNCAFN have continued in varying forms to the present day, but the UDAA vanished by 1964.<sup>403</sup>

By analyzing the rhetoric and the memorial politics of veterans' associations, this chapter contributes to two major discussions in contemporary French history: the political role of veterans in society, and the fractured memory of the Algerian War. First, compared with the generations of veterans of the World Wars, it took longer for veterans

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<sup>401</sup>The UNCAFN was founded in December 1957, combining attempts by the Defense Ministry and nationalist veterans' associations to promote the effort in French Algeria. "Regroupement des associations," François Porteu de la Morandière Papers, *Union nationale des combattants* (UNC) headquarters, Paris, "Divers" folder, undated communiqué draft; Gérard Le Marec, "Plus d'équivoque: UNC-AFN," *La Voix du Combattant* 1234 (5 February 1958): 1, UNC headquarters, Paris; "Une Union nationale des combattants d'Afrique du Nord," *Le Monde* (14 December 1957): 6.

The FNACA was founded in September 1958, federating three small anti-war associations. "La FNAA: «non» à la politique du gouvernement et des autorités militaires en Algérie," *Le Monde* (23 September 1958), 3. Originally called the FNAA (*Fédération nationale des anciens d'Algérie*, National Federation of Those Who Have Experienced Algeria), the group took the name FNACA in 1963, to highlight its demand for veterans' status, and to distinguish its members from repatriated French colonists, who also referred to themselves as "*anciens d'Algérie*." *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 17 (April 1963): 8. For clarity's sake, the association will be referred to simple as the FNACA, its name during the majority of the chronology examined here.

<sup>402</sup>Jean-Pierre Prouteau, "Les Anciens d'Algérie dans la Nation. 23,405 morts, 50,376 pensionnés, 3,000,000 hommes. Un nouveau style d'Ancien Combattant," UDAA pamphlet, 1963, 5. Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine (BDIC), O pièce 32495.

<sup>403</sup>The FNACA exists independently today, while the UNCAFN officially merged with the *Union nationale des combattants* (National Soldiers' Union, UNC) in 1985, before then existing independently but in close alliance, often with overlapping leadership. "Historique," *La Voix du Combattant* 1345 sup. (1988): 5.

of Algeria to attain political influence, because there was no initial consensus on their moral authority, as combatants of a deeply divisive war that ultimately ended in defeat.<sup>404</sup> Thus, one of the major goals of veterans' association rhetoric was to endow veterans of Algeria with moral authority serving to justify their political engagement.

Second, as historian Benjamin Stora argues, no state-sponsored collective memory of the war emerged in France because President Charles de Gaulle diverted the Fifth Republic's gaze, refusing to acknowledge that the Algerian conflict was even a war, through words, laws, or commemoration.<sup>405</sup> Between official silence and public indifference, the memory of the Algerian War became refracted into opposing memory communities, insider groups defining themselves through a particular frame of reference on the war, which became more stable and self-referential over time. Veterans' associations were a crucial component of this process: during the Gaullist period, they cultivated mutually exclusive narratives of the war that would resurface in later decades, when the taboos surrounding the war remained, but Gaullist memorial politics no longer existed.

Associations representing veterans of Algeria often insisted they were 'apolitical,' yet the major associations founded during the war made significant political claims, the first of which was to elevate veterans as witnesses with crucial perspectives to offer the

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<sup>404</sup>For an example of how quickly previous generations of veterans with recognized moral authority had acceded to political power, the first elections after the end of the First World War saw the seating of a center-right "*chambre bleu horizon*" (sky blue Assembly, named for the uniforms of French soldiers) in November 1919, nearly half of whom were veterans. Chris Millington, *From victory to Vichy: veterans in interwar France* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2010), 28.

<sup>405</sup>Benjamin Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Découverte, 1992), 221.

nation.<sup>406</sup> Veterans of Algeria, who did not automatically receive the same moral authority granted to veterans of earlier wars, faced an uphill battle to position themselves as worthy political actors. This chapter examines why only the associations with the most polarized politics could thrive after the war. Evaluating the lasting political impact of this veterans' movement in French society, this chapter argues that despite Gaullist efforts to repress the memory of the war and constrain political participation, veterans' associations cultivated narratives of the war already formed by 1958, forging space for political engagement by young French citizens deeply marked by their Algerian experience. The first half of this chapter examines the wartime rhetoric of veterans' associations that aimed to establish veterans as political actors, and the second half of the chapter analyzes the memorial politics and debates of veterans' associations after the war.

As discussed in Chapter 1, service in the Algerian War affected almost an entire generation of young Frenchmen.<sup>407</sup> From 1956 onward, the French state began sending classes of conscripts to fulfill their national military service in Algeria. Until 1962, men born between 1932 and 1945 faced being drafted, producing a coherent generational experience, despite differences in location, time, and branch of service.<sup>408</sup> A quarter of all families in mainland France had a son "over there" at some point during the war.<sup>409</sup> Yet

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<sup>406</sup>Claiming to be "apolitical" or engaged in "civic action" rather than divisive politics followed the precedent of the World War I veterans' movement. Millington, *From victory to Vichy*, 8.

<sup>407</sup>In 1986, the Ministry of Defense numbered just over 1.1 million conscripts deployed in Algeria between 1952 and 1962, with just over 120,000 each being sent to Tunisia and Morocco. However, veterans' associations still dispute these figures, claiming 2.5 million conscripts or more served in the war. Benjamin Stora, *Appelés en guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 12.

<sup>408</sup>Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J. F. V. Keiger, "'The War Without a Name': the French Army and the Algerians: Recovering Experiences, Images and Testimonies," in Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, J. F. V. Keiger, *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2002), 12.

<sup>409</sup>Florence Dossé, *Les héritiers du silence: enfants d'appelés en Algérie* (Paris: Stock, 2012), 132.

these soldiers formed an invisible generation for several reasons. First, the war itself existed in an uncertain space: over one million French citizens lived in Algeria, which was administratively divided into French departments, and the French state thus considered the conflict a “rebellion” rather than a “war.” Second, many veterans of the World Wars—who held great moral and often, political authority—did not regard the “kids” of Algeria as “real veterans.”<sup>410</sup> In their view, conscripts merely served in police operations and “pacification” of “rebels,” rather than defending the homeland against an invading existential threat, as Frenchmen had fought the Germans at Verdun or in the Ardennes. Third, metropolitan French society, seeking tranquility after World War II and wary of colonial conflicts after the loss of Indochina in 1954, was ambivalent toward the war and its veterans, moving from indifference to outright disdain.<sup>411</sup>

Most significantly, however, the state’s self-conception was at stake—not least because it had violated its own laws in “implicitly” authorizing torture.<sup>412</sup> Both the “conception and the conduct of the war were incompatible with the laws of the Republic.”<sup>413</sup> It was politically expedient for President de Gaulle to portray French Algeria as having been “an unfortunate colonial detour,” and independence a foregone conclusion brought by inevitable historical winds, although he had returned to power

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<sup>410</sup>Michel Sabourdy, Editor-in-Chief of the FNACA’s newspaper since 1970, interview with the author, FNACA headquarters, Paris, 11 May 2014. Indeed, associations of the celebrated veterans of World War I had often “hesitated to open their ranks to the new generation, for fear of devaluing their own criteria,” a generational conflict that reproduced itself in the reluctance many World War II veterans felt acknowledging veterans of Algeria. Lagrou, 42.

<sup>411</sup>Stora, *Appelés en guerre d’Algérie*, 13.

<sup>412</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l’armée pendant la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), 109.

<sup>413</sup>Jacques Julliard, “Le mépris et la modernité,” 153-160 in Jean-Pierre Rioux, dir., *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 159.

backed by officers and activists who believed he would “save” French Algeria.<sup>414</sup> For all these reasons, Gaullist ministers forcefully rejected the notion that Algeria was in a state of war, and thus that the young Frenchmen sent there for military service were veterans.

Against this backdrop of ambivalence and silence, veterans’ associations framed their missions in competing moral imperatives, the first step toward establishing the political authority of this new generation of veterans. The UNCAFN emerged in 1957 to defend the dignity of the Army and its cause. Co-founder and longtime National President François Porteu de la Morandière recalls the combativeness of his movement: he and his colleagues were “ready to fight, to defend French Algeria, to defend the memory of our dead comrades.”<sup>415</sup> The UNCAFN’s founding goal of “continuing combat for the Franco-Muslim community” meant that its solidarity with the Army and French Algeria would last “to the end.”<sup>416</sup> But the FNACA, consciously “confronting the UNCAFN,” opposed the war on moral grounds.<sup>417</sup> At its first Congress, led by founding President Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, the FNACA declared that the war “strongly prejudices the prestige of France,” and it urged “peace in Algeria” in order to “save the traditions of France and its army.”<sup>418</sup> The lines in the sand were already drawn by 1958;

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<sup>414</sup>Todd Shepard, *The Invention of decolonization: The Algerian War and the remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell, 2005), 11, 75. For a discussion of the involvement of nationalist veterans of Algeria and specifically the UNCAFN in the movement to bring back Charles De Gaulle in 1958, see Chapter 5.

<sup>415</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, co-founder and President of the UNCAFN, 1958-1985; interview, Sèvres, France, 12 February 2014.

<sup>416</sup>Jean-Yves Alquier, “Notre Choix,” *Djebel* 2 (May 1958): 1. UNC headquarters and the Bibliothèque nationale française (BNF), FOL-JO-10590.

<sup>417</sup>“Rapport des bureaux nationaux,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (December 1958): 2.

<sup>418</sup>“Programme adopté à l’unanimité par le Congrès de la Fédération Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (December 1958): 8.

these associations would never significantly deviate from their mutually exclusive moral visions of the war.

The UDAA, formed in 1961 by former FNACA members displeased with the Federation's cooperation with Communists, likewise considered it a moral duty to end the war.<sup>419</sup> However, this group also warned against the manipulation of veterans by either the UNCAFN, which it claimed had tacitly sided with the generals' putsch in April, or the FNACA, which ostensibly collaborated with the French Communist Party.<sup>420</sup> The leaders of the UDAA hoped to group all "unengaged" veterans into a "union of democrats," to face the double peril of fascism and communism.<sup>421</sup> Numerically, the UNCAFN posed the greatest threat; by 1961 it had about 80,000 members, and claimed a readership of 200,000.<sup>422</sup> The FNACA struggled to recruit until the early 1970s; even in 1967, it had only around 20,000 members.<sup>423</sup> Fighting perceived ideological threats on

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<sup>419</sup>It was a major quandary for the antiwar, non-Communist left in France to decide whether or not to actively cooperate with Communists toward the common goal of ending the war. Catherine Brun and Olivier Penol-Lacassagne, *Engagements et déchirements: les intellectuels et la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), 17.

<sup>420</sup>The associations projected their worst fears onto the putsch. The UNCAFN feared above all that Communists would launch a coup in response, while the FNACA and the UDAA considered the putsch a manifestation of fascism. François Porteu de la Morandière, "La bonne voie et l'ordre," *Djebel* 19 (May 1961): 4; "Communiqué de presse," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 6 (May 1961): 7; "Démocratie et formation civique," *La Tribune des Anciens d'Algérie* 1 special (February 1962): 2, BNF, FOL-JO-12655. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the FNACA's alleged Communist ties.

<sup>421</sup>Jean-Pierre Prouteau, "Appel aux anciens d'Algérie," *La Tribune des anciens d'Algérie*, no. 1 special (February 1962), 1.

<sup>422</sup>"Caractéristiques des 200,000 lecteurs de Djebel," *Djebel* 19 (May 1961): 5.

<sup>423</sup>"Partis, syndicats, et mouvements divers," Paris Police Prefecture Archives, G<sub>d</sub>18, September 1967, 45. See Chapter 4 for analysis of the respective recruitment and growth of the FNACA and the UNCAFN.



the right and the left, the UDAA expanded rapidly, opening committees in forty-one departments in France by spring 1962.<sup>424</sup>

Confronting societal indifference and governmental neglect, these associations appropriated the “veteran mystique” established by World War I veterans, to position veterans of Algeria as political witnesses with moral authority.<sup>425</sup> The UNCAFN was born mere months before the coup of May 13, 1958, which marked the apex of French support for the Algerian War, so the association began on a confident footing.<sup>426</sup> For instance, in the days immediately after May 13, a National Committee member wrote that winning over the Algerian population would “be remembered as one of the most beautiful victories of our Army.”<sup>427</sup> But the UNCAFN’s rhetoric grew increasingly strident as it became apparent that Metropolitan society did not care to keep Algeria French. In a 1961 editorial, the President implored nationalist veterans to testify in defense of French Algeria: “the future of the Country depends on your bearing witness.”<sup>428</sup>

The group’s rhetoric turned bitter and confrontational when it became clear that de Gaulle would “abandon” French Algeria. A few months later, the President’s pleas turned to generalized threats: “Wait another couple of years and you will see the

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<sup>424</sup>“L’UDAA grandit vite!”, *La Tribune des anciens d’Algérie* 2 (May 1962): 1. I have not been able to determine the number of members of this association, as I only found two internal documents, and neither the press nor the police reported on membership numbers for the UDAA, as they did for the other two associations. What is important, as we will see, is that the UDAA promoted an ambitious veterans’ politics far different from those of the UNCAFN and the FNACA, but that this vision could not persist long after the war’s end.

<sup>425</sup>Millington, *From victory to Vichy*, 3.

<sup>426</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle: son choix pour l’Algérie* (Paris: Laffont, 2009), 182.

<sup>427</sup>Jean-François Le Maire, “Enthousiasme musulman, victoire française,” *Djebel* 2 (May 1958): 2.

<sup>428</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Maintenir,” *Djebel* 16 (January 1961): 1.

Generation of the Djebels rise up. But, make no mistake, we will be merciless.”<sup>429</sup> The UNCAFN portrayed the generation of veterans as true believers in French Algeria who had been betrayed by the government and de Gaulle in particular, and argued that these veterans deserved a corrective role in politics.

The rhetoric of the FNACA also depicted veterans as a generation of wronged citizens, but the wrong was having been drafted to fight in an unjust conflict in the first place. The association urged veterans to turn the tide of public opinion, arguing that since the Algerian War “too often marks the soldier because it implies contempt for human life and racism,” veterans should “join with all those who act for Peace, and bring them the contribution of those who lived the war.”<sup>430</sup> Accordingly, as French society grew to oppose the war, the FNACA’s rhetoric became more confident. In 1961, the association insisted that the generation “marked” by the war had “the right and the duty to make its voice heard, to play a role in the future of the country.”<sup>431</sup> As we will see, the FNACA’s portrayal of veterans’ suffering, and the UNCAFN’s depiction of French Algeria’s true believers abandoned by the state and society, would remain their guiding narratives after the war’s end.

The UDAA admittedly sought “identical goals [to those of the FNACA] such as a negotiated peace in Algeria” and “the defense of rights.”<sup>432</sup> The UDAA also emphasized the value of veterans’ testimony, insisting that “all those who served [...] have the duty to

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<sup>429</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Le Levain,” *Djebel* 18 (March 1961): 4.

<sup>430</sup>“Pour une solution pacifique et négociée du problème algérien,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 4 (November 1960): 5.

<sup>431</sup>“La campagne d’accueil,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 7 (July 1961): 5.

<sup>432</sup>“L’UDAA a été présentée à la presse le 18 décembre 1961,” 2.

bear witness.”<sup>433</sup> However, it offered a significantly more ambitious platform, proposing that “an action of education and civic formation must be undertaken for the veterans of Algeria [and] those who are leaving for military service, along with youth movements, students, and conscripts.”<sup>434</sup> On top of this, the association sought a comprehensive restructuring of the armed forces, the transformation of national military service into a civic corps and perhaps its eventual abrogation, and Franco-Algerian technical cooperation.<sup>435</sup> The UDAA was born in a moment when France seemed on the edge of civil war—generals had launched a coup in Algiers and the OAS aimed to forestall decolonization with the power of *plastique* in Algeria and the mainland.<sup>436</sup> The association therefore felt empowered to propose a radically different France, and believed that this vision could attract a wide political coalition in the midst of chaos.

In qualifying veterans as political witnesses, these associations all followed a precedent established by veterans of the Great War, many of whom had used their moral stature to castigate the parliamentary politics of the Third Republic.<sup>437</sup> The French Army was highly politicized through the Algerian period, and remained so until de Gaulle purged it in the mid-1960s.<sup>438</sup> Conservative officers and career military dominated the

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<sup>433</sup>“Le mot du rédacteur en chef: Notre devoir,” *La Tribune des Anciens d’Algérie* 2 (May 1962): 2.

<sup>434</sup>“Union Démocratique des Anciens d’Algérie: Programme,” UDAA pamphlet, 1961, 1. BDIC, 4 delta 0880.

<sup>435</sup>Jean-Claude Siebauer, “Une armée nouvelle,” *La Tribune des Anciens d’Algérie* 2 (May 1962): 2.

<sup>436</sup>To illustrate how grave this period was for mainland France, in 1962, there were forty confirmed OAS bombings or shootings between January 15 and 21 alone, 25 of them in or around Paris. Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire: de «l’Algérie française» au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Découverte, 1999), 53.

<sup>437</sup>Millington, *From Victory to Vichy*, 12.

<sup>438</sup>Martin S. Alexander, “Duty, Discipline, and Authority: the French Officer Elites Between Professionalism and Politics, 1900-1962,” in dir. Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett, *The Right in France from Revolution to Le Pen* (London: IB Taurus, 2003), 149.

UNCAFN, which had been founded by nationalists.<sup>439</sup> But the leadership and members of the FNACA were quite politicized as well in this period, as former conscripts chose to join an antiwar and anticolonial association.<sup>440</sup> Thus, it was not unusual in itself that associations for veterans of Algeria should engage in political matters; more noteworthy is how they overcame a highly forbidding context to do so.

For several decades, veterans' politics in France had required delicate navigation. With the February 6, 1934 antiparliamentary riots led by veterans' associations still in living memory, many nationalist veterans were wary of seeming too closely involved in politics.<sup>441</sup> Making matters worse, in August 1940, Marshall Philippe Pétain had dissolved all state-recognized veterans' associations and ordered their incorporation into the *Légion française des combattants* (French Legion of Soldiers).<sup>442</sup> In retribution for the collaboration of the veterans' movement with Vichy, Charles de Gaulle had "personally opposed" the creation of a Veterans' Ministry in 1946, and generally distrusted veterans' associations and their demanding attitudes.<sup>443</sup> The most immediate obstacle to the Algerian War veterans' movement, however, was the constitution of the Fifth Republic itself, which placed executive power with the President rather than the legislature.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>439</sup>Frédéric Rouyard, "Les commémorations de la guerre d'Algérie" (Master's thesis, Université de Paris-X-Nanterre, 1989), 50, consulted at the FNACA headquarters.

<sup>440</sup>And many of the founding militants of the FNACA came from a background of left-wing political organizing in their youths. See Chapter 4 for further discussion.

<sup>441</sup>Millington, *From victory to Vichy*, 1.

<sup>442</sup>*Ibid.*, 216.

<sup>443</sup>Lagrou, *Legacy of Nazi Occupation*, 182.

<sup>444</sup>Serge Berstein, *L'histoire du gaullisme* (Paris: Perrin, 2012), 515.

This constellation of power deprived Algerian War veterans of sympathetic intermediaries in the government. During the war, President de Gaulle sought approval of his policies by referendum, and afterward instituted universal suffrage for the presidency.<sup>445</sup> In creating this “dialogue” between himself and the French people, de Gaulle diminished the power of traditional intermediaries, especially elected deputies.<sup>446</sup> The government could veto deputies’ proposals for the order of the day in the National Assembly.<sup>447</sup> This new dynamic located the source of political change in de Gaulle and his ministers, who were not keen to listen to the appeals of young soldiers who fought a war they would rather forget.

These considerations compelled the right-wing and left-wing associations to deny the political nature of their missions. “Apolitical by statute,” but “national in its form, spirit and action,” the UNCAFN reserved the right “to take an interest in state affairs [...]” as it frequently would.<sup>448</sup> Similarly, the FNACA emphasized that its statutes “affirmed its independence from civil and military authorities and all political parties,” but asserted it could not be neutral, since that precluded defending veterans’ rights.<sup>449</sup> Both associations sought to frame their activism as civic engagement or mutual aid. But the UDAA, emerging as the generals’ putsch and the rise of the OAS “transform[ed]” the war “into a subject of interior French politics,” did not face the same pressures.<sup>450</sup> The

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<sup>445</sup>Berstein, 260.

<sup>446</sup>*Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>447</sup>“La guerre d’Algérie a bien eu lieu,” *Le Monde* (7 June 1972): 6.

<sup>448</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Apolitisme national!!!”, *Djebel* 16 (January 1961): 4.

<sup>449</sup>Yves Curvale, “Indépendance et neutralité,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 43 (May-June 1967): 3.

<sup>450</sup>“Union Démocratique des Anciens d’Algérie, Programme,” 1.

association was unabashedly political. As one of its members noted, in such divisive times, “being apolitical does not mean anything. What must be avoided is being ‘partisan.’”<sup>451</sup>

After the end of the war and the defeat of the OAS, the UDAA minimized its program of civic formation, feeling that “the problems posed by the reintegration of conscripts dominate all others.”<sup>452</sup> In spring 1962, the association created a special bureau to help mediate between the Ministry of Labor and unemployed veterans, who were often “shuttled between one office and another” when they sought help with professional reinsertion.<sup>453</sup> The UDAA also addressed society, publishing a book in 1964 portraying conscripts as victims of an indifferent Metropole, and evaluating their place in the Republic.<sup>454</sup> This book argued that veterans were robbed of their youth for the preservation of a colonial order in which they had no stake, and now faced reintegration into a society where “their fellow citizens ignore them” and a modernizing economy where “every undereducated man will be out of work.”<sup>455</sup>

In 1964, *Le Monde* listed the UNCAFN, the FNACA, and the UDAA as “the three associations of veterans of Algeria,” but this seems to have been the last year of the

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<sup>451</sup>Gérard Constant, “Pourquoi nous combattons,” *La Tribune des Anciens d’Algérie* 2 (May 1962): 3.

<sup>452</sup>“Les Missions de l’UDAA,” *La Tribune des Anciens d’Algérie* 2 (May 1962): 1.

<sup>453</sup>“Création du bureau technique d’accueil du contingent,” *La Tribune des Anciens d’Algérie* 2 (May 1962): 1; André Davoust, intervention in debate over budget for the Ministry of Veterans and War Victims, French National Assembly, 2nd legislature, extraordinary session of 1962-1963, *Compte rendu de la Séance de l’Assemblée nationale* (22 January 1962): 1457. <<http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/2/cr/1962-1963-extraordinaire1/038.pdf>>

<sup>454</sup>Daniel Blanc, *Après les armes, citoyens (La place du contingent dans la guerre d’Algérie et la République)* (Paris: Le pré au clé, 1964).

<sup>455</sup>*Ibid.*, 140, 143.

UDAA's existence.<sup>456</sup> The UDAA had neither a discrete mobilizing ideology, like the UNCAFN's pro-French Algeria nationalism, nor a concise, easily explained campaign for concrete results, like the FNACA's fight for veterans' status. Presenting itself as a bulwark of democracy during chaos, the UDAA was intended to be "transitory"—it sought to "give youth the taste for social and political engagement," and announced plans to disband "once the war is over, once democracy is reconstructed."<sup>457</sup> Yet it continued for several years beyond 1962. And its goals, including restructuring both the armed forces and national military service, certainly aimed far beyond the end of the war or defense of veterans' rights, to a fundamental transformation of civil and military relations in France. It presented the most sophisticated and avowedly political program of all veterans' associations founded during the Algerian War.

But the UDAA's existential challenge was that it proposed a political vision of veterans to a disappearing audience. This association joined a wave of political and civic movements emerging around 1958 amid much optimism in renewing national life. But its idealistic politics courted a democratic center that no longer existed after eight years of an extremely polarizing war, when politicized veterans had already chosen their sides. All three associations proposed a veterans' politics, and the UDAA's was by far the most

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<sup>456</sup>“L'Union Nationale des Anciens d'Algérie et la Fonction Sociale,” *Le Monde* (17 January 1964): 13. A report from the *Renseignements généraux* (a French domestic intelligence agency) obtained by the FNACA confirms that the UDAA had disbanded by 1964. The document lists “three organizations” representing veterans of Algeria in France: the FNACA, the UNCAFN, and the UDAA, whose name was crossed out, with the word “dissolved” written in pen underneath. I have spent enough time with police reports at the Paris Police Prefecture to attest that this document was written in the proper style and format, and it does not seem worthwhile for FNACA leaders to have devoted the energy to forging such a document to prove that they were of interest to the police, when they already had public proof that the authorities were concerned with them by the 1970s. “Objet: Dissolution du Comité de Châtelleraut de la FNACA,” Interior Ministry, Intelligence note 1004, 20 November 1964, published in “Des Renseignements... vraiment tres généraux!” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 79 (January 1971): 7.

<sup>457</sup>“L'UDAA a été présenté à la presse le 18 décembre 1961,” 2.

ambitious, but only the FNACA's and the UNCAFN's combative political stances could find an audience and ensure the survival of these associations. This polarization of the Algerian War veterans' movement—the disappearance of a conciliatory center—allowed the rhetorical space for veterans to transmit only two, mutually exclusive narratives of the war in society: the antiwar, anticolonial view of the FNACA, or the nationalist pro-French Algeria view of the UNCAFN.

From the moment of the cease-fire itself, there was no consensus on how to commemorate the more than 24,000 soldiers lost in the war. In 1962, most of France “was not conscious of having experienced a defeat”; indeed, for President de Gaulle, as well as for the Republic he had created, the end of the Algerian War represented “a resounding political victory.”<sup>458</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, the scope and aims of the war had shifted over time—from ‘pacification’ of a local rebellion, to fighting terrorism and winning over ‘hearts and minds,’ to seeking diplomatic negotiations from a position of military strength. In retrospect, the Algerian War was “a war without a message,” which made commemoration a particularly complex question.<sup>459</sup> The “mission creep” of the Algerian War, from fighting “rebels,” to “pacifying” a national independence revolution, to peacekeeping leading up to a negotiated withdrawal, meant that determining why soldiers had died was a painful question for veterans on both sides of the political spectrum.

To veterans who had believed in the fight to preserve French Algeria, France's embrace of decolonization was scandalous, disgracing the memory of soldiers who died

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<sup>458</sup>Robert Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 601-607 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 607.

<sup>459</sup>*Idem.*



serving the nation. After the loss of French Algeria, its *raison d'être*, the UNCAFN entered a period of mourning, inviting other nationalist associations and patriotic figures, such as the wife of Marshall Alphonse Juin, to frequent remembrance masses at the church of Saint Louis at the *Hôtel des Invalides* in Paris.<sup>460</sup> Its Vice President even penned meditations on a requiem mass for all of France after the Algerian War, writing for the moment of confession, “oh! how true it is vis-à-vis the Algerian War that we sinned by thought, word, deed, and omission!”<sup>461</sup>

The UNCAFN was well aware that society “now judged” the combat to preserve French Algeria as “stupid and useless,” and the way it cultivated a memory of the war sought to fight this sense of futility.<sup>462</sup> The nationalist veterans who spoke for this association believed that soldiers in Algeria had been defending “principles of justice, of liberty, the French tradition,” ideas which they felt were “weak” in France itself.<sup>463</sup> Following from this assumption, the association represented the combat as continuing on the homefront: veterans must work “[t]o renew among the masses a taste for civism,” and “[r]ediscover the meaning of the words ‘responsibilities’ and ‘duties’ before that of ‘rights.’”<sup>464</sup> UNCAFN discourse had sought for years to elevate nationalist veterans as “a civic elite” with a “voice that must be heard on the national level.”<sup>465</sup> Reconstructing the nation in accordance with veterans’ collective insight offered the hope that “‘our war’ [...]

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<sup>460</sup>“La messe de l’UNC-AFN,” *La Voix du combattant* 1315 (March 1966): 1.

<sup>461</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Méditation pour une Messe de Requiem,” *La Voix du combattant* 1280 (October 1962): 8.

<sup>462</sup>René de la Serre, “Pourquoi?” *La Voix du Combattant* 1284 (February 1963): 8.

<sup>463</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>464</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>465</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Notes sur le civisme,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1286 (April 1963): 8.

will not have been in vain.”<sup>466</sup> As one militant explained, France’s future “obviously” depended on those “who passed through the crucible of Algeria [...],” who now must “impose [...their] way of seeing things [...]”<sup>467</sup>

But for those who had longed for the war to end, its duration had only “rendered their sacrifices more useless.”<sup>468</sup> After the cease-fire, the FNACA emphasized soldiers’ suffering in a futile war, to justify its campaigns for veterans’ rights. The association launched vigorous mass campaigns for rights and recognition, arguing that the state owed veterans’ status and material benefits to young citizens sent to fight a war against their will. The FNACA often used pathos to convey this injustice. For instance, a special series in its newspaper, entitled “The Great Misery of Demobilized Veterans,” presented unsigned first-person testimonials with heart-wrenching titles such as “On the street with my two children,” “I am completely disgusted,” and “How to survive?”<sup>469</sup> These testimonials were intended to illustrate how “the state, after having used us for many months, refuses to recognize the extent of harm caused by the Algerian War.”<sup>470</sup>

The choice of a commemoration date followed logically from both associations’ narratives of the war. The FNACA, believing the war had been harmful to French soldiers and the very soul of the French nation, chose to commemorate the anniversary of the cease-fire, March 19, 1962. Its National Committee decided on this commemoration date at its third Congress, at Noisy-le-Sec in 1963. Selecting a specific commemoration

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<sup>466</sup>de la Serre, “Pourquoi?”, 8.

<sup>467</sup>B. Prod’homme, “Pour un bond en avant!”, *Djebel* 21 (April 1964): 2.

<sup>468</sup>Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 607.

<sup>469</sup>Guy Ramis, “La grande misère des démobilisés,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 11 (April 1962): 4.

<sup>470</sup>*Idem.*

date for this combat generation, in the tradition of November 11 and May 8, asserted the FNACA's position that Algeria *was* a war, and that its veterans deserved rights like their elders.<sup>471</sup> The association took care to explain that in commemorating March 19, it was not celebrating the "Accords of Évian," the diplomatic agreement with the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic signed on March 18; rather, the FNACA commemorated the end of a war that had killed 25,000 young Frenchmen. It publicly framed veterans' remembrance of this day as "work in favor of peace," noting that the end of the Algerian War "brought our country its first day of peace in nearly a quarter of a century."<sup>472</sup> At first, the state did not oppose this commemoration date, since it did not seem to contradict the official narrative portraying the end of the Algerian "conflict" as a victory for France. From 1964 onward, the FNACA's yearly ceremony at the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris was authorized to use military music.<sup>473</sup>

The commemoration of March 19 was not initially the FNACA's first priority, but over the years it became intertwined with the association's primary goal; the national leadership provided a written statement demanding veterans' recognition, to be read at March 19 ceremonies.<sup>474</sup> And by 1970, with the tenth anniversary of the war's end in sight, the battle over its meaning intensified. President de Gaulle's amnesties of the last OAS members in prison in 1968, as well as his death in November 1970, seemed to give

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<sup>471</sup>"Pour honorer la mémoire de nos camarades tombés en Algérie," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 17 (April 1963): 8. During this Congress, the association changed its name from "*La Fédération nationale des anciens d'Algérie*" to "*La Fédération nationale des anciens combattants en Algérie, Maroc, et Tunisie*," to further emphasize that its members were real veterans.

<sup>472</sup>"Communiqué de presse," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 80 (February 1971): 7.

<sup>473</sup>Frédéric Rouyard, "La bataille du 19 mars," 545-552 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 548.

<sup>474</sup>*Idem.*

free rein to opponents of decolonization to air their grievances. Concomitant with an increased focus on commemorating March 19, the FNACA sought to inscribe its narrative of the war on the French memorial landscape.

The first “March 19-Cease-fire-in-Algeria Square” was inaugurated in 1971, on a square formerly named for André Maginot in Vitry-sur-Seine, a working-class suburb southeast of Paris.<sup>475</sup> The local FNACA committee persuaded the town council to vote in this measure unanimously, in remembrance of the twenty young inhabitants of Vitry-sur-Seine who had died in Algeria.<sup>476</sup> In the same town in 1964, the committee had succeeded in building a monument to the war’s dead, which seems to have occurred without controversy, as two associations representing *pieds noirs* had attended the inauguration, and they certainly would not have sanctioned the monument if it seemed to celebrate the end of the war.<sup>477</sup> But to nationalists who regretted the outcome of the Algerian War, the conversion of a square named in memory of a wounded World War I hero, to a square celebrating March 19, 1962, was a grave affront.

Commemorating March 19 clearly celebrated the victory of all those who had worked to end the war.<sup>478</sup> For those who had supported French Algeria to the very end, the commemoration of the cease-fire felt like a slap in the face, as it seemed to celebrate the loss of a French territory, as well as the victory of the Left in yet another “Franco-

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<sup>475</sup> Although, in the coming decades, the FNACA’s campaigns for squares and streets in honor of March 19, 1962 would be easier in left-leaning municipalities, the most important factor behind its successes was the vigor of the local FNACA committee. Rouyard, “La bataille du 19 mars,” 550.

<sup>476</sup> “Vitry-sur-Seine aura sa place du 19-Mars,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 79 (January 1971): 3.

<sup>477</sup> “Nouvelles militaires,” *Le Monde* (18 March 1964): 13.

<sup>478</sup> Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 607.

French war.”<sup>479</sup> The antiwar left had run the gamut from the legal opposition, including the FNACA, to the so-called “*porteurs de valises*” (suitcase carriers), diverse underground activists who collected money for the FLN. But in the eyes of nationalists who never accepted the loss of French Algeria, these antiwar groups were all treasonous. As the UNCAFN Vice President wrote, “the date of March 19 could only have been suggested by those who ardently wished for our defeat in Algeria.”<sup>480</sup>

The FNACA’s nationwide campaign to convince towns and villages to name streets and squares in honor of March 19 tempted nationalist veterans and pro-French Algeria politicians to polemicize the commemoration date.<sup>481</sup> The year of the first square’s inauguration in Vitry-sur-Seine, 1971, the two rounds of municipal elections bookended the date of March 19, and the FNACA’s commemoration could thus be construed as a gimmick to help the left gain power. In January and February 1971, two deputies wrote to Minister Duvillard to alert him to the FNACA’s alleged political manipulation. Alain Griotteray, an Independent Republican, pointed to Vitry-sur-Seine, asking the Minister what his plans were “faced with this political agitation unfolding around the anniversary of the Accords of Évian.”<sup>482</sup> And Charles Pasqua, a Gaullist, emphasized the “shocking” nature of FNACA’s commemoration date, and explained the

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<sup>479</sup>Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 607.

<sup>480</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Évian n’est pas une victoire. NON au 19 mars!,” *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 3 (January-February-March 1972): 12.

<sup>481</sup>Rouyard, “La bataille du 19 mars,” 548.

<sup>482</sup>Alain Griotteray, written question to Minister Henri Duvillard, *Journal officiel* of 25 January 1971, directly quoted in “Glané dans la presse,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 80 (February 1971): 7. Alain Griotteray was a member of the UNCAFN, although not a veteran of Algeria. He had worked with the association to create the state’s first symbolic recognition of veterans, the “*Titre de Reconnaissance de la Nation*” (Award of the Nation’s Gratitude), in 1967. Hugues Dalleau, “L’amendement!,” *La Voix du combattant* 1331 (December 1967): 12; Alain Griotteray, “Incompatibilité parlementaire,” *Les Cahiers du djebel* 3 (January-February-March 1972): 5.

association's strategy to inaugurate a street or place for March 19 in each town of France, "thus exploiting the memory of this painful and tragic event which divided France at the time."<sup>483</sup>

The FNACA's chief rival eagerly jumped into the fray of the "battle of March 19."<sup>484</sup> In March 1971, UNCAFN President François Porteu de la Morandière wrote a letter to Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Chaban-Delmas in protest of the FNACA's upcoming commemoration.<sup>485</sup> Chaban-Delmas responded that he "shared the sentiment of your companions regarding this project," and that he had received "vehement protests from all of France," including from repatriated *piéd noirs* and other veterans' associations.<sup>486</sup> Indeed, only one national veterans' association, the Communist-oriented *Association républicaine des anciens combattants* (ARAC), founded during World War I, supported the FNACA in this matter, and leaders of *piéd noir* associations were hostile to what they perceived as a celebration of their exodus from Algeria.<sup>487</sup>

The Prime Minister's letter informed Porteu de la Morandière that, with his approval, the Minister of Veterans had mailed out a circular "giving the point of view of the Government" that the state would "neither participate nor be represented at any so-called ceremonies of March 19." This circular instructed prefects throughout the country

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<sup>483</sup>Charles Pasqua, written question to Minister Henri Duvillard, *Journal officiel* of 6 February 1971, directly quoted in "Glané dans la presse," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 80 (February 1971): 7.

<sup>484</sup>Rouyard, "La bataille du 19 mars."

<sup>485</sup>The two men had had cordial ties since 1957, when Chaban-Delmas encouraged the creation of the UNCAFN, seeing the fight for French Algeria and the fight to return General De Gaulle to power as inextricably linked. François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, Sèvres, 12 February 2014. See Chapter 5 for more details.

<sup>486</sup>Letter from Jean-Jacques Chaban-Delmas to François Porteu de la Morandière, 17 March 1971, François Porteu de la Morandière papers, Sèvres.

<sup>487</sup>Rouyard, "La bataille du 19 mars," 549; Millington, *From victory to Vichy*, 3.

to direct their subordinates, such as mayors, “*not to participate in any manner*” in the FNACA’s commemoration, nor to “*receive any delegations.*”<sup>488</sup> Apparently, Porteu de la Morandière had sent another warning to Minister Duvillard himself, because an excerpt of the letter—“I would like to draw your attention to the absurd and indecent character of this anniversary, which tries to assimilate the Accords of Evian to a victory comparable to those of 1918 and 1945”—featured in a Veterans’ Ministry periodical entitled “Dialogues.”<sup>489</sup> The UNCAFN’s letters to either the Prime Minister or the Minister of Veterans may well have triggered Duvillard’s instructions to the prefects; in any case, they provided ammunition for his anti-March 19 campaign.

The UNCAFN, for its part, preferred a commemoration of the Algerian War that embraced its veterans in a patriotic lineage of French military sacrifices. In his letter to Prime Minister Chaban-Delmas, the UNCAFN President had suggested that November 11 become a national day of remembrance in honor of all soldiers lost in war, and the Prime Minister promised to pass this idea on to the Minister of Veterans.<sup>490</sup> The UNCAFN likened its proposed commemoration date to a generalized French “*Jour du Souvenir* (Memorial Day),” as in the United States.<sup>491</sup> The armistice of 1918 represented

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<sup>488</sup>Jean Verdier, “Le Préfet de Paris à Madame et Messieurs les Maires des arrondissements de Paris,” Circular, reference CAB V number 14, 7 February 1972, published in “Inadmissible ingérence...,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 92 (March 1972): 2. In this document, the Prefect referred to a previous circular that he had sent on March 12, 1971. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>489</sup>“Glané dans la presse,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 86 (September 1971): 7. The letter was featured in *Dialogues* 12 (June 1971), according to “Lettre ouverte à M. Henri Duvillard par Jacques de Jæger, Président National,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 86 (September 1971): 7.

<sup>490</sup>Letter from Chaban-Delmas to Porteu de la Morandière, 17 March 1971.

<sup>491</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Morts pour la France,” *La Voix du combattant* 1355 (April 1970): 8. Although nothing came of his “Memorial Day à la française” suggestion initially, the UNCAFN President would be pleased when President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing decided to end the observation of May 8 as a state holiday in 1975, leaving November 11 as the sole national holiday to commemorate the nation’s war dead. Henry Rousso, “Identités et mémoire sous la Ve République,” 383-398 in dir. Jean Garrigues, Sylvie Guillaume,

the last time in the twentieth century that France had a cohesive collective memory of victory. Choosing to commemorate the Algerian War on November 11 minimized the war's exceptional nature, in effect tying it to a defense of "the land and the fundamental values of our civilization."<sup>492</sup> This was how the UNCAFN preferred to remember soldiers lost in a war whose original aims now seemed utterly foreign in the postwar period.

But the UNCAFN's attempts to quash the FNACA's March 19 commemoration did not have the desired effect, suggesting a split between higher and lower levels of state power. As in previous years, in 1971 the Federation received the proper authorization from the Paris Police Prefecture to hold its ceremony at the *Arc de Triomphe*. The Committee of the Flame, the association that organized the relighting of the "Sacred Flame" at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier—a Republican rite that has taken place every day at 6:30 pm since 1923—reportedly invited the association to "attend in great numbers."<sup>493</sup> But a nationwide campaign attacked the FNACA's upcoming commemoration: in the weeks preceding the event, anonymous opponents had "profaned" war monuments by posting tracts reading, "Évian is not a victory, NO to March 19!"<sup>494</sup>

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and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Comprendre la Ve République* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2010), 393; François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000), 62.

<sup>492</sup>Hugues Dalleau, "Morts pour la France," *La Voix du combattant* 1355 (April 1970): 8.

<sup>493</sup>Michel Sabourdy, "À Paris comme ailleurs, nous commémorons le 19 mars," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 81 (March 1971): 2. The "Committee of the Flame," titled in full "La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe," was founded in 1925, and officially declared in 1930; it designates veterans' and patriotic associations to undertake the flame-relighting ceremony every day according to a calendar. "Histoire," *La Flamme sous l'Arc de Triomphe, Flamme de la Nation* website, <<http://www.laflammesouslarcdetriomphe.org/lassociation/histoire/>>.

<sup>494</sup>"Glané dans la presse," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 82 (April 1971): 7. I have been unable to determine if the UNCAFN's leaders or members were directly behind these tracts, but the association published articles several times using this precise slogan, so the Union either invented it, or drew on it from the shared



However, the growing polemic around March 19 only energized the FNACA to organize its largest commemoration to date. National President Jacques de Jæger estimated over 1,200 attendees at the ceremony in Paris, and recalled that officials of the “Committee of the Flame” remarked that “never [...] had a ceremony of relighting the flame seen such numbers.”<sup>495</sup> The Federation was confident enough at this point to use its detractors’ campaign against them—pointing out, for instance, that the Sub-Prefect of Pithiviers, Minister Duvillard’s hometown, attended the ceremony there, despite the orders that Duvillard had sent out.<sup>496</sup> And the national battles between the FNACA and the UNCAFN did not always translate to the local level; in Saint-Médard-de-Guizières and in Saône-et-Loire, for instance, the local UNC sections participated in the FNACA’s ceremony.<sup>497</sup> In 1972, public officials continued to take sides; Senate President and former presidential candidate Alain Poher was the guest of honor at the FNACA’s March 19 ceremony in Chartres, while the mayor of Laval stated that he regretted the “abstention of prefectural and military authorities” at the FNACA’s commemoration in his town.<sup>498</sup>

In 1973, however, in a period of détente with the Ministry of Veterans, the state installed a plaque under the *Arc de Triomphe* in memory of the soldiers lost in Algeria. Created on the suggestion of the Cabinet, it was inaugurated in January 1973, in the

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discourse of far right nationalist and *pied noir* circles. cf. Hugues Dalleau, “Évian n’est pas une victoire. NON au 19 mars!”, *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 3 (January-February-March 1972): 12.

<sup>495</sup>“Lettre ouverte à M. Henri Duvillard par Jacques de Jæger, Président National,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 86 (September 1971): 7.

<sup>496</sup>“Tout est clair,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 82 (April 1971): 7.

<sup>497</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>498</sup>“Plusieurs manifestations commémorent les accords d’Évian,” *Le Monde* (21 March 1972): 8.

presence of recently elected Veterans' Minister André Bord, the first in his position to publicly acknowledge that Algeria had been a war. Leaders of both veterans' associations attended the ceremony.<sup>499</sup> After this promising sign, though, there were some setbacks to the FNACA's memorial politics in the short term. From 1974 onward, after the election of President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the FNACA would not be permitted to use military music at its ceremonies, and this is likely because the pro-French Algeria Giscard d'Estaing agreed with the argument that to commemorate March 19 was to celebrate defeat.<sup>500</sup> But in the long term, the struggle to defend March 19 gave the FNACA a stronger sense of identity around which to rally.

In honor of the tenth anniversary of the ceasefire in 1972, the FNACA furthered its efforts to frame March 19 as a victory for peace. Its newspaper held a contest asking members to submit their stories of the day of the cease-fire itself, thus encouraging them to incorporate the association's narrative of the war into their personal memories. The first-place winner had been stationed in Algiers on March 19, 1962, and his description of the moment of the ceasefire—"at noon, under the reddening sky of Algiers, joy and relief replaced worry"—spoke to the memory community of antiwar or apolitical conscripts, for whom demobilization was the ultimate prize. However, this memory of March 19 had nothing in common with that of many professional soldiers, *pieds noirs*, or Algerian auxiliaries.<sup>501</sup> Nor did it speak for conscripts deployed in Algeria well after the cease-fire.

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<sup>499</sup>“Une plaque à la mémoire des morts en AFN est placée sous l’Arc de Triomphe,” *Le Monde* (13 January 1973): 11; Claude Pelèrin, “La qualité du combattant aux AFN: un rappel des faits,” *La Voix du combattant* 1383 (February 1973): 7; Hugues Dalleau, “La reconnaissance,” *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 5 (November 1972): 10.

<sup>500</sup>Rouyard, “La bataille du 19 mars,” 550.

<sup>501</sup>“Premier Prix, Envoi de M. Henri Gay,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 91 (February 1972): 12.

Indeed, the schism over the choice of a commemoration date suggests that, at its base, the Algerian War was “uncommemorable” for France—there could be no consensus over why soldiers had died.<sup>502</sup> These skirmishes over commemoration reflected the veterans’ movement attempting to define the Algerian War generation and explain what had been done to it. The FNACA’s memorial politics conveyed that the Algerian War had injured a generation of conscripts, physically and morally, and that they deserved state support and recognition. The UNCAFN’s memorial politics indicated that veterans of Algeria had believed in their mission, were grievously betrayed by the state, and deserved political authority in return. Debating what had been done to soldiers was, by metonymy, a way of evaluating how the Algerian War had affected France. This commemoration polemic represented the first phase of processing the memory of defeat in Algeria, an “active experience” that took decades.<sup>503</sup>

As with the first phase of collective memory of World War II in France, which emphasized the martyrdom of the Occupation and the heroism of the Resistance, the first phase of processing the memory of Algeria centered on what had been done to France. Veterans’ associations agreed that the Algerian War had been harmful to France and her soldiers, although through diametrically opposed political lenses. Only in the later “anamnesis” phase of memory, in both contexts, would French society be able to contemplate what France had done—in terms of the Shoah and collaboration under Vichy, and crimes and torture in Algeria.<sup>504</sup>

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<sup>502</sup>Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 607.

<sup>503</sup>John Horne, “Defeat and Memory in Modern History,” 11-29 in Jenny MacLeod, ed., *Defeat and Memory: Cultural Histories of Military Defeat in the Modern Era* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 20.

<sup>504</sup>Henry Rousso, “Identités et mémoire sous la Ve République,” 383-398 in dir. Jean Garrigues, Sylvie Guillaume, and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Comprendre la Ve République* (Paris: Presses universitaires de

The debate over what had been done to France and to veterans, although rendered public through commemorations, largely took place in the private “world of veterans.” As the state and society both turned to other priorities—modernization, European integration, the growth of consumer society—the Algerian generation was left to sort out its “identity crisis” alone.<sup>505</sup> The two associations competing to speak for veterans of Algeria drew on mutually exclusive narratives of the war, formulated as early as 1958. As they cultivated their remembrances against a background of social indifference, they ended up channeling the veterans’ movement into two separate memory communities that had little to say to each other, so incompatible were their frames of reference on the war. And each frame of reference contained an inherent contradiction. Choosing to remember the war through a nationalist lens ran up against the facts of defeat and division, and remembering the war through an antiwar lens precluded the patriotism that was central to the discourse of previous veterans’ movements.<sup>506</sup> Two more contentious questions of memory divided the associations into hostile camps after the war, both concerning the final traumatic year of the Algerian War: the fate of Muslim auxiliaries who had fought for France, and the legal consequences facing OAS members and the putschist generals.

Regarding Muslim Algerian auxiliaries or *harkis*, both associations showed a remarkable cognitive dissonance, influenced by their political interpretations of the war. The FNACA’s national newspaper made its first substantive mention of *harkis* in 1974, when the subject became a national question following hunger strikes launched to draw

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France, 2010), 391. With my thanks to my adviser, Don Reid, for pointing out the pattern of this two-stage process to me.

<sup>505</sup>Frank, “Les troubles de la mémoire française,” 607.

<sup>506</sup>Claude Liauzu, “Le contingent français entre silence et discours ancien combattant,” 507-516 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 515.

attention to the *harkis*' social and economic exclusion in France.<sup>507</sup> The 1974 article simply stated that "local committees have joined the outpouring of solidarity" triggered by the hunger strikes. The rest of the article summarized government plans to improve the housing, employment, and education of resettled *harkis*, without commentary or editorializing.<sup>508</sup> An article in *Le Monde* confirms that the FNACA committee in Évreux "expressed solidarity" with the local hunger-striker, Mohamed Laradji, but it is curious that the national FNACA newspaper did not consecrate any more coverage to this protest.<sup>509</sup>

The second article on *harkis* the FNACA published in 1974 was an administrative notice confirming that former Algerian auxiliaries could have their military service validated and counted toward social insurance.<sup>510</sup> These were useful notices to those few *harkis* who might have been members of the FNACA, or for veterans who were friends with *harkis*, but these scant discussions suggest they were not a major priority of the association. According to the FNACA's anticolonial narrative that the Algerian War pitted French soldiers against the Algerian nation rather than the FLN, *harkis* were collaborators at best. Furthermore, the mere existence of Muslim Algerians who would

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<sup>507</sup>The only mention of *harkis* as a class of veteran before the 1974 article was a brief notice in 1972 that *harkis* were not currently allowed to apply for an "Award of the Nation's Gratitude," because administratively they were considered civilian contractors rather than soldiers. Minister Duvallard announced that he supported allowing the Award to *harkis* who had chosen French nationality, seeing the Veterans' Office benefits it opened as a way for *harkis* to "more easily surmount the undeniable difficulties" that they encountered in their social and economic integration in France. This notice was presented without commentary on the part of the FNACA, and buried near the back of the newspaper. "Harkis et Titre de Reconnaissance," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 92 (March 1972): 6.

<sup>508</sup>"Problèmes des harkis," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 114 (March 1974): 8.

<sup>509</sup>"La grève de la faim d'un ancien harki à Évreux: «Rejetés par les Français et rejetés par les Algériens»," *Le Monde* (11 January 1974): 17.

<sup>510</sup>"Validation des services accomplis dans les forces supplétives," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 117 (June 1974): 8.

take up arms for France out of patriotism contradicted the FNACA's "*malgré nous*" narrative of French veterans' military service against their will. Finally, the torture and massacre of *harkis* and their families by the tens of thousands after the cease-fire in 1962, as traitors in a newly independent Algeria, belied the FNACA's affirmation that the end of the war was a victory for peace.<sup>511</sup> So it was easier for the association to ignore these veterans, who did not fit into any useful schema, and focus its attention on other matters.

The UNCAFN's pro-French Algeria stance led to the cognitive dissonance of fetishizing *harkis* as "French Muslims who loyally defended our flag," while failing to acknowledge the diversity of reasons other than patriotism—from economic necessity to the desire for self-defense or vengeance—that might compel Algerians to take up arms in the French military.<sup>512</sup> But it is indisputable that the disarming, abandonment, and massacre of tens of thousands of *harkis* formed part of the brutal aftermath of the Algerian War. After the French state shielded itself from the consequences by forbidding "any individual initiative toward installing French Muslims in the Metropole," via an order from Minister of Algerian Affairs Louis Joxe, the UNCAFN protested loudly.<sup>513</sup>

In response to the persecution and slaughter of *harkis* in the summer of 1962, the UNCAFN welcomed them to France as "refugees." It asked the government to "demand the respect of the Accords of Évian by forbidding FLN reprisals against Muslims faithful to France," and excoriated "the Leaders of the New Algeria, who speak of coexistence and fraternity" while "our Muslim Brothers in arms continue to be arrested, imprisoned,

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<sup>511</sup>Paul Thibaud, "Génération algérienne?" 608-616 in dir. Rioux, *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français*, 608.

<sup>512</sup>Hugues Dalleau, "Nos compagnons Harkis," *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 10 (June 1974): 10.

<sup>513</sup>Louis Joxe, Minister of State for Algerian Affairs, telegram 125/IGAA, 16 May 1962, quoted in Hugues Dalleau, "Une grande cause sociale: les anciens harkis," *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 10 (June 1974): 6.

tortured, killed.”<sup>514</sup> Later, during the hunger strikes in the mid-1970s, the UNCAFN asserted that *harkis* were “at home” in the association, and told its members that they needed “our help obtaining justice from an ignorant population and bureaucrats who still treat them as immigrant workers and not as true citizens.”<sup>515</sup> The association asserted that “only veterans of Algeria will know how to find the gestures, the attitude and the words that will touch the *harkis*,” and urged its members to “act without delay.”<sup>516</sup> This vocal support of the *harkis* is nearly impossible to disentangle, however, from the UNCAFN’s nostalgia for French Algeria and its desire for “good Muslims” who proved that not all Algerians had supported the FLN.<sup>517</sup>

The second point of contention after the war concerned amnesty for French soldiers imprisoned for crimes in Algeria, a major rallying point of the far right through the 1960s. The FNACA firmly established its position soon after the trial of General Edmond Jouhaud, one of the four putschist generals, who became the right-hand man of General Raoul Salan in the OAS. Jouhaud was sentenced to death on April 13, 1962, but stayed on death row for months. The FNACA urged his execution, as well as protesting the “scandalous indulgence that marked the verdict of Salan,” who had been condemned

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<sup>514</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Sauver l’essentiel,” *La Voix du combattant* 1279 (July 1962): 8; François Porteu de la Morandière, “À propos de...finances,” *La Voix du combattant* 1285 (March 1963): 8.

<sup>515</sup>Dalleau, “Nos compagnons Harkis,” 10.

<sup>516</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Une grande cause sociale: les anciens harkis,” *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 10 (June 1974): 7.

<sup>517</sup>During the war, François Porteu de la Morandière had sought through numerous means to bring attention to the Algerians fighting for France. For instance, in 1960, at the commemoration of November 11 at *l’Étoile* in Paris, he left a wreath in the name of the UNCAFN at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier with a ribbon reading, “To all our Muslim comrades who died for France, their fatherland, from the veterans of North Africa.” This incident attracted press attention because wreaths with specific dedications violated the statutes of the Committee of the Flame, and so the ribbon was subsequently removed. “Le quarante-deuxième anniversaire de l’Armistice, le général de Gaulle a passé les troupes en revue place de l’Étoile,” *Le Monde* (12 November 1960): 16.

to life in prison instead of the death penalty. The association felt that “before so many crimes, firmness is a humane attitude; forgiveness is complicity.”<sup>518</sup>

The FNACA headquarters in Paris had been bombed by the OAS in March 1962, a week after the cease-fire, and so the association’s outrage at the state’s lenient treatment of OAS leaders was emotional as well as ideological.<sup>519</sup> The Federation decried the successive amnesties throughout the 1960s as political opportunism. It also seized on a further OAS amnesty proposed by the Cabinet in 1968 to demand amnesty for all conscripts who had been involved in driving accidents in Algeria, and still owed the state thousands of Francs each. However, the association’s attempts to lobby the Minister of the Army and the judicial agent of the Treasury on this matter bore no fruit.<sup>520</sup>

The UNCAFN’s position on amnesty resulted from two factors: ideological and institutional sympathies with the OAS, which numerous leaders and rank-and-file members of the association had joined upon demobilization in Algeria or France, as well as bitter memories of de Gaulle’s condemnation of Pétain as a traitor in 1945.<sup>521</sup> Along with insisting on veterans’ recognition and drawing attention to the plight of the *harkis*, the UNCAFN repeatedly passed motions asking the government to institute “a broad amnesty covering all the consequences of the Algerian War” at its yearly congresses.<sup>522</sup>

In 1963, its Vice President explained that “camaraderie forces us to fight for” amnesty,

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<sup>518</sup>“Il faut châtier,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 12 (May-June 1962): 10.

<sup>519</sup>J. Martinet, “Le plasticage de notre siège: le prix de notre clairvoyance,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 11 (April 1962): 1.

<sup>520</sup>“Pourquoi pas nous?” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 47 (January-February 1968): 3.

<sup>521</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014. The founding President of the UNCAFN, Jean-Yves Alquier, who quit as President in 1958, was himself arrested in 1961 on suspicion of involvement in a metropolitan branch of the OAS.

<sup>522</sup>“La motion finale,” *La Voix du combattant* 1288 (June 1963): 8.



since it “directly concerns” so many “comrades,” presumably in the association itself. He concluded that since France “had not yet recovered from the consequences of the Liberation [in 1944],” the country “could not afford the luxury and the shame of accumulating new resentments.”<sup>523</sup> For many nationalist veterans of Algeria and especially  *pied noir*  veterans, the OAS had represented the last hope to save French Algeria when the state seemed determined to abandon it. The final amnesties of OAS members in 1968, and thus the erasure of an official record of their crimes, emboldened the far right to organize in ways that continue to affect France to this day. de Gaulle’s final amnesty indirectly paved the way for the creation of the National Front.

Jean-Marie Le Pen’s political party represents the blowback of the aggrieved memory of French Algeria shared among nationalist veterans. He was a survivor of the battle of Dien Bien Phu, and wrote afterward, perhaps apocryphally, that there he had learned how “wars are won and lost away from the battlefield,” swearing to himself “that if I made it back, I would devote myself to politics.”<sup>524</sup> At age 27, Le Pen became the youngest elected deputy in France, representing the right wing  *Union de défense des commerçants et artisans*  (UDCA) party of Pierre Poujade, which thrust itself into the defense of French Algeria. He then volunteered as a paratrooper in Algeria for six months between 1956-1957 before returning to far-right activist circles.<sup>525</sup> On May 13, 1958, as the leader of the short-lived political party  *Front national des combattants*  (FNC), he

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<sup>523</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “L’Amnistie,”  *La Voix du combattant*  1289 (July 1963): 8.

<sup>524</sup>Jean-Marie Le Pen, essay in dir. Jean-Yves Alquier,  *Chant funèbre pour Pnom Penh et Saïgon*  (Paris: Société de Production Littéraire, 1975), 212.

<sup>525</sup>Serge Berstein, “La peau de chagrin de «l’Algérie française»,” 202-217 in dir. Rioux, 206; Stora,  *Le transfert d’une mémoire* , 40; Valérie Igounet,  *Le Front National de 1972 à nos jours: le parti, les hommes, les idées*  (Paris: Seuil, 2013), 12.

joined pro-French Algeria associations, the UNCAFN among them, marching in Paris to demand the return of General de Gaulle.<sup>526</sup>

Although an elected deputy, Le Pen briefly dallied with the idea of insurrection as decolonization appeared on the horizon. For instance, in January 1960, the FNC printed tracts attempting to organize Parisian students to support the civilian revolt in Algiers that became known as “the week of barricades.”<sup>527</sup> That same month, Le Pen would be placed under house arrest after calling for de Gaulle’s assassination.<sup>528</sup> In July of the same year, he founded the *Front national pour l’Algérie française* (FNAF), along with activists including Jean-Louis Tixier-Vignancour, who would run for President in 1965 under Le Pen’s management, and Jean Dides, former head of the *Légion française des combattants* in Vichy France.<sup>529</sup> The FNAF sought to establish Metropolitan ties with the *Front de l’Algérie Française*, which participated in legal and illegal opposition to decolonization in Algeria, and was a precursor to the OAS.<sup>530</sup>

After the end of the Algerian War, however, Le Pen developed a long-term strategy of gaining power for the far right through a slow burning political revolution, rather than illegal means, and the UNCAFN indirectly helped fuel the National Front’s

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<sup>526</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l’Étoile par le ‘Comité d’Action des Associations Nationales d’Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” Paris Police Prefecture archives, B<sub>a</sub>.2453, “CAANAC” folder, 13 May 1958, 3.

<sup>527</sup>“Étudiants, lycéens!” tract, Front national des combattants, January 1960, BDIC, Fonds Jacques Delarue, F delta res 888 1.

<sup>528</sup>Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 56.

<sup>529</sup>“Front National pour l’Algérie Française,” tract, 19 July 1960, BDIC, Fonds Jacques Delarue, F delta res 888 1.

<sup>530</sup>Berstein, “La peau de chagrin,” 210.

rise.<sup>531</sup> The extreme right wing party, founded in 1972 by Le Pen and former OAS members, presented itself from the beginning as the gathering of all nationalists—including Vichy collaborators and royalists—and appealed to the “vanquished” of history.<sup>532</sup> The National Front presented itself as the home of the true right, as opposed to Gaullism since 1962.<sup>533</sup> The Front thus found a particularly receptive audience among nationalist veterans of Algeria who shared the colonial nostalgia and memory of Gaullist betrayal cultivated by the UNCAFN. The party claimed a direct filiation with the OAS and offered veterans the chance to continue their combat in a mass political movement.<sup>534</sup> The Front co-opted the far right’s aggrieved memory of French Algeria and flattered nationalist veterans’ sense that their Algerian experience had given them the political insight necessary to save a dangerously misguided country. Moreover, the Front delivered its appeals in a brutal register—“social and military violence” was the “distinguishing feature” of Le Pen’s political rhetoric.<sup>535</sup>

Since its foundation, the UNCAFN had cultivated an image of nationalist veterans of Algeria as a civic elite, the “new steel” needed to lead France.<sup>536</sup> The association’s leaders concluded that that “the end of the Algerian war was the price of cowardice.”<sup>537</sup> Convinced that only nationalist veterans had emerged from Algeria with honor, the

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<sup>531</sup>Igounet, 17.

<sup>532</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>533</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>534</sup>Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 56.

<sup>535</sup>Nonna Mayer, *Ces Français qui votent Le Pen* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002), 140.

<sup>536</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “L’Acier nouveau,” *Djebel* 3 (September 1958): 1.

<sup>537</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

association frequently encouraged its members to enter local politics: it was “eminently desirable that the practice of camaraderie, moral uprightness, and sense of nationalism should lead to an official civic engagement.”<sup>538</sup> French Algeria’s true believers in the UNCAFN joined a larger memory community that Benjamin Stora calls “*les hommes du Sud*” (men of the South), composed of “soldiers, *pieds noirs*, officers, [and] former OAS activists” who all bore “a certain conception of French Algeria” that informed their politics.<sup>539</sup> Among veterans, “only the vanquished [French Algeria supporters] had a coherent and tenacious memory” of the war, which made them an important target demographic of the National Front in its early years.<sup>540</sup>

Feeling like so many “internal émigrés” in a decolonized France, these men tended to rally to the National Front in the 1970s and 1980s, whose growing strength came from its myopic portrayals of “Islam, North African immigrants, and the Algerian War.”<sup>541</sup> As the war grew more distant in time, it came to appear an increasingly “foundational moment” in the lives of men who had believed in French Algeria, making references to the war more potent in National Front discourse.<sup>542</sup> While it had no direct ties to the creation of the National Front itself, the UNCAFN offered an important vector of transmission of an embittered far-right memory of French Algeria and Gaullist

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<sup>538</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Au-delà de l’UNC-AFN...” *La Voix du combattant* 1288 (June 1963): 8.

<sup>539</sup>Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 14.

<sup>540</sup>Paul Thibaud, “Génération algérienne?” 608-616 in dir. Rioux, *La guerre d’Algérie et les Français*, 611.

<sup>541</sup>Berstein, “La peau de chagrin,” 217; Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 58.

<sup>542</sup>Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 72.

betrayal that the Front mobilized, and the association even trained “numerous local politicians,” helping to ensure the Front’s slow growth to political viability.<sup>543</sup>

By 1973, the National Front had established itself as the only real far right party in France, and Le Pen’s presidential campaign in 1974, although ultimately a failure, gave his party national visibility.<sup>544</sup> The Front’s period of impoverishment and political isolation, which the French term “crossing the desert,” ended in the early 1980s.<sup>545</sup> In view of the legislative elections of 1986, François Porteu de la Morandière quit his position as UNCAFN President in 1985 to campaign on a National Front list, joining 1,521 candidates nationwide.<sup>546</sup> This was the period that all of France seemed to take notice of the far-right party’s slow implantation through local elections. Porteu de la Morandière saw in the National Front the “great hope” of a party that represented the “right with conviction.”<sup>547</sup> He would serve the Pas-de-Calais as a National Front deputy until 1988.<sup>548</sup>

By the end of the 1980s, the Front had become the third political force in a country long accustomed to the bipolar conflict between Communists and Socialists on

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<sup>543</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000), 6.

<sup>544</sup>Igounet, 71, 76.

<sup>545</sup>*Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>546</sup>Erwan Lecœur, *Un néo-populisme à la française: trente ans du Front National* (Paris: Découverte, 2003), 41, 55; Marité Gaudefroy, Secretary for the Executive Committee of the UNC/UNCAFN since the 1970s, conversation, Paris, 12 November 2013.

<sup>547</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!*, 7.

<sup>548</sup>«François Porteu de la Morandière,” “Notices et portraits des députés de la Ve République” page, Assemblée Nationale website, <<http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/trombinoscope/Vrepublique/Legis08/porteu-de-la-morandiere-francois-20051928.asp>>

the left, and variations on Gaullism on the right.<sup>549</sup> In 1992, François Porteu de la Morandière was elected regional counselor for the Pas-de-Calais at the head of a National Front list; indeed, this regional election season had been dominated by lists of “veterans of Algeria and OAS celebrities.”<sup>550</sup> But he would leave the party in 1997, disappointed with the level of “aggression reigning in the National Assembly” between National Front deputies and members of traditional right wing parties.<sup>551</sup> Porteu de la Morandière claims to have been attracted to the National Front because of its patriotism, but the party had been openly anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant since its foundation.<sup>552</sup> While the UNCAFN co-founder observed the rules of his association by quitting his responsibilities to enter politics, he was following through on the model of “civism” that he had set for his members since 1958—testifying to the nation as a battle-hardened true believer in French Algeria.<sup>553</sup>

As for the FNACA, it transmitted an anticolonial narrative of the war that grew in public resonance over time. But because this association counted among the “victors” of the Algerian War, supporting decolonization from the beginning, it did not have to defend its politics as rigorously as did groups that opposed Algerian independence. Instead, the FNACA turned its energy and cohesive group identity toward lengthy mass campaigns for veterans’ status, eventually gained in late 1974, under the first post-

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<sup>549</sup>Igounet, 19.

<sup>550</sup>Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 60.

<sup>551</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!*, 130.

<sup>552</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>553</sup>Indeed, he describes his entry into national politics as a continuation of his veterans’ politics: “When I became certain that the domain of action of veterans would remain limited, and that the essential combat actually took place in the National Assembly, I quit my associative functions and engaged myself in parliamentary life.” Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!*, 250.

Gaullist government of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing. With this victory won, the FNACA embarked on “constructing a discourse of legitimation” around former conscripts of Algeria, who had been tarred by association with the OAS and the boasts of generals who justified torture.<sup>554</sup> In the association’s logic, conscripts had been doubly victimized—first, by being sent to fight an unjust war against their will, and later, by the rejection of a society that refused to understand them. In the 1980s the FNACA sought to create a reconciliatory view of veterans in the public eye, reframing the experiences of conscripts as a “permanent warning to future generations,” and creating a committee to study how the Algerian War was being taught in schools.<sup>555</sup> The *Guerre d’Algérie Jeunesse Enseignement* [Algerian War Youth Education, GAJE] committee to this day engages in outreach with students, teachers, and journalists, and has produced several traveling exhibits.<sup>556</sup>

Veterans of Algeria frequently distrusted party politics, and “invested themselves little in the state [...]”<sup>557</sup> But when members of the “Algerian generation” came to political power, especially in the 1980s and 1990s, the associations representing them had been disseminating a specific narrative of the Algerian War for decades.<sup>558</sup> The FNACA was ahead of French public opinion, which would eventually come to agree that the Algerian War had been a grave misadventure, and the end of the war was a victory for

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<sup>554</sup>Claude Liauzu, “Le contingent entre silence et discours ancien combattant,” 507-516 in dir. Rioux, 512.

<sup>555</sup>Martin Evans, “Rehabilitating the traumatized war veteran: the case of French conscripts from the Algerian War, 1954-1962,” 73-85 in eds. Martin Evans and Ken Lunn, *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Berg: Oxford, 1997), 78.

<sup>556</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d’Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 32.

<sup>557</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l’oubli*, 224.

<sup>558</sup>Stora, *Le transfert d’une mémoire*, 7.

France. But the leaders of the UNCAFN insisted that nationalist veterans possessed valuable insights that no one was listening to, and claimed to represent a generation of “disabused witnesses, sickened by the fiasco with which they have been associated.”<sup>559</sup>

The association formed a sort of echo chamber that would contribute to the growth of the National Front in this period. These links between the UNCAFN and the National Front highlight the indirect but important ways that the experience and memory of the Algerian War “weighed on national political life, with the long internal exile of the vanquished of French Algeria and then the return” of the very theses that had justified colonialism.<sup>560</sup> Since the UNCAFN has escaped much scholarly attention at all, its central role in cultivating a crucial voting demographic early in the National Front’s history has never been examined.

While French society and the state sought to forget Algeria in the decades after the war’s end, these veterans’ associations kept alive specific narratives of the war that later re-emerged to fuel political rhetoric and action in the post-Gaullist period. In elevating veterans as political witnesses and actors working toward commemoration and recognition, the FNACA and the UNCAFN had introduced many members of the Algerian generation to politics. Unlike the “sky blue Assembly” elected in November 1919, or the World War II veterans and Resistance members who dominated the earliest governments of the Fourth Republic, the generation of veterans of Algeria had to fight for years to establish the value of their testimony, and their right to political authority.

Gaullist memorial politics, as well as the nature of political power in the early Fifth Republic, obliged the UNCAFN and the FNACA to deny the political nature of

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<sup>559</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!*, 21.

<sup>560</sup>Jean-Pierre Rioux, “La Flamme et les bûchers,” 497-508 in dir. Rioux, 498.



their organizations in order to establish a foothold in politics for veterans. Yet eight years of a divisive and traumatic conflict had rendered impossible the democratic, reconciliatory center sought by the UDAA, and thus only the anticolonialist and nationalist extremes of the veterans' movement survived. This early fragmentation of the veterans' movement directly contributed to the polarization of France's memory of the war that lasts to this day. The "impossible" task of building a collective memory of Algeria has not been examined through the window of the veterans' movement, yet politicized veteran-activists felt honor-bound to defend what they believed the war had meant for themselves and for their country.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>561</sup>Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 242.

### CHAPTER 3: LESSONS FROM THE MOUNTAINS: THE FOUNDERS OF THE ALGERIAN WAR VETERANS' MOVEMENT

The pioneers of the Algerian War veterans' movement—highly educated, politically informed, and older than most of their recruits—had served in a key phase of the war. In 1956-1957, mass conscription began, the combat was shifting from the countryside to the cities, and France's repression of the war and systematic use of torture attracted criticism on the domestic and international fronts. The leaders of both major veterans' associations drew a crucial lesson from this transitional period: they knew that opinion on the homefront was of primordial importance in determining the war's outcome, especially in the aftermath of the Battle of Algiers. UNCAFN co-founder François Porteu de la Morandière created his association to support the combat for French Algeria just as public support for the colony was at its height.<sup>562</sup> And FNACA President Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, riding a wave of anti-torture denunciations, federated his association just in time to protest the escalation of the war under de Gaulle.

But both men also worked as activists in their own right, independent but never fully separate from their associations. In 1958, the conclusion of the Algerian War was far from certain, and few of the most outspoken activists either for or against decolonization followed a straight path through to 1962. To support the cause of French Algeria, Porteu de la Morandière worked alongside future OAS members—such as Jean-

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<sup>562</sup>Even by summer 1958, French public opinion polls indicate a slight majority still in favor of maintaining Algeria, but support would only drop from this point onward. Serge Berstein, "La peau de chagrin de «l'Algérie française»," 202-217 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 208.

Yves Alquier and Jacques Soustelle—but also collaborated with Alexandre Sanguinetti, who would later be tasked with dismantling the OAS. Although Porteu de la Morandière stayed on the legal far right, not all of his fellow travelers made this decision. And toward the goal of ending the war, Servan-Schreiber joined forces with activists such as Georges Mattéi, who would later go underground to aid the FLN, feeling that the FNACA was too moderate.<sup>563</sup> But Servan-Schreiber refused to condone desertion, or support of the FLN. The very “unpredictability of paths” travelled by activists in this period suggests “that it was an entire system of values that had broken” as French society navigated this conflict.<sup>564</sup> Yet the founders of these associations maintained their respective political and tactical positions on Algeria through the end of the war, and this merits further attention.

Despite a political enmity that sometimes became personal, these men shared many traits: “elders” of the generation that served in Algeria, they possessed the life experience to bring strong political opinions to the war. Their family backgrounds, access to education, and charisma facilitated their leadership of the Algerian War veterans’ movement. They served as reserve officers during the same phase of the war, and came back to France determined to testify, through the associations they created and through their personal engagements. Finally, they developed similarly ambitious programs to reorganize France in the wake of decolonization, and both entered national politics bearing the weight of their Algerian experiences. What are the political lessons that resulted from their military service and activism in this period, and how much can veteran identity explain these men’s national engagements in the Fifth Republic? To

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<sup>563</sup>Martin Evans, *The memory of resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 107.

<sup>564</sup>Paul Thibaud, “Génération algérienne?”, 608-616 in dir. Rioux, 614.

answer these questions, this chapter offers a comparison of the political biographies of François Porteu de la Morandière and Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, the pioneers of the Algerian War veterans' movement. While it is difficult to disentangle the actions of these men with those of the associations they steered, the coverage will limit itself to those engagements bearing the personal imprint of the founders.

Both Porteu de la Morandière and Servan-Schreiber came from positions of wealth sufficient to have access to higher education, but their family backgrounds illustrate the clash between “old” and “new” money in mid-century France. Count François Porteu de la Morandière is descended from what he describes as an “old Breton family” that had held the fief of *Prévôt des marchands* in Rennes before the French Revolution.<sup>565</sup> With such a position, his family is likely to have been relatively recent bourgeoisie under the *ancien régime*, and may have purchased its title of nobility.<sup>566</sup> Porteu de la Morandière grew up in Sèvres, a wealthy suburb southwest of Paris. After World War II, he received a doctorate in law at *Sciences-Po* preparatory to a career in business.<sup>567</sup> Compared to his rival, Porteu de la Morandière had more education before fighting in Algeria.

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<sup>565</sup>Marc Prévost, “Régionales J-75: Interrogations autour des listes de Xavier Bertrand,” *Daily Nord* (19 September 2015), <<http://www.dailynord.fr/2015/09/regionales-j-75-interrogations-autour-des-listes-de-xavier-bertrand/>>, consulted 7 March 2016; François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014, Sèvres.

<sup>566</sup>From a conversation with Jay Smith, Society for French Historical Studies conference, Nashville, 5 March 2016.

<sup>567</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014. He published his dissertation on “Forestry credits in France and abroad” in 1953, after writing a Master’s thesis in legal history bearing the inscrutable title “The Mexican Origins of Several Roman Institutions,” which was published in 1951. François Porteu de la Morandière, “Le Crédit forestier en France et à l’étranger,” Dissertation in law, self-published, 1953, Worldcat; François Porteu de la Morandière, “Les origines mexicaines de quelques institutions romaines,” mémoire DES, 1951, Worldcat.

But Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, with a relatively lesser degree of education, had more life and work experience before his military service. He claimed that his great-grandfather had been a secretary of Chancellor Bismarck's who had emigrated from Berlin in 1869.<sup>568</sup> Servan-Schreiber's family found its status in French society through publishing; his father Émile and his uncle Robert had founded the newspaper *Les Échos*.<sup>569</sup> Reflecting on his upbringing, Servan-Schreiber acknowledged the advantages of a middle class background and a solid “bourgeois” education, but insisted that he “inherited nothing from [his] father, who had no fortune.”<sup>570</sup>

He did, however, inherit his father's success in journalism, and the media platform that he established. After World War II, Servan-Schreiber worked for a while as a foreign correspondent for *Les Échos*, and eventually became the youngest journalist working at *Le Monde* at age 25. In 1953, at the age of 29, he and his colleague Françoise Giroud, who would also be his companion until 1960, founded the newspaper *l'Express* over the course of several weeks—it initially appeared as a Saturday edition of *Les Échos*.<sup>571</sup> Their avowed aim was to help bring Pierre Mendès-France to power and to promote his brand of Republican liberalism.<sup>572</sup> Nothing like this weekly opinion newspaper had existed in France previously: it would trigger many imitations.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>568</sup>Jean-Claude Vaugy, *JJSS par JJSS* (Paris: Éditions de la Table Ronde, 1971), 103.

<sup>569</sup>Éric Roussel, “*l'Express*, un hebdomadaire pas comme les autres,” ed. Éric Roussel, *Pierre Mendès-France, Françoise Giroud, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber: La politique soumise à l'intelligence: correspondances croisées (1953-1981)* (Paris: Laffont, 2011), 16.

<sup>570</sup>Jean Bothorel, *Celui qui voulait tout changer: les années JJSS* (Paris: Laffont, 2005), 19.

<sup>571</sup>*Ibid.*, 141; Roussel, 266, 16.

<sup>572</sup>Roussel, “*l'Express*, un hebdomadaire pas comme les autres,” 16.

<sup>573</sup>Bothorel, 141.

However, *l'Express* would not be profitable until 1965, after it had become a weekly magazine following the model of *Time*.<sup>574</sup>

Unlike many of the conscripts they would end up leading in their associations, Servan-Schreiber and Porteu de la Morandière received distinct political cultures through their upbringings. Porteu de la Morandière came from a conservative family that viewed the Popular Front as the cause of the defeat of 1940, and he was strongly marked by the “threat of Communist disintegration” that unfolded across Europe after World War II.<sup>575</sup> Along with military pride and Catholic values, anti-Communism was a moral and political imperative for Porteu de la Morandière.<sup>576</sup> As for Servan-Schreiber, he emphasized the invaluable political education he had acquired at his father’s dinner table, alongside prominent politicians, journalists, and press moguls of the Third Republic.<sup>577</sup> His father had been especially close with those leaders who were, as he later described, “in revolt against the society of the time, unrelentingly opposed to Hitlerism, indignant at the notion of the Maginot line, convinced that de Gaulle’s theories on armor were well-founded.”<sup>578</sup> The rest of the political class in this period, Servan-Schreiber affirmed, were unconcerned with stopping “the fascist menace,” and acquiesced to the

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<sup>574</sup>Vaugy, 65.

<sup>575</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014, Sèvres.

<sup>576</sup>During our interviews, he mentioned several times that I should make sure to write about the reality of the threat of international Communism before and during the Algerian War. A further example of the central importance of anti-Communism to his worldview came when he happened to mention General Franco: “Some say he was a dictator, and I think that was true. But all the same, he saved Spain from Communism, and if he had lost that battle, France would have been lost.” Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>577</sup>“M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes,” *Le Monde* (30 May 1974): 4; Bothorel, 19.

<sup>578</sup>Vaugy, 29.

establishment of the Vichy state.<sup>579</sup> Servan-Schreiber's antifascist sensibility would put him on a collision course with the anti-Communism that Porteu de la Morandière took with him to the Algerian War.

Although there were but four years of age between these men—Servan-Schreiber was born in 1924 and Porteu de la Morandière in 1928—they experienced the defeat of 1940 and the Occupation differently. Porteu de la Morandière was twelve years old in 1940, and lived in occupied Paris.<sup>580</sup> He witnessed the death of a twenty-year old cousin and the grievous injury of his aunt due to an errant Allied bomb that fell in his front yard, but other than this lesson in the arbitrariness of death, the war did not seem to have been a formative experience or reference point for him.<sup>581</sup> Certainly his father, a veteran of World War I, bore great respect for the aged hero of Verdun at the head of the Vichy state—“he would have slapped my face if I had referred to him as Pétain rather than Marshall Pétain,” Porteu de la Morandière recalls.<sup>582</sup> But he was only a teenager when the war ended, and it had not been a source of great anguish or political reflection for him: “at the Liberation I thought it would all turn out well.”<sup>583</sup>

Servan-Schreiber' adult life was just beginning when World War II broke out, so it was a more formative period for him. By 1942, he came to a somber realization: “France supported Pétain from one end to the other.” He decided that “the bourgeoisie were traitors,” and would henceforth feel a hostility toward and zero identification with

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<sup>579</sup>Vaugy, 30.

<sup>580</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>581</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>582</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>583</sup>*Idem.*

the entrenched political class, even though he came from the bourgeoisie himself.<sup>584</sup> In 1943 he gained admission to the elite *École Polytechnique* university to study engineering, and experienced the German and then the Italian occupation at Grenoble.<sup>585</sup> Along with his father, Servan-Schreiber managed to escape France, and joined the Air Force branch of the Resistance in Spain, eventually training as a pilot in the U.S.A., although he did not see combat.<sup>586</sup> He later confessed that he had chosen to train as a pilot rather than a tank commander out of fear of the physical suffering that would result from being in a tank hit by a mortar.<sup>587</sup> Servan-Schreiber was proud to be one of only five members of his entering class at the *Polytechnique* who had rallied to de Gaulle.<sup>588</sup> It was a family engagement. His sister Brigitte joined the internal Resistance, and was captured and tortured by the *Gestapo* at the age of 15.<sup>589</sup>

After beginning their adult lives in the new Fourth Republic, both men were recalled as reserve officers in Algeria, and came home seeking to testify, feeling that France was in the grip of indifference. In 1956, Porteu de la Morandière was remobilized as a reserve lieutenant, having completed his military service with the French occupation forces in Germany in 1953.<sup>590</sup> In Algeria, he was assigned to the *56ème division blindée*

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<sup>584</sup>Vaugy, 32.

<sup>585</sup>*Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>586</sup>Éric Roussel, “Pour une évolution en Algérie,” ed. Roussel, 42; “M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes,” *Le Monde* (20 May 1974): 4.

<sup>587</sup>Vaugy, 65.

<sup>588</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>589</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>590</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014; “Ordre de mission tenant lieu de feuille de déplacement temporaire no. 602.605/51,” 12 September 1960, UNCAFN papers, unnamed beige folder.



*des fusiliers de l'air*, an armored infantry division in the Air Force.<sup>591</sup> Porteu de la Morandière numbered among a cohort of reserve officers who were given command of hastily composed units in the Air Force as conscription accelerated in 1956—he found himself leading mechanics, radio operators, and desk jockeys in combat in Algeria, which was “frightful,” he recalls, “not a pretty sight.”<sup>592</sup>

Yet the work required to build esprit de corps in this motley band paid off: “we put our hearts into the Algerian War,” he remembers proudly.<sup>593</sup> After his “baptism of fire” during a “very tough encounter,” he received command of thirty men in an isolated post by the seaside. But the anxiety of protecting these troops, among whom “there were not ten who were battle ready,” made him sleepless and ill, requiring a brief hospitalization.<sup>594</sup> After recovering, Porteu de la Morandière returned to the original branch he had trained with during his national military service—the *1er spahis algérien*, a storied colonial cavalry division—until his demobilization in 1957.<sup>595</sup>

The young lieutenant returned home to discover that, as he recalls, “Metropolitan France didn’t give a damn what was happening in Algeria.”<sup>596</sup> He was sickened at the public’s ignorance of the FLN’s intimidation tactics: “When you see a guy get his throat

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<sup>591</sup>Photograph and caption, *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 12 (February 1975): 20.

<sup>592</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 11 February 2014.

<sup>593</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>594</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>595</sup>*Idem.*; François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacree Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000), 14.

<sup>596</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

slit, you cannot stay indifferent.”<sup>597</sup> Porteu de la Morandière was moved to pro-French Algeria activism out of nationalism, certainly, but more importantly a sense of duty to defend the troops from what he saw as “scandalous, inadmissible” calumny leveled by Communists and other activists who criticized the war effort.<sup>598</sup> Soon after his demobilization, he began meeting with friends in Paris to discuss how best to support the cause of French Algeria on the homefront, eventually culminating in the creation of the UNCAFN in December 1957.<sup>599</sup>

Servan-Schreiber had been actively criticizing France’s Algerian adventure before his military service; his newspaper *l’Express* was a valuable platform for political commentary.<sup>600</sup> *L’Express* presented a diversity of opinions, which was part of its novelty, but initially only one contributor, Jean Daniel, affirmed that full independence was “inevitable.”<sup>601</sup> Supporting independence was a minority position even among intellectuals critical of the war effort at this point. For a time Servan-Schreiber believed, along with many liberal Republicans, that Algeria was an “integral part of the Republic,” but that France should evolve toward “an intelligent and liberal politics” in order to keep good relations with Algeria and deny the FLN its justification for revolution.<sup>602</sup> When the magazine briefly became a daily in 1955, the goals of its first

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<sup>597</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>598</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>599</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>600</sup>Bothorel, 158.

<sup>601</sup>Roussel, 153.

<sup>602</sup>*Ibid.*, 44, 153.

issue were to bring Pierre Mendès-France back to power, and to resolve the Algerian crisis through encouraging reconciliation between the Algerians and the settlers.<sup>603</sup>

But his close involvement in the repression of the Algerian War led Servan-Schreiber to refine his views. In July 1956, he was recalled as a reserve lieutenant for Algeria—not in retaliation for his editorial positions, as Françoise Giroud suspected at the time, but simply through the same process that mobilized millions of other Frenchmen.<sup>604</sup> Studying at the *École polytechnique* had automatically rendered him a sub-lieutenant.<sup>605</sup> Servan-Schreiber did not use his connections or celebrity to avoid service, taking a stand for the ““elementary principles of equality before the law,”” and he had publicly opposed the calls for desertion emanating from some antiwar circles.<sup>606</sup> He served in the *531e demi-brigade de fusiliers de l’air*, an infantry unit attached to the Air Force. Both Servan-Schreiber and Porteu de la Morandière thus served as remobilized reserve lieutenants in the Air Force, during the dramatic escalation of the French effort, when most reserve units were reconstituted as infantry in great haste and disorganization.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>603</sup>Bothorel, 217-218.

<sup>604</sup>*Ibid.*, 234; Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Defense Minister Maurice Bourgès-Manoury, 15 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 351.

<sup>605</sup>Vaugy, 64.

<sup>606</sup>Bothorel, 232, 235; Servan-Schreiber, letter to Bourgès-Manoury, 15 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 352. Servan-Schreiber even refused aid offered by Pierre Mendès-France to get out of his mobilization. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 4 September 1956, ed. Roussel, 188.

<sup>607</sup>Ludivine Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge? Jeunes et jeunesses en France dès l’aube des Trente Glorieuses à la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 290.

And indeed, Servan-Schreiber perceived his work as “extraordinarily unpredictable and acrobatic.”<sup>608</sup> Without any additional training, he was immediately put in charge of about 150 men on his arrival southeast of Algiers, in a small town called Rivet (present-day Meftah).<sup>609</sup> He described his soldiers as having “a touching naïveté and a great honesty.”<sup>610</sup> Servan-Schreiber embraced his role as an educated instructor of the young conscripts in his charge, attempting “bit by bit [to explain] to my company the reasons for discipline and the rules of such a complex mission that we all have been called to do.”<sup>611</sup> But he found it difficult to build their motivation, since he did not believe in the mission himself; he needed to “invent the force of conviction,” and discovered it in the goal of saving his men’s lives.<sup>612</sup> And he feared that his celebrity had the potential to harm unit cohesion and effectiveness. Even though Servan-Schreiber was well known among his troops for his work at *l’Express*, he tried “to make them understand with a smile and a wink that the best favor they could do for me is to forget who I am.”<sup>613</sup> He even declined to share his political interpretations of the war, since some of his soldiers strongly supported French Algeria.<sup>614</sup>

Servan-Schreiber, despite his opposition to the Algerian War, ended up with greater command responsibilities than did Porteu de la Morandière, the true believer. He

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<sup>608</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 24 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 155.

<sup>609</sup>Bothorel, 235-236; Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 24 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 155.

<sup>610</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 29 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 162.

<sup>611</sup>Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 24 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 155.

<sup>612</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber to Pierre Mendès-France, 12 August 1956, ed. Roussel, 169.

<sup>613</sup>Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 29 July 1956, ed. Rousel, 162.

<sup>614</sup>*Idem.*

“plunged deep into the task that they have made me do,” hoping to “do it better than others” had; this was his method to fight depression and avoid seeing “this adventure as utterly stupid.”<sup>615</sup> His successes saw him promoted to battalion chief of staff, with indirect responsibility for nine hundred men.<sup>616</sup> Servan-Schreiber was eventually selected to train the first teams of *commandos noirs* [black commandos], units that had a double mission of “pacification”: to establish friendly ties and trust with the local population, but also to fight the FLN with “an exemplary severity.”<sup>617</sup> For his dutiful work, and perhaps also for the propaganda value of the gesture, the Army decorated Servan-Schreiber with the Cross of Military Valor.<sup>618</sup>

But his deep involvement in “pacification” only validated his “Parisian convictions [...] far beyond what is conceivable,” he recalled after the war.<sup>619</sup> Servan-Schreiber observed that “an army of occupation is not the instrument of a solution; it contributes directly to forging the national consciousness of the people [...], sustains the enemy, and nourishes the rebellion.”<sup>620</sup> Like Porteu de la Morandière, Servan-Schreiber needed time to recover from stresses incurred during the war. After demobilization, he convalesced at a “*bio*” health clinic in Zurich, and converted to vegetarianism.<sup>621</sup> When he returned to France in 1957, he used his celebrity as well as his eyewitness experience

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<sup>615</sup>Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 29 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 162.

<sup>616</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 12 August 1956, ed. Roussel, 175.

<sup>617</sup>Bothorel, 244.

<sup>618</sup>*Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>619</sup>Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 24 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 158.

<sup>620</sup>Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 29 July 1956, ed. Roussel, 172.

<sup>621</sup>Bothorel, 253.

as a veteran of Algeria to criticize France's conduct and incoherent policies. In May 1958, he was elected President of the *Association des Anciens d'Algérie*, which sought to organize "republican defense" in the wake of the May 13 coup, and which he would lead to federate with two other small associations to create the FNACA in September.<sup>622</sup>

Both men were very charismatic, able to lead and inspire people, and possessed a vigorous self-regard that drove their activism on the crucial national question of the time, the fight over French Algeria.<sup>623</sup> Porteu de la Morandière had sought the community of veterans elsewhere before founding his own association. In January 1958, he wrote to Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front national des combattants* party, asking to be stricken from the membership for "an ensemble of personal reasons."<sup>624</sup> Perhaps he no longer needed to seek "contact with the largest number of veterans of North Africa possible," since he had just created the UNCAFN in December 1957. Or maybe he feared that the FNC would devolve into illegal opposition to the Algerian War, since he desired to avoid crossing this boundary himself. The same day, he also sent a letter to the *Association des Anciens*

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<sup>622</sup>«Un appel de l'Association des anciens d'Algérie," *Le Monde* (22 May 1958). At the FNACA's constitutive congress, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber presided over the fusion of the AAA with the *Association Nationale des Anciens d'Algérie* (ANAA) and the *Groupement des rappelés et maintenus* (GRM). Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, "Présentation," *Fédération nationale des anciens d'Algérie: Bulletin de Liaison de la Commission Constitutive*, BNF, 4-JO-13704. The ANAA had been founded by Communist activists, and the GRM by left Socialists including Georges Mattéi. Jean-Pierre Prouteau, "Les Anciens d'Algérie dans la Nation. 23,405 morts, 50,376 pensionnés, 3,000,000 hommes. Un nouveau style d'Ancien Combattant," pamphlet, *Union démocratique des anciens d'Algérie*, 1963, BDIC, O pièce 32495.

<sup>623</sup>For an example of François Porteu de la Morandière's healthy self-esteem, he believes to this day that the French Communist Party created the FNACA as a subterfuge *because* he had "too openly" criticized the Party's opposition to the war. Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014. And Jean Bothorel, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's biographer, states that he "never thought of himself as a man among others." Bothorel adds that Servan-Schreiber had a "fictionalizing mechanism" when it came to describing his role "in the history of our time"; for instance, he claimed to have been a special correspondent at the Geneva Conference in 1954, which was not true. Yet Bothorel affirms that these tendencies of self-aggrandizement "stopped when he wrote his editorials." Bothorel, 14, 194.

<sup>624</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, letter to *Front National des Combattants*, 9 January 1958, UNCAFN archives, "Divers CAANAC" folder.

*d'Algérie*, resigning in “disappointment with its goals and its means.”<sup>625</sup> He must have only recently discovered that the AAA was an antiwar association seeking a negotiated peace under the leadership of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber. In any case, he could not remain in an association opposed to the war.<sup>626</sup>

But Porteu de la Morandière also sought common cause with groups fighting for French Algeria beyond the veterans’ world. In February, he joined the *Union pour le salut et le renouveau de l’Algérie française* (Union for the Salvation and Renewal of French Algeria, USRAF), a moderate civic association founded by Jacques Soustelle and Georges Bidault to raise public support for French Algeria.<sup>627</sup> One of his first actions after becoming a USRAF Executive Committee member was to write letters of support to General Raoul Salan as well as Robert Lacoste, Minister of Algeria, promising that demobilized veterans of Algeria would continue “the combat for Franco-Muslim Community in a French Algeria, in the same spirit that united us while in uniform.”<sup>628</sup> Porteu de la Morandière agreed to write occasional articles for USRAF propaganda, to speak at the association’s press conferences—primarily in Brittany, where he conducted

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<sup>625</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, letter to *Association des Anciens d’Algérie*, 9 January 1958, UNCAFN archives, “Divers CAANAC” folder.

<sup>626</sup>The closings of these letters speak volumes to Porteu de la Morandière’s feelings toward both organizations. He had signed his letter to the FNC on a note of respect and seeking to maintain ties for the future: “I renew to you the expression of my very cordial memory.” But he signed the letter to the AAA with a closing that, in French, is brusque and unsubtle almost to the point of hostility: “Sincerely.”

<sup>627</sup>General Secretariat of the USRAF, letter to François Porteu de la Morandière, 14 February 1958, UNCAFN archives, “USRAF” folder. See Chapter 5 for full discussion of the UNCAFN’s collaboration with the USRAF.

<sup>628</sup>Letter to François Porteu de la Morandière from Secrétariat Général of the USRAF, 14 February 1958, UNCAFN archives, “USRAF” folder, 14 February 1958; Letter from François Porteu de la Morandière and Jean-Yves Alquier to General Salan, 3 March 1958, UNCAFN archives, “USRAF” folder; Letter from François Porteu de la Morandière and Jean-Yves Alquier to Minister Robert Lacoste, 3 March 1958, UNCAFN archives, “USRAF” folder.

much of his business—and also to give talks on “revolutionary war” at colloquia that Jacques Soustelle organized.<sup>629</sup>

Porteu de la Morandière also raised awareness about the cause of French Algeria through the auspices of the state. In 1958, Defense Minister Chaban-Delmas asked him to “pass” as a French student to attend a seminar of international students in Norway that was discussing colonialism in Algeria, with some FLN delegates in attendance. Porteu de la Morandière, accompanied by another Frenchman and a Muslim Algerian, attempted to convince the audience in Norway of the justice of France’s fight against the FLN, while the FLN delegates defended the movement’s combat for national independence. At the end of the seminar, the Muslim student in Porteu de la Morandière’s contingent invited anyone who was not yet convinced to come to Algeria and see for themselves.

Apparently this generated a great deal of interest, for European ambassadors wrote to the French Defense Minister asking if such visits could be arranged.<sup>630</sup>

With the Defense Ministry’s aid, Porteu de la Morandière organized at least one visit of international students to Algeria in 1960.<sup>631</sup> His goals were for students to see

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<sup>629</sup>Correspondence between Simone Menut, member of the Executive Committee of the USRAF, and François Porteu de la Morandière, 28 February-25 March 1958, UNCAFN archives, “USRAF” folder; Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>630</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2015. Although I do not have documentary proof of these foreign ambassadors’ requests, I do not doubt the veracity of Porteu de la Morandière’s overall outline, as there is ample evidence to confirm that he did organize and undertake at least one trip. In the era before the French government’s official turn to a policy of decolonization, it is believable that the state would task the leader of a highly visible pro-war veterans’ association with such intelligence and propaganda missions.

<sup>631</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, form letter in English to “Dear friend” asking for confirmation of trip to Algeria between 16 and 26 August 1960, 2 August 1960, UNCAFN papers, “MRP” folder. Confirming that the students were foreigners, Porteu de la Morandière’s papers include a telegram from a Greek student who cancelled at the last minute, and a letter from a British student who has having trouble obtaining a visa in time. Kellas Anastasios, “My participation impossible,” telegram to UNCAFN headquarters, Athens, undated, UNCAFN archives, “Voyage Étudiants” folder; Brian Walsh, letter to François Porteu de la Morandière, 31 July 1960, UNCAFN archives, “Voyage Étudiants” folder.



Algerians armed to fight the FLN in so-called “self-defense villages,” to witness France’s “pacification” work in native schools and clinics staffed by specialized administrative units, and preferably to see more Muslim soldiers than French ones.<sup>632</sup> And indeed, the visit, lasting ten days, brought students on tours of Algiers to meet Algerian students and hear lectures on economic and political topics, to Hassi-Messaoud to discover France’s recent oil extraction project in the Sahara, and into the countryside to see a “self-defense village” and a school for Algerian children run by French officers.<sup>633</sup>

This project seemed to draw on a precedent set in 1959, when the French state began organizing brief visits of French university students to Algeria, to see the exploitation at Hassi-Messaoud and the work of rural administrative units, as well as sometimes the aftermath of the Battle of Algiers—including the late Ali La Pointe’s former hideout, which had been dynamited. This was an effort to raise public support for the Constantine Plan, which de Gaulle had promulgated in 1959—a last-ditch attempt to bring the kind of modern industrialization and economic development that had been lacking in Algeria since its colonization.<sup>634</sup> Although international propaganda effects are unknown, Porteu de la Morandière’s field trip had some domestic visibility, as highlights were broadcast on French national news.<sup>635</sup>

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<sup>632</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>633</sup>“Projet de programme du voyage no. 21 (Étudiants Étrangers),” not dated but written before 16 August 1960, UNCAFN archives, “Voyage Étudiants” folder. Porteu de la Morandière also claims that he allowed three Scandinavian students to try their prowess with a machine gun, and also sent them out with a unit on a night raid, after which they returned unharmed and had “completely changed” their point of view in favor of France’s mission. Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2015. I could find no documentary evidence to support these claims, but given the legal and ethical gray area in which this decision would have been made, no one was likely to have recorded this incident.

<sup>634</sup>Bantigny, 221, 223.

<sup>635</sup>“Voyage étudiants Algérie,” 31 August 1960, Journal télévisé 13h, Institut national de l’audiovisuel (INA) website, <<http://www.ina.fr/video/CAF97504735>>

A later television program featured interviews with several of the students—a Danish man, three German men, and a Canadian woman—after their return in late August 1960.<sup>636</sup> The students’ testimony was a bit superficial since the interview was not conducted in their native languages, but Porteu de la Morandière’s propaganda goals were manifest in the students’ evocations of what interested them most. A German man and the Canadian woman discussed the specialized administrative units in rural Algeria, where “above all, the officers do human work [...] helping people with administrative tasks, and all the needs of daily life,” and where “the children like learning, and learning from French people.” Another German student described the oil exploitation at Hassi-Messaoud as “very important for the French economy and all of Europe,” almost certainly parroting the thesis of a lecture that the students received.

But there was some nuance to the students’ testimony as well. The Danish student mentioned that the new housing construction in Algiers looked “more modern than any European town,” and had the benefit of reducing the unemployment rate among Algerians. But he pointed out the existence of “awful shantytowns” right behind the modern housing blocks, asking, “Why didn’t France build these new houses before the rebellion?” And one of the German students, asked to summarize the group’s experiences for the conclusion, observed that Algeria had transformed from a “battlefield into a site of reconstruction,” but expressed regret that they did not have time to discuss political questions.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>636</sup>“Interview étudiants,” Journal télévisé nuit, 31 August 1960, INA, <<http://www.ina.fr/notice/voir/CAF91063136>> The first student interviewed confirmed that the trip was arranged by the UNCAFN.

<sup>637</sup>*Idem*. Porteu de la Morandière claims that the interviewer in this television broadcast, Léon Zitron, also conducted a radio interview, in which he did not allow the students to testify on the positive aspects of

Rather than secret missions and state-funded propaganda tours, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber fought the battle on the homefront through the pages of his newspaper *l'Express*. This charismatic young journalist was variously celebrated and reviled for his activism against the war in Algeria and its excesses. He numbered among the “new Dreyfusards,” a term coined by the historian and antiwar activist Pierre Vidal-Naquet to describe liberal Republicans who opposed the war for its moral effects on France, rather than out of a fundamental critique of colonialism.<sup>638</sup> While he eventually came to feel that independence was the only solution, initially he hoped that with an intelligent policy in Algeria, France could “succeed [...] in truly associating different people and races in a common task,” which would lead to an “American-style renewal,” and a humane Republican empire.<sup>639</sup> Servan-Schreiber’s best remembered public critique of the war effort came with a short novel, *Lieutenant en Algérie*, published in 1957 by his friend René Julliard. The work originally appeared in *l'Express* in installments beginning in March 1957.<sup>640</sup>

A lightly fictionalized and cuttingly sarcastic account of Servan-Schreiber’s wartime experiences, the novel critiqued the incoherency of France’s war effort by tracing the downward spiral of violence in the revolution. For instance, it described how settlers responded to an attack by Algerian rebels with a series of lynchings, which the political authorities did little to prevent: “We just have to live with it. We get used to

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France’s work they witnessed, attempting instead to steer them to critiques of colonialism. Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>638</sup>Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 2006), 67.

<sup>639</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 25 June 1957, ed. Roussel, 233.

<sup>640</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan Schreiber, *Lieutenant en Algérie* (Paris: Julliard, 1957); Bothorel, 255.

it.”<sup>641</sup> The work reflected the confusion of the French mission of pacification in Algeria—was it to win over hearts and minds, or to destroy the FLN? Servan-Schreiber implied that France could pursue one or the other goal, but not both. Since the adversary in a guerilla war was not “marked with a cross on the forehead,” it was necessary “to round up—or kill—four or five” Algerians in order to get “one real” rebel.<sup>642</sup> This was already not a particularly flattering depiction of the French war effort.

But the second installment in *l'Express*, published on May 15, 1957, explicitly lamented French soldiers’ routine reprisals in response to “the exactions of the rebels”: “how many units, pushed all of a sudden by blind anger, give in to the worst excesses: pillage, murder, collective tortures, not to be outdone by those committed by their adversaries, and justifying all the opposition’s propaganda.”<sup>643</sup> It was not because Servan-Schreiber wished for France’s defeat in Algeria that he published these details, but because, as one of his characters explained, “the Army in Algeria has become a national taboo, to which we can only render homage. [...] We are in a vicious circle: soldiers, whose opinion on the conduct of the Army would have credibility, cannot express it; civilians, when they can speak on it, are discredited.”<sup>644</sup> Servan-Schreiber, an educated and famous civilian temporarily transformed into a soldier, was attempting to breach this taboo. But on the pretext of the word “torture,” Defense Minister Maurice Bourgès-Manoury prosecuted Servan-Schreiber and *l'Express* for “moral injury to the

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<sup>641</sup>Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant en Algérie*, 30-31.

<sup>642</sup>*Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>643</sup>*Ibid.*, 71-72.

<sup>644</sup>*Ibid.*, 69.

Army,” citing Article 76 of the penal code. For this offense, Servan-Schreiber faced ten years in prison.<sup>645</sup>

Servan-Schreiber’s trial coincided with growing public debate in France on the use of torture in Algeria. During his deployment, he had served under General Jacques Pâris de Bollardière, who would distinguish himself as the only general to have opposed the Army’s use of torture in Algeria by resigning.<sup>646</sup> A friend and supporter of the general, Servan-Schreiber published de Bollardière’s protest letter explaining his resignation in *l’Express*.<sup>647</sup> Furthermore, *Le Monde* published a letter from de Bollardière to Servan-Schreiber, which praised his work to raise awareness of “the fearful danger of our losing sight, under the fallacious pretext of immediate efficacy, of the moral values which alone have defined the greatness of our civilization and our Army.”<sup>648</sup> Thus the Defense Ministry’s pursuit of Servan-Schreiber unfolded in a larger context wherein the state had just decided to continue General Jacques Massu’s methods of severe repression used in the Battle of Algiers rather than heed General de Bollardière’s call to end torture.<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>645</sup>Bothorel, 256-257.

<sup>646</sup>General de Bollardière cited his experiences being tortured as part of his training as a Resistance fighter, and his refusal even to torture captured German soldiers, to explain why he rejected using torture in Algeria: “it degrades he who inflicts it more than he who undergoes it.” Jacques Pâris de Bollardière, *Bataille d’Alger, bataille de l’homme* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1972), 11.

<sup>647</sup>Bothorel, 240.

<sup>648</sup>General Jacques Pâris de Bollardière, letter to Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, published in *Le Monde* (30 March 1957), reproduced verbatim in Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *Passions* (Paris: Fixot, 1992), “Appendix 2.”

<sup>649</sup>Bothorel, 257.

However, Servan-Schreiber would not be cowed by the state's prosecution, and viewed his trial as yet another platform to raise public awareness of torture.<sup>650</sup> But nationalist veterans who supported the Army and its mission viewed the antiwar testimony of this rising celebrity as a threat. The French nationalist right excoriated Servan-Schreiber's engagements as defeatist if not treasonous.<sup>651</sup> In March 1958, knowing that Servan-Schreiber's case would add to the growing public conversation on torture and raise questions on the justice of France's mission, Porteu de la Morandière asked his friend Gérard Le Marec, the UNCAFN National Secretary, to help him identify some "solid guys" living in Paris who could testify that Servan-Schreiber had indeed "morally injured the Army."<sup>652</sup> Eventually, the Army's case against Servan-Schreiber was dismissed, perhaps because the state wished to cease fueling the public polemic over torture.<sup>653</sup> But the debate over the conduct of the French Army and its mission in Algeria translated into a heated personal rivalry between the two association founders, although Porteu de la Morandière seems to have been more preoccupied with Servan-Schreiber than vice versa.

In the summer of 1959, Porteu de la Morandière and several colleagues attended a public information session hosted by the FNACA Committee of Saint-Denis, a working-class suburb outside Paris. Appalled by the antiwar themes of the meeting—which he

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<sup>650</sup>Bothorel, 259.

<sup>651</sup>*Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>652</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, letter to Gérard le Marec, 1 March 1958, UNCAFN archives, "USRAF" folder. I have been unable to find confirmation that UNCAFN members did indeed testify for the prosecution, but it is likely that they did, given the association's favor with the Defense Ministry in this period, as well as the nationalist respectability of the UNCAFN and its parent UNC.

<sup>653</sup>"M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes," *Le Monde* (30 May 1974): 4.

interpreted as “Peace in Algeria, the atrocities of the Army, France at war against the Algerian people, etc.”—Porteu de la Morandière stepped to the microphone to call Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber a liar. He explained the reasons to be proud of the Army and its combat, including the 120,000 Algerian soldiers and auxiliaries fighting for France. Ignoring the threatening noises emanating from the audience, the anti-Communist veteran asked the anti-fascist veteran if he was “ashamed to have used [his] writing to smear comrades who could not respond because they were still in uniform.”<sup>654</sup> The FNACA decried the UNCAFN’s repeated “aggressions,” and used them to boost its profile—for instance, mentioning without surprise that members of the association had once again “savagely attacked” President Servan-Schreiber during a meeting in Lyon later the same year.<sup>655</sup>

These men’s wartime engagements made them highly visible public figures in France. In 1960, during the military trial of Francis Jeanson, the head of a network of French activists who collected money and forged documents for the FLN, Servan-Schreiber’s newspaper was seized by the state for “inciting desertion” by simply reporting on Jeanson’s trial, as well as a secret press conference that Jeanson had held.<sup>656</sup> In the eyes of the state, Servan-Schreiber and his newspaper were guilty by association, even though he had on numerous occasions refused to support desertion, and condemned aid to the FLN. And in the increasingly divisive battle on the homefront, nationalists who

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<sup>654</sup>“Soirée scandaleuse à Saint-Denis,” *Djebel* 9 (July-August 1959): 2.

<sup>655</sup>Samuel Margolinas, “Agir de façon efficace pour la Paix en Algérie,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 4 (November 196): 2. Because of the delightful imprecision of the French language, it is impossible to determine whether the “savage attack” was a physical or verbal aggression, but it was likely only verbal, as Servan-Schreiber did not file charges against Porteu de la Morandière or it certainly would have been noted in the FNACA’s newspaper.

<sup>656</sup>Bothorel, 281.

supported French Algeria felt that either one could support the Army unconditionally, or one could support the FLN; there was no room for nuance.<sup>657</sup> François Porteu de la Morandière organized a brief silent demonstration in front of the military tribunal building in Paris where the trial was being held, to protest testimony for the defense that had criticized the action of the French Army and justified that of the FLN.<sup>658</sup> He invited numerous nationalist veterans' associations allied with the UNCAFN and UNC.<sup>659</sup>

Throughout the war, both men navigated the increasingly slim margin between anti-Gaullism and anti-Communism, although their political priorities meant that they would never recognize each other as potential allies. While Servan-Schreiber opposed the Fifth Republic from its birth, Porteu de la Morandière tactically allied with Gaullists in 1958 toward the cause of “saving” French Algeria. He organized a march in Paris on May 13, 1958 to call for the return of General de Gaulle to power, whereas Servan-Schreiber joined the anti-Gaullist protest “For the defense of the Republic” from *Nation* to *République* in Paris on May 28.<sup>660</sup> In Servan-Schreiber’s view, de Gaulle’s return on the wings of an orchestrated military coup was the “original sin” of the Fifth Republic, foretelling authoritarianism and perhaps even fascism.<sup>661</sup> He felt that part of the mission of *l’Express* in the 1960s was to “gather the men who will form the team that will

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<sup>657</sup>Bothorel, 281.

<sup>658</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, carbon copy of form letter to “My dear comrade,” 22 September 1960, UNCAFN archives, “Proposition de loi” folder.

<sup>659</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, carbon copy of form letter to “Dear Mister President,” 22 September 1960, UNCAFN archives, “Proposition de loi” folder.

<sup>660</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée, à 18h.30, Place de l’Étoile,” Paris Police Prefecture Archives, F<sub>d</sub>, carton 4, “Manifestation des CAANAC le 13 mai 1958” folder, 13 May 1958; Bothorel, 273.

<sup>661</sup>Bothorel, 270.



succeed de Gaulle.”<sup>662</sup> One concrete project toward this end was the launch in *l'Express* of a presidential campaign for “Mister X” in 1965, later revealed to be the Socialist Gaston Defferre, in an ultimately vain attempt to regroup the non-Communist left and some of the center.<sup>663</sup> Servan-Schreiber celebrated de Gaulle’s departure in 1969, but would remain anti-Communist his whole life.<sup>664</sup> And Porteu de la Morandière would definitively lose his illusions about Gaullism by 1961, when the government’s new policy of decolonization became clear.<sup>665</sup>

Finally, both men entered national politics after their engagements with veterans’ associations, and their understandings of the Algerian War would inform their political visions for France. Servan-Schreiber considered himself a “political man” above all, and claimed that he had only used journalism as an entry into national politics.<sup>666</sup> He had been a “trusted advisor” and supporter of Pierre Mendès-France in his attempts to revitalize the Radical party, and had founded *l'Express* a little over two weeks before Mendès-France was seated as Prime Minister in 1953.<sup>667</sup> Servan-Schreiber’s first electoral attempt was in January 1957, as a legislative candidate in Paris, but the Radical party rejected his candidature.<sup>668</sup> In 1962, he lost a campaign to represent a district of the Seine-Maritime in the second round to the Gaullist candidate.

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<sup>662</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 26 February 1963, ed. Roussel, 293.

<sup>663</sup>Roussel, 261, 294.

<sup>664</sup>Bothorel, 92, 161, 269.

<sup>665</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>666</sup>Vaugy, 44.

<sup>667</sup>“M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes,” 4.

<sup>668</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 9 December 1956, ed. Roussel, 200.

After the above-mentioned failed campaign of “Mister X” in 1965, Servan-Schreiber became more seriously interested in the reform of political institutions themselves. He saluted what he called “the awakening of France” that he perceived in the nationwide revolts of summer 1968, and celebrated the final referendum after which de Gaulle left power in 1969.<sup>669</sup> He rose to Secretary-General of the Radical party in 1969, and was elected a Radical deputy representing Nancy in 1970. That year, he also stood as a mayoral candidate in Bordeaux, but failed in his attempt to unseat current Prime Minister Jean-Jacques Chaban-Delmas. From 1971 to 1979, Servan-Schreiber, now the President of the Radical party, attempted to “renew this old formation,” which he had desired since his time in the Algerian War.<sup>670</sup>

At the Radical party Congress of 14-15 February 1970, Servan-Schreiber presented a manifesto called “Heaven and Earth” with which he hoped to reinvigorate the party, and propose an ambitious reorganization of the French economy and political life. The first plank in the Radical manifesto called for the “separation of political and economic power.” This implied ending the practice of “artificial and ruinous state aid” to private companies, and channeling those funds to create “economic security” for citizens who had been sidelined by economic development.<sup>671</sup> The second plank emphasized access to “social equality,” beginning with a reform of education to encourage civic and cultural formation in the home, even before formal schooling began.<sup>672</sup> Instead of

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<sup>669</sup>“M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes,” 4.

<sup>670</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>671</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and Michel Albert, *Ciel et terre: manifeste radical* (Paris: Denoël, 1970), 68.

<sup>672</sup>*Idem.*

“consolidating” social privileges, Servan-Schreiber hoped to use education to “attack the roots of social inequality.”<sup>673</sup> Building social equality also implied, in his view, the replacement of obligatory national military service with a “civil, economic, pedagogical, and social” service, as well as ending the system of the higher education networks (“*Grandes Écoles*”) and civil service exams (“*Concours*”) that concentrated political power in a tiny bureaucratic elite (“*Grands Corps*”).<sup>674</sup>

Third, the manifesto sought to abolish “private hereditary power,” proposing to increase social mobility and encourage the competitiveness of private companies by ending the “hereditary possession of the instruments of production.” Servan-Schreiber claimed that with the proper legislation, this could be accomplished in one generation.<sup>675</sup> Finally, Servan-Schreiber urged the “redistribution of public power,” arguing that France’s system of centralized, national politics no longer corresponded with economic realities. Between rising multinational corporations, who “establish their planetary empire beyond national political powers,” and the strictures of the “thick bureaucratic hierarchy” in France, ordinary citizens had less and less control over the decisions that affected them most directly.<sup>676</sup> He proposed opening more spheres of politics to universal suffrage, “from small units (town or village), all the way to the European federation.”<sup>677</sup> Servan-Schreiber’s political platform revealed the paradox of his aspirations for France: privileged by a bourgeois background that allowed his entry into politics to begin with,

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<sup>673</sup>Servan-Schreiber and Albert, 69.

<sup>674</sup>*Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>675</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>676</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>677</sup>*Idem.*

he sought to break the hold of the bourgeoisie on French political life.<sup>678</sup> And the Radical party unanimously approved his manifesto.<sup>679</sup>

As head of the Radical party, Servan-Schreiber attempted to strategically reorganize the political landscape by gathering Socialists with moderate centrists. But the Socialists, under the leadership of François Mitterrand, refused this alliance, feeling it was their negotiation and alliance with the Communist party that gave them strength.<sup>680</sup> In the legislative elections of 1973, Servan-Schreiber's centrist grouping won only 34 seats. Showing his political orientation was more to the left than his strategic centrist positioning suggested, Servan-Schreiber only endorsed Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's presidential run three days before the election in May 1974.<sup>681</sup> However, he briefly served as Minister of Reforms in Jacques Chirac's first cabinet under Giscard, leaving after a week due to his outspoken opposition to upcoming nuclear testing.<sup>682</sup> Chirac and Servan-Schreiber were the first veterans of Algeria to serve in national government. 1974 marked the end of Servan-Schreiber's formal political career, although he would continue to figure in national debates on many topics including nuclear power, the Concorde, and France's need to embrace information technology.

Proceeding on a different timeline, Porteu de la Morandière remained at the helm of his association for twenty-seven years, attempting to inculcate civic values and the taste for political engagement in his members, as discussed in Chapter 2. Although he did

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<sup>678</sup>“M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes,” 4.

<sup>679</sup>Vaugy, 172.

<sup>680</sup>“M. J-J Servan-Schreiber: un réformateur aux réformes,” 4.

<sup>681</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>682</sup>Roussel, 330.

not enter national party politics until the 1980s, he began formulating a political vision for France as soon as he observed the government's shift toward decolonization. In January 1961, de Gaulle's referendum on Algerian self-determination was put to the country, and Porteu de la Morandière wrote an enraged manifesto in response. In July, he published a book speaking for the nationalist veterans who, "returning from the *djebels*, lean and hardened, [...] saw the bourgeois country from which we came, and [...] wanted to bite."<sup>683</sup> Drawing on the traditional right wing critique of French society as decadent, he insisted that the Algerian revolution was preying on "the weakness of our institutions, of our faith, and of our energy."<sup>684</sup> Porteu de la Morandière criticized his country's lack of ideological commitment to Algeria, which he felt had handicapped France's combat against the FLN: "Down there we came to understand the superiority of those who believe in something over those who do not believe in anything, and we returned to a country that believes in nothing."<sup>685</sup>

Porteu de la Morandière's diagnosis of France also drew on the traditional right-wing critique of parliamentary politics, calling "the mechanism of French domestic politics [...] indisputably dead," since the most important political forces were outside of

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<sup>683</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, *La Révolution en sursis: vers une République à trois ordres* (Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, 1961), 182. Porteu de la Morandière recalls that he published this book intending to distribute it through the UNC, which never happened. He is dismissive of the book now, calling it "of no interest" at all, and expressed amusement that I had even read it. He says that he destroyed all the copies he had, feeling his work was inadequate because he was young and rushed and simply "wanted to say something." But this suggests the book's importance as a record of the political testimony of an idealistic and angry young veteran, rather than the octagenarian he is today. Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2015.

<sup>684</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *La Révolution en sursis*, 181.

<sup>685</sup>*Ibid.*, 185.

Parliament, and political parties offered nothing to men under the age of forty.<sup>686</sup> He desired to rid France of “its old notions and traditions such as the right and the left which are now [only] social signifiers [...]” The shifting political sands of the Algerian War had taught him that these labels had lost their political meaning, since one could be a Socialist and oppose independence, or one could be a right wing Gaullist and support independence.<sup>687</sup> Porteu de la Morandière described his vision for France as “neither a monarchy nor a dictatorship, but a Republic that is democratic and simply rejuvenated.”<sup>688</sup> He explained that he was proposing the very “political reconstruction from the ground up” that veterans of Algeria had expected but not received from de Gaulle’s Fifth Republic.<sup>689</sup> Expressing the worldview born of his wealthy and noble background, he suggested that “it is not harmful to equality to help define a moral and national hierarchy.” And, in his view, the group best prepared to form the country’s new “civic elite” were veterans, as long as they had not been distracted from their national duty with either militant goals or a myopic fixation on commemoration.<sup>690</sup>

Porteu de la Morandière proposed a model for a tripartite Parliament, consisting of a nationally elected political assembly combined with two apolitical structures—a “pyramid of territorial representation from the town to the national level,” and a “corporate” body to represent voters through affiliations of religion, family, intellectual

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<sup>686</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *La Révolution en sursis*, 58.

<sup>687</sup>*Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>688</sup>*Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>689</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>690</sup>*Ibid.*, 73, 158.

tradition, and social class.<sup>691</sup> This corporatism clearly harkened back to the model of the Vichy state. Rejecting what he perceived as the institutionalization of demagoguery, Porteu de la Morandière advocated ending the presidential regime, but maintaining universal suffrage, so that citizens voted more often and were better represented by the three corporate bodies he proposed.<sup>692</sup> While defending private property as “one of man’s most profound instincts,” and decrying the estate tax as “having no justification other than its profitability for the state,” Porteu de la Morandière declared that “capitalism is dead,” since it “constituted a materialist oppression almost as strong as that of the Communist world.”<sup>693</sup> He envisioned the “very delicate balance” of a “Western economy with a socialist coloration” as France’s best economic path.<sup>694</sup>

Porteu de la Morandière advocated decentralization “in the framework of a certain regionalism.”<sup>695</sup> And he included Algeria in his vision of a renewed France, writing that “Islam must be able to make its voice heard” in the corporate structure of government. He even allowed that Algeria could vote for independence if it wished, but affirmed that under his plan, there would be no need for this separation, since the country’s “personality” would be “perfectly expressed on the regional level.”<sup>696</sup> He reveals his perspective as an anti-Communist Cold Warrior with his description of democracy as “a

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<sup>691</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *La Révolution en sursis*, 146, 151, 105.

<sup>692</sup>*Ibid.*, 167, 122.

<sup>693</sup>*Ibid.*, 123, 113, 125.

<sup>694</sup>*Ibid.*, 125-126.

<sup>695</sup>*Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>696</sup>*Ibid.*, 177, 179.

certain Christian and Western conception of man, far beyond the political use of votes.”<sup>697</sup>

Although he was not a believer, and always considered himself a “man of the left,” Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber ended up sharing a surprising number of political critiques with Porteu de la Morandière.<sup>698</sup> He did not make the Algerian War the center of his political discourse, as pro-French Algeria politicians tended to do, but the war remained an important frame of reference. In 1970, addressing the Radical party in Nancy as a newly elected deputy, he used the discourse of the Algerian War to promote political decentralization. If the state would not negotiate with local forces and cede enough power, he foresaw Frenchmen turning into “*fellaghas*”—the Arabic word for “peasant” had become a common shorthand for FLN fighters during the war. Servan-Schreiber decried the power and omnipresence of representatives of the State, who gave him “the impression that we are in the colonies.” He continued that “Colonial war is now in France. [...] We must encourage the French to take the power where they are, before we end up with guerilla warfare. This is the new French revolution, without violence, or destruction, or purges.”<sup>699</sup>

Against the excessive centralization of French politics and its domination by the *mandarinat*, a tiny minority of bourgeois educated in exclusive schools such as the *École nationale d’administration*, Servan-Schreiber proposed “the right to political life for the

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<sup>697</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *La Révolution en sursis*, 130.

<sup>698</sup>Vaugy, 93.

<sup>699</sup>“À Nancy, devant les radicaux de l’Est, M. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber appelle à la conquête du pouvoir régional,” *Le Monde* (17 November 1970): 9.



whole of the population, and political participation in the broadest sense of the term.”<sup>700</sup> Servan-Schreiber, like Porteu de la Morandière a decade earlier, criticized what he perceived as an ossified democracy in France. They both lamented the “crisis of parties” or the death of “the mechanism of French domestic politics” during the war, blaming the quagmire of parliamentary maneuvering for France’s inability to lead a coherent policy in Algeria.<sup>701</sup>

But their proposed solutions to this political stalemate were quite different. Porteu de la Morandière sought to depoliticize public life by corporate representation and the creation of a new elite, evidenced by his efforts to encourage civic engagement among UNCAFN members, and his eventual tenure as a National Front politician. He feels that he has been successful in “constructing a useful force for our country, making the ‘generation of the *djebels*’ fully enter into French associational life.”<sup>702</sup> And he cites the UNCAFN’s “training of numerous local elected officials” as an example of “concrete civism.”<sup>703</sup> Servan-Schreiber, however, sought to break the traditional hold of the elite on politics by introducing as many citizens as possible to political life. In 1971, he explained that he would consider his political mission accomplished if he succeeded in having inspired “a great number of men and women to politics who can themselves, together, in

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<sup>700</sup>Vaugy, 94.

<sup>701</sup>Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, letter to Pierre Mendès-France, 25 June 1957, ed. Roussel, 231; Porteu de la Morandière, *La Révolution en sursis*, 58.

<sup>702</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!*, 5.

<sup>703</sup>*Ibid.*, 6.

a team, with me or without me, achieve this new democracy that we are attempting to create [...].”<sup>704</sup>

The life paths of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and François Porteu de la Morandière demonstrate how the war radicalized educated veterans and informed their political engagement in the Fifth Republic. Veteran identity was central to Porteu de la Morandière’s self-concept and political ambitions, both because he was younger during his military service, and because he believed in his mission, making it a strongly formative experience. He became the Honorary General President of the UNC after its fusion with the UNCAFN, and this title remains important to how he presents himself to the world.<sup>705</sup> But for Servan-Schreiber, who had distinguished himself as an intellectual leader before Algeria—a political man who took up journalism as a way to enter the national discussion—the important experience seems to be his critiques of the war and the consequences of his engagement, rather than his identity as a veteran.

Servan-Schreiber quit the presidency of his veterans’ association in 1965, and the FNACA distanced itself somewhat from his legacy, in part because it sought to present itself as apolitical after the war, which it certainly was not under his leadership.<sup>706</sup> He had assembled the Federation in order to press for a negotiated end to the war. After 1962, he was not thoroughly involved in the “life of the association,” focused on his work for *l’Express* as well as his nascent political career.<sup>707</sup> In 1965, he handed over the reins to

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<sup>704</sup>Jean-Claude Vajou, *JJSS par JJSS*, 78.

<sup>705</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, calling card, December 2014.

<sup>706</sup>Michel Sabourdy, interview, Paris, 11 May 2014.

<sup>707</sup>*Idem.*; Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur côtisation! Témoignages sur Maurice Sicart* (Paris: FNACA de Paris, 2008), 77.

former Seine Committee President Jacques de Jæger on the condition that the Federation “retain its independence and never fall into the hands of a political party.”<sup>708</sup> He did, however, attend the fortieth anniversary celebration of the FNACA’s foundation in 1998, in the same building where it was federated in 1958, at the *Place de la République*.<sup>709</sup> By this time, he was already suffering from a degenerative disease, and he died in 2006. Although Servan-Schreiber is recognized for his profuse public engagements in French political life from the 1950s through the 1980s, his contribution in founding what would grow to be the largest national association for veterans of Algeria in France has gone almost completely uncommented to this day.<sup>710</sup>

Of these two pioneers of the Algerian War veterans’ movement, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber was by far the better known. In the 1960s and 1970s, between 75 and 80 percent of the public could identify him—rivaling only the fame of Charles de Gaulle—and he often went by his initials, JJSS, in imitation of John F. Kennedy.<sup>711</sup> But both men had equally weighty impacts on the Algerian generation, and French politics in general. Along with inspiring the creation of what became the largest association in the

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<sup>708</sup>“Le Bureau national de la FNACA,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 29 (July-August 1965): 5; Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur cõtisation!*, 77.

<sup>709</sup>Sabourdy, interview. As a sign of the infiltration of multinational capitalism into France, what had been the *Hôtel Moderne* in 1958 had become a Holiday Inn by 1998.

<sup>710</sup>The FNACA’s membership peaked at around 300,000 in the 1980s, while the UNCAFN had 257,000 members. By the close of the 1980s, out of all veterans of Algeria who were members of an association, the FNACA had a plurality of 40%. Frédéric Rouyard, “La bataille du 19 mars,” 545-552 in ed. Rioux, 544, 546.

Jean Bothorel, who wrote the authorized biography of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber with the cooperation of his family, and received access to Servan-Schreiber’s personal archives, did not once mention or even hint at the veterans’ association that he founded, although he devoted many pages to Servan-Schreiber’s antiwar engagements.

<sup>711</sup>Bothorel, 11.

Algerian War veterans' movement, Servan-Schreiber validated progressive, modernizing opinions in *l'Express*, and attempted to rebuild a non-Communist liberal center by revitalizing the Radical party. And Porteu de la Morandière, through his example of pro-war activism and his cultivation of an anti-Gaullist and pro-French Algeria memory through the UNCAFN, helped introduce a generation of nationalist veterans to politics—indirectly fueling the rise of the National Front, as discussed in Chapter 2.

They had both served as leaders of men during the dramatic escalation of the Algerian War in 1956-57, and they learned the importance of public opinion to the outcome of France's war effort. After their service in Algeria, both veterans sought to reorganize French democracy in order to fight the weaknesses that they believed had caused France's predicament in the war. Military service did not lead either François Porteu de la Morandière or Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber to deviate from the political orientations acquired during their youth—Catholic-informed anti-Communism and anti-fascist Republicanism—but these orientations, combined with their Algerian experiences, gave them the frame of reference for a political vision for France with deeply personal significance. This comparative political biography underscores the disproportionate impact that the older, more educated, and politically experienced leaders of the Algerian War veterans' movement had on the shape and aims of their associations. Chapter 4 provides a comparative institutional history of the two associations that these men formed after their own images.

## CHAPTER 4: RIGHTS VERSUS DUTY: ORGANIZING CITIZENS IN ALGERIAN WAR VETERANS' ASSOCIATIONS

Almost a decade after the end of the Algerian War, the two main French associations for veterans of the war were still engaged in combat—with each other. In 1971, the nationalist UNCAFN compared its competitor to the envious frog in La Fontaine's fable, who puffed itself up hoping to become as big as a bull.<sup>712</sup> In response, the left-wing FNACA proclaimed itself “the permanent nightmare” of its rival, which was little better than a “phantom” association anyway.<sup>713</sup> This was only one of many hostile exchanges that these two associations traded over the years. Since the late 1950s, both organizations had campaigned for the moral and material rights of veterans of Algeria in France. But the contest to speak for the “Algerian generation” was so heated because the two warring associations represented fundamentally opposed conceptions of veterans and their relationship with society. The Algerian War was the last time that France sent conscripts into battle in the twentieth century, and the war between these two veterans' associations presents a debate in microcosm over the nature of French citizenship and the meaning of military service.

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<sup>712</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “La grenouille et le bœuf,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1364 (March 1971): 8.

<sup>713</sup>“Tartuffe ou Basile?” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 87 (October 1971): 9.

During the war itself, two main associations competed to speak for veterans of the “war without a name.” The nationalist UNCAFN was founded by conservative veterans and backed by prominent politicians to support the war effort. The left-leaning FNACA was created by conscripts and reservists who opposed the war. How did the FNACA, impoverished and isolated at its creation, manage by the early 1970s to pose a threat to its rival UNCAFN, which had the initial advantage of far greater funding, political access, and prestige? This chapter examines the institutional characteristics of both associations—their foundation, political culture, recruitment, and organizing tactics—to determine why the FNACA was able to grow much more successfully than the UNCAFN.

Associational life was a central feature of French civil society through the twentieth century, but the history of the Algerian War veterans’ movement has not been written.<sup>714</sup> The World War I veterans’ movement set the example for all subsequent attempts to group veterans in France. Antoine Prost, himself a veteran of Algeria, depicts the World War I veterans’ movement as the bulwark against fascism in interwar France, arguing that veterans’ principle role in society was as moral witnesses.<sup>715</sup> The veterans of World War I also established the “fetish” of the veterans’ card in 1926, which extended material benefits such as loans, priority medical care, and a pension.<sup>716</sup>

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<sup>714</sup>Serge Barcellini, “Réflexions sur les associations Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre,” 25-33 in dir. Bruno Benoît and Marc Frangi, *Guerres et associations: actes du colloque de Lyon, 29 septembre 2001* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2003): 28.

<sup>715</sup>See especially Chapter 4 of Antoine Prost, *Les Anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939* vol. 3, *Mentalités et idéologies* (Paris: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977), 121-185.

<sup>716</sup>Pieter Lagrou, *Legacy of Nazi occupation: Patriotic memory and national recovery in western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 41.

But several obstacles prevented the generation of Algerian War veterans from simply adopting wholesale the precedent of the veterans' movement established by their grandfathers. As discussed in Chapter 2, the memorial politics of Charles de Gaulle after World War II discouraged "the cult of veteranism as a social movement." More specific to the Algerian generation, however, since Algeria had been administered as French territory, the state refused to acknowledge that Algeria had been a war.<sup>717</sup> Since there had been no war, there could be no veterans—only individuals who had fulfilled their national military service in an overseas department, and professional soldiers who had also happened to serve in North Africa. Veterans fought for years to force the state to recognize them officially, which only occurred in 1974. In view of the state's long reluctance to acknowledge these veterans and their war, a close study of the competing associations aiming for official recognition will help us understand how the interest-group of veterans of Algeria "was constituted in regard to public authorities."<sup>718</sup>

Even at their height, veterans' associations represented a small fraction of all of the soldiers who served in North Africa between 1954 and 1962. Many veterans did not develop the "veterans' syndrome," because they did not feel themselves the equals of the archetypal World War I veterans, or because they preferred to leave the past behind and did not wish to associate with other former soldiers.<sup>719</sup> It appears that veterans often joined associations after state recognition in 1974 in order to receive benefits, but

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<sup>717</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 42.

<sup>718</sup>This is one of the lines of inquiry into the history of veterans of Algeria proposed by Raphaëlle Branche in "La dernière génération du feu? Jalons pour une étude des anciens combattants français de la guerre d'Algérie," *Histoire@Politique*, Politique culture, société 3 no. 3 (November-December 2007): 6, doi: 10.3917/hp/003.0006.

<sup>719</sup>Isabelle Maury, *L'empreinte de la guerre: paroles d'appelés en Algérie* (Paris: J. C. Lattès, 2012), 63.

neglected their membership obligations.<sup>720</sup> But examining the veterans' movement before the period when material benefits served as an inducement allows us to understand how the two associations seeking veterans' recognition rallied competing images of veterans to further their cause.

Because silence was inscribed into the Algerian War from its beginning, the reservists, draftees, and professional soldiers who returned to France were met with attitudes ranging from indifference to disdain.<sup>721</sup> To fight feelings of isolation and neglect, but also to promote a certain vision of the war they had fought, veterans assembled small clubs and groups, which would coalesce into a confrontation of two major associations, both of whom claimed to speak for the Algerian generation.<sup>722</sup> The FNACA and the UNCAFN represented two mutually exclusive narratives of the Algerian war. But, as we will see, the associations also reflected clashing interpretations of the legacy of the World War I veterans' movement, which had led veterans to expect material benefits as a right, but which also consecrated veterans' political engagement as a duty.<sup>723</sup>

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<sup>720</sup>Claire Mauss-Copeaux, *Appelés en Algérie: la parole confisquée* (Paris: Hachette, 1998), 47.

<sup>721</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Appelés en guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 13.

<sup>722</sup>The scattered nature of early efforts to organize veterans of Algeria, and the eventual emergence of two opposing nationwide factions, followed the pattern of the veterans' movement of World War I. The centralized, right-wing nationalist *Union nationale des combattants* (UNC) inspired the UNCAFN, just as the decentralized center-left *Union fédérale* (UF) provided a model for the FNACA. Antoine Prost, *Les Anciens combattants et la société française* vol. I, *Histoire*, 59, 43. However, a major difference in the Algerian veterans' movement is that only a small minority rather than the "immense majority" of veterans joined either faction, although military service was an almost universal experience for each respective generation. Prost, vol. I, 111.

<sup>723</sup>Prost writes that by 1927, the veterans' movement came to define having served in war "as a title of nobility [...] which gave the right not only to obtain legitimate reparations, but to intervene positively in public affairs." *Les Anciens combattants et la société française* vol. I, *Histoire* (Paris: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977), 111.



The UNCAFN was born in 1957 of two parallel attempts to organize nationalist veterans of Algeria with the support of military and political elites. The *Union Nationale des Combattants* (National Union of Soldiers, UNC) had been created by Father Daniel Brottier and other Catholic militants in 1918, with financial support from Georges Clemenceau.<sup>724</sup> The association became a conservative national force in favor of “consolidating the social order,” for which it would earn the respect of the government.<sup>725</sup> As the rebellion in Algeria grew, the UNC urged returning veterans to join its ranks; one of its young recruits insisted in an appeal to his comrades, “this association, already old and experienced, [...] will offer us excellent guidance.”<sup>726</sup>

Members of the UNC created the *Comité des rappelés d’Afrique du Nord* (Committee of Reservists Deployed in North Africa) in late 1956, under the presidency of Gérard Le Marec.<sup>727</sup> He hoped to “rejuvenate” the UNC with the energy of young veterans, and in its first month of existence, the filial gained almost five thousand recruits.<sup>728</sup> But veterans of the World Wars still dominated the association, figuratively and numerically; veterans of Algeria were often uninterested in joining, or felt

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<sup>724</sup>Prost, vol I., 59.

<sup>725</sup>Prost, vol I, 58. Members of the UNC frequently numbered in the government; for instance, at the start of the Algerian War, both President René Coty and Minister of Veterans Antoine Quinson were members of the association, as was the first Veterans’ Minister of the Fifth Republic, Raymond Triboulet. Photo caption, *La Voix du Combattant* 1233 (5 January 1956), 2; Photo caption, *La Voix du Combattant* 1235 (5 March 1958), 1; “Impressions d’Algérie,” *La Voix du combattant* 1265 (March 1961): 1.

<sup>726</sup>Henri Bohly, “À ceux qui rentrent d’Afrique du Nord,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1222 (1 January 1957): 1.

<sup>727</sup>“Activités des anciens combattants d’AFN de l’UNC,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1224 (15 February 1957): 2; “Comité des rappelés d’Afrique du Nord,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1222 (1 January 1957): 4. The name of this group referred to the fact that the first veterans of Algeria were young reservists who had already fulfilled their national military service elsewhere, but had been remobilized to serve in Algeria. The name would eventually be changed to the *Comité des anciens d’Afrique du Nord de l’UNC* (Committee of Veterans of North Africa of the UNC), as conscripts and career soldiers also joined.

<sup>728</sup>“Quatre générations du feu,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1228 (15 June 1957): 3.

unwelcome. The leaders of the Committee wondered how to recruit more of the Algerian generation: “If the Veterans of Algeria do not come to us, we must go to them, convince them, tear them away from their indifference.”<sup>729</sup>

At the same time that young recruits to the UNC were forming their Committee, nationalist veterans built an external association with high-level government support. Early in 1957, veteran reservist François Porteu de la Morandière met with friends and colleagues, all recently returned from the war, to discuss how to defend the dignity of the troops and support their cause. One of his former university classmates, the veteran paratrooper Jean-Marie Le Pen, proposed forming a new political party, but the idea did not raise much interest, and the meeting ended without a clear resolution.<sup>730</sup> Another of Porteu de la Morandière’s former classmates and friends, Jean-Yves Alquier, was soon convened to a meeting with Defense Minister Jean-Jacques Chaban-Delmas. The Minister said that he appreciated Alquier’s recent book defending the success of the war effort, and he encouraged the young veteran to create a national organization in support of French Algeria.<sup>731</sup>

Accordingly, in a room at the Palais d’Orsay in December 1957, Porteu de la Morandière, Le Marec, Henri Bohly, and J. Merlin announced the formation of the *Union nationale des combattants d’Afrique du Nord*, which enfolded the UNC’s Committee of Veterans of North Africa, existing regimental associations, and Porteu de la Morandière’s newly chartered but inactive *Association des décorés de la valeur militaire* (Association

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<sup>729</sup>Hervé Trnka, “AFN: Premier anniversaire,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1231 (15 October 1957): 2.

<sup>730</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014. Le Pen would eventually found the short-lived *Front national des combattants* (FNC) political party before the war’s end.

<sup>731</sup>Jean-Yves Alquier, *Nous avons pacifié Tazalt: journal de marche d’un officier parachutiste rappelé en Algérie* (Paris: Laffont, 1957).

of those Decorated for Military Valor).<sup>732</sup> In June of the next year, a separate far right veterans' group, *Ceux d'Algérie* (Those of Algeria), would also merge with the UNCAFN.<sup>733</sup> Alquier's employers at the French Petrol Company soon pressured him to step down as President of the association, as it seemed a conflict of interest for him to defend the war in Algeria, since oil had recently been discovered in the Sahara.

Defense Minister Chaban-Delmas then pushed Porteu de la Morandière to assume the presidency, promising him logistical aid and funds.<sup>734</sup> He accepted with hesitation, but would hold this post uncontested for almost thirty years.<sup>735</sup> The new UNCAFN president discovered a "marvelous" supporter in UNC President Alexis Thomas, but the UNC headquarters did not initially have space for UNCAFN leaders to meet.<sup>736</sup> So Porteu de la Morandière sought help from the former Governor-General of Algeria, Jacques Soustelle, who offered the UNCAFN a rent-free apartment in Paris for its headquarters as well its first permanent employee.<sup>737</sup> The UNCAFN was thus born of private contacts between conservative veterans and political elites.

The UNCAFN's aims expressed the military pride, nationalism, and imperial worldview of its founders. The association sought foremost to "continue the combat for

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<sup>732</sup> "Regroupement des associations," UNCFN archives, "Divers" folder, undated communiqué draft; Gérard Le Marec, "Plus d'équivoque: UNC-AFN," *La Voix du Combattant* 1234 (5 February 1958): 1; "Une Union nationale des combattants d'Afrique du Nord," *Le Monde* 14 December 1957, 6.

<sup>733</sup> François Porteu de la Morandière, transcribed speech, "Congrès séance du matin," UNCAFN archives, 6 July 1958, 1.

<sup>734</sup> François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>735</sup> Conversation with Marité Gaudéfroy, Secretary for the Executive Committee of the UNC/UNCAFN since the 1970s, 12 November 2013.

<sup>736</sup> Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>737</sup> *Idem.*

Franco-Muslim Community in French Algeria, in the same spirit that united us while in uniform.”<sup>738</sup> Other aims included “strengthening the ties between veterans of North Africa,” and “the defense of material and moral interests of all those who fought in North Africa: mutual aid in all its forms [...]”<sup>739</sup> The association was founded just after the end of the Battle of Algiers in 1957, and during the high-water mark of support for French Algeria, so the UNCAFN began from a position of confidence that the war in Algeria was winnable.<sup>740</sup>

By comparison, the foundation of the FNACA in 1958 was hardscrabble, illustrating the fragmented state of the antiwar position at this point, and the challenges facing a movement that lacked establishment ties. This association also resulted from several smaller groups, whose grassroots nature and collectivist vision would determine the political culture of the FNACA. The left-Socialist *Groupement des Rappelés et Maintenus* (Grouping of Reservists and Soldiers Deployed Beyond the Legal Limit, GRM), created in late 1956, was formed to testify against torture and atrocities occurring in Algeria, and to save “the hundreds of thousands of young Frenchmen exposed to racism and violence” from manipulation by “official veterans’ associations steered by civil and military authorities.”<sup>741</sup> The *Association des Anciens d’Algérie* (Association of Veterans of Algeria, AAA), founded in early 1957 by left Catholics and Radicals and

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<sup>738</sup>Jean-Yves Alquier, “Pourquoi?” *Djebel* 1 (March 1958): 2.

<sup>739</sup>“Ce qu’est l’Union Nationale des Combattants,” *Djebel* 1 (March 1958): 4.

<sup>740</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Le mystère de Gaule: son choix pour l’Algérie* (Paris: Laffont, 2009), 182.

<sup>741</sup>Paul Bebiesse, “Notre Congrès: Rapport des Bureaux Nationaux présenté au Congrès,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (December 1958): 2; Georges Mattei, “Le Groupement des rappelés et maintenus,” *Fédération Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie: Bulletin de Liaison de la Commission Constitutive*, BNF, 4-JO-13704, 3.

counting members from “all classes of society,” opposed the continuation of the war.<sup>742</sup> Finally, the *Association Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie* (National Association of Veterans of Algeria, ANAA), a grouping of Communist veterans formed in early 1958, lobbied energetically for veterans’ rights and peace in Algeria.<sup>743</sup> On September 21, 1958, at the Hôtel Moderne in Paris, near the *Place de la République*, two hundred sixty delegates from these three associations met to constitute the FNACA under the leadership of AAA President Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, known for his outspoken engagements against the war as a veteran and as director of the news magazine *l’Express*.<sup>744</sup>

The FNACA opposed the war from its foundation, both for its injustices and for how it affected soldiers. It held that ending the war was the first step toward defending veterans’ rights. The Federation’s leaders viewed the war as a dangerous misadventure; its first program in 1958, written in Servan-Schreiber’s strident rhetoric, called for “a negotiated solution” in order to defend “the moral values, the honor of our Army, and the prestige of France.”<sup>745</sup> The FNACA thus represented the politics of the “new Dreyfusards,” liberal Republicans who criticized the Algerian War foremost for its moral

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<sup>742</sup>“Les Anciens d’Algérie dans la Nation,” Union Démocratique des Anciens d’Algérie, pamphlet, (1962), 2; “1958...1962... Des premiers pas au 19 mars 1962,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 470 sup., (October 2008): 3; Jean-Pierre Prouteau, “L’Association des Anciens d’Algérie”; *La Fédération Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie: Bulletin de Liaison de la Commission Constitutive*, 2, BNF, 4-JO-13704.

<sup>743</sup>“Les Anciens d’Algérie dans la Nation,” *op. cit.*; Bebiesse, *op. cit.*; “1958...1962...Des premiers pas,” *op. cit.*, 3; Paul Bebiesse, “L’Association Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie,” *La Fédération Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie: Bulletin de Liaison de la Commission Constitutive*, 2. Georges Mattéi, who was involved in the GRM, recalls that the AAA had been founded by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and that the ANAA was organized by the French Communist Party. Martin Evans, *The Memory of Resistance: French Opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 95.

<sup>744</sup>“La FNAA: «non» à la politique du gouvernement et des autorités militaires en Algérie,” *Le Monde* (23 September 1958): 3.

<sup>745</sup>“Programme de la FNAA,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (Dec. 1958): 2.

effects on France.<sup>746</sup> This portrayal of the war probably appealed to a wider section of the French left than an outright denunciation of colonialism would have at the time.

The identities of these organizations thus emerged from diametrically opposed narratives of the Algerian War. While claiming to speak for the generation of French citizens who fought in the Algerian War, both associations conceived of veterans' citizenship in dramatically different ways. The FNACA portrayed veterans' citizenship as an exchange with the government, wherein the suffering of conscripts had earned veterans "our right to reparation" through the veterans' card.<sup>747</sup> The UNCAFN, on the other hand, considered military service as a duty of citizenship, and demanded that society welcome the civic engagement and respect "the soul of the generation of the *djebels*."<sup>748</sup>

These fundamentally different views of military service as an honor or a burden expressed themselves in the very names of the associations. The "National Union of Soldiers of North Africa" (UNCAFN) acknowledged the French empire's legitimacy, since the French name for colonial North Africa was "*Afrique française du nord*," abbreviated "AFN." The Union's name also emphasized military pride, since its members were not "veterans" but "soldiers," suggesting that their combat for French Algeria did not cease with the end of their military service. Meanwhile, the "National Federation of Veterans of Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco" (FNACA), underscored the specificity of a foreign military experience that marked a whole generation, for which it deserved

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<sup>746</sup>Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: the Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006), 67.

<sup>747</sup>"Le diplôme de Reconnaissance de la Nation," *L'Écho FNACA* 8 (April 1970): 2.

<sup>748</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "Nos responsabilités," *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 1 (July-August-September 1971): 3.

recognition and compensation. The common thread was shared suffering, in North Africa and afterward, not support for *Algérie française* or pride in military service. Finally, the titles of the newspapers of each association also conveyed divergent institutional identities. The UNCAFN's newspaper *Djebel* was named after the Arabic word for "mountain," suggesting the mystique of a foreign military experience that transformed soldiers into a worthy civic force, ready to testify and act on behalf of the nation. The FNACA's newspaper title—*L'Ancien d'Algérie* means "He who has experienced Algeria,"—simply connoted passive participation in the Algerian War, without any exoticism or trappings of colonialism.

These competing narratives of the war attracted different member demographics. Most of the founding leaders of both associations were conscripts or reservists, rather than professional soldiers. But the targets for recruitment at the rank-and-file level were quite different. Because it supported the war, the UNCAFN appealed more to officers and career military, who tended to be politically conservative and hesitant to critique the decisions of military leaders. The UNCAFN's members and leaders were mainly employed in farming, small business, and white collar jobs, while the FNACA was primarily composed of former conscripts with young families—laborers, shop employees, farmers, and office workers, who would be more interested in the promise of benefits and a pension.<sup>749</sup> There was thus a significant class difference between the two associations, as veterans from different backgrounds self-selected into an organization honoring military duty and pride, or one lamenting the suffering and disruption of an

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<sup>749</sup>“Djebel: Le journal d’une génération, 40.000 abonnés,” UNCAFN publicity pamphlet, UNCAFN archives, “1962 Documents divers” folder, undated; Frédéric Rouyard, “Les commémorations de la guerre d’Algérie,” Master’s thesis in history, Université de Paris-X-Nanterre, dir. Philippe Levillain (1989): 50-52.

unwanted war. While the leaders of the FNACA drew on the specific culture developed through the conscript experience—one that often bred skepticism and antiauthoritarianism—the leaders of the UNCAFN promoted the patriotic, nationalistic culture of career military, honed in World War II and Indochina.<sup>750</sup>

Reflecting the conscript versus career military divide, the FNACA and the UNCAFN responded differently to the demands of organizing. From the outset, the FNACA proclaimed itself the only association unique to veterans of Algeria. The UNCAFN, on the other hand, was proud of its union with its “elders,” through collaboration with the UNC. This alliance developed over time, from informal cooperation in 1957 to a shared headquarters in 1960. UNC President Alexis Thomas told his association’s Congress in 1961 that he had “daily contacts” with the UNCAFN leaders, with whom the UNC was “close morally as well as materially.”<sup>751</sup> The two Unions formalized their union with a 1971 protocol rendering membership interchangeable between them, and allowing UNCAFN members to hold positions at all levels of the UNC hierarchy.<sup>752</sup>

The UNCAFN’s alliance with the UNC proved an initial advantage. The UNCAFN’s intergenerational model meant that the association could rely on the UNC’s resources—sharing its headquarters, national congress venues, networks of contacts, and its nationalist credentials. It also, however, opened the threat of intergenerational conflict

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<sup>750</sup>Jean-Charles Jauffret, “The War Culture of French Combatants in the Algerian Conflict,” 106-116 in Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J. F. V. Keiger, eds., *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (Houndsmill: Palgrave, 2002), 101.

<sup>751</sup>Alexis Thomas, “Le rapport moral,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1268 (June 1961): 5.

<sup>752</sup>*Le Conseiller du Combattant et des Victimes de Guerre, édité par l’UNC et l’UNCAFN* (Rennes: Nouvelles de Bretagne, 1974), 147, BNF 8-R-84158.



and a lack of institutional dynamism. Veterans of both World Wars often hesitated to welcome veterans of Algeria into the family of combatants: the decolonization conflict did not seem as “real” to many of them as the hecatombs of the World Wars.<sup>753</sup> And while the FNACA benefitted from singleness of purpose in its unique war model, it was forced to build its movement and network of allies entirely from scratch. But in the long term, the Federation’s commitment to independence proved an advantage. Fully aware of the obstacles they faced, its leaders knew they had no choice but to organize and recruit vigorously.

Because they were on different sides of the war, represented fundamentally different conceptions of military service, and were looking to recruit from the same mass of conscripts, both associations distrusted each other from the start. A 1958 UNCAFN editorial warned against other associations created “at the instigation of extremist parties,” thinly veiled code for Communist maneuvering.<sup>754</sup> Although the FNACA had not yet been constituted, the UNCAFN leadership was alarmed by the emergence of small antiwar associations that would merge to become the Federation. The FNACA came out fighting, accusing the UNCAFN of exploiting veterans, and of being “in tight relation with the activist elements of the Army and the partisans of French Algeria.”<sup>755</sup>

Each association feared that the other would exploit veterans to support the wrong side of

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<sup>753</sup>Branche, “La dernière génération du feu?,” 6.

<sup>754</sup>Gérard Le Marec, “Plus d’équivoque: UNC-AFN,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1234 (5 February 1958): 4.

<sup>755</sup>Samuel Margolinas, “Agir de façon efficace pour la paix en Algérie,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 4 (Nov. 1960): 2.

the war. After the war's end in 1962, both associations turned to disputing the proper way to commemorate the war, and how the government should recognize veterans.<sup>756</sup>

By the late 1960s, as veterans' recognition became a more plausible reality, the two associations came to seem more and more odious to each other. The FNACA criticized the UNCAFN's leadership for being obsessed with medals and awards for "the most deserving among us," yet caring little about veterans' rights.<sup>757</sup> The Federation even referred to its rival as a "rump-association," presumably because it rode the coattails of the UNC.<sup>758</sup> To the UNCAFN, the collective militancy of the FNACA meant it was a mere "sub-union," unconcerned with the future of the nation, and contributing to the "devalorization of the image of the family of veterans."<sup>759</sup> The leaders of the FNACA felt veterans had earned rights that needed to be defended, while the UNCAFN leaders believed that moral recognition—in the form of medals if necessary—would confer the respect veterans needed to be able to testify in society, which they held as a duty.

The political schism between the associations came to a head in 1973, when UNCAFN President Porteu de la Morandière denounced the supposed Communist elements in the FNACA, labeling its Secretary General, Maurice Sicart, and its Legal Adviser, Guy Ramis, "notorious Communist militants."<sup>760</sup> Not dignifying these

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<sup>756</sup>For the campaign for veterans' recognition, see Chapter 6.

<sup>757</sup>"Glané dans la presse," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 94 (May 1972): 7.

<sup>758</sup>Guy Ramis, "A propos du Conseil d'administration de l'Office National et de la Commission départementale d'action sociale," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 78 (December 1970): 2. The original French is "*association-croupion*," which is rather more vulgar than its closest idiomatic English translation.

<sup>759</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "Réflexions sur l'avenir du monde combattant," *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 7 (May 1973): 2.

<sup>760</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "La Grenouille et le bœuf," *La Voix du combattant* 1385 (April 1973): 1, 8.

accusations with a response, the FNACA simply dismissed the UNCAFN as jealous of its “fruitful action,” implying the nationalist group was self-congratulatory and unconcerned with veterans’ rights.<sup>761</sup>

Both associations bore the imprint of energetic and devoted leaders. While the FNACA’s most visible official was Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, its National President from 1958 to 1965, he was not deeply involved in the “internal life of the FNACA.”<sup>762</sup> It took militants with a background in political organizing to begin the hard work of building the Federation from the ground up. The most influential activist in the FNACA’s early years was Maurice Sicart, its Secretary-General from 1961 to 2008. He had begun his militancy as a young man in the Communist-affiliated *Union des jeunesses républicaines de France* (Union of Republican Youth of France, UJRF), protesting the war in Indochina.<sup>763</sup> He joined the FNACA in 1960 soon after returning from his military service in Algeria.<sup>764</sup> He thus committed to the association when its primary goal was to end the war, but remained a true believer in the FNACA afterward. Sicart had a persuasive and energizing effect on others, and steered the association toward the goal of building “a huge organization to defend [veterans’] rights.”<sup>765</sup> Indeed, in the words of

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<sup>761</sup>“La Grenouille refait surface! De Côté... s’agit-il?” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 105 (May 1973): 7.

<sup>762</sup>Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation! Témoignages sur Maurice Sicart* (Paris: FNACA, 2011), 77.

<sup>763</sup>Jean Laurans, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 5, 11-12. The UJRF also worked to turn soldiers against the war in Algeria, publishing a special edition of its magazine *l’Avant-Garde*, entitled “The Conscript,” for each departing class of draftees. Julien Hage, “La guerre d’Algérie et les publications communistes en France,” 195-213 in dir. Hervé Bismuth and Fritz Taubert, *La Guerre d’Algérie et le monde communiste* (Dijon: Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 2014), 204.

<sup>764</sup>Guy Darmanin, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 19-20.

<sup>765</sup>William Fort, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 23.

National President Jacques de Jæger, Sicart gave the association its “road map” to undertake aggressive recruiting throughout France.<sup>766</sup>

The UNCAFN official who provided the association its road map was indisputably its National President, François Porteu de la Morandière. He returned from military service as a reservist in 1957 desirous to support his comrades who were still fighting, and seeking to mold veterans of Algeria into a “useful force for our country.” In co-founding the UNCAFN, he aimed to bring the Algerian generation “fully into French associational life.”<sup>767</sup> To do so, Porteu de la Morandière sought cooperation with veterans of World War II and Resistance members, “great men who believed in France,” whom he had met in pro-French Algeria activist circles.<sup>768</sup> He led the UNCAFN to ally informally with the UNC in 1960, became elected Vice-President of the latter association in 1962, and oversaw the strategic accord in 1971 to “assure the continuity of the veterans’ world.”<sup>769</sup> Porteu de la Morandière set the example for his association by representing his generation at patriotic events, such as the Armistice Day and Bastille Day ceremonies at the *Arc de Triomphe*.<sup>770</sup> He sought to present veterans of Algeria as a civic force in the nation and to testify on their behalf, rather than to wrest reparations from the state.

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<sup>766</sup>Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 35.

<sup>767</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller Édition, 2000), 5.

<sup>768</sup>*Ibid.*, 13. For details on the UNCAFN’s engagement in pro-French Algeria activism, see Chapter 5.

<sup>769</sup>“M. Porteu de la Morandière est élu Vice-Président de l’UNC,” *Le Monde* (10 February 1962): 4; Jean-Maurice Martin, “UNC...UNCAFN...deux associations, un seul journal,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1363 (February 1971): 1.

<sup>770</sup>“Le quarante-deuxième anniversaire de l’Armistice,” *Le Monde* (12 November 1960).

The political orientations, member demographics, and organizational models of these associations expressed themselves in opposing internal structures. The FNACA's national officials expected informed participation at all levels. To this end, the association developed a sophisticated communication structure, establishing in 1969 a monthly bulletin to communicate with leaders of national commissions, and presidents, secretaries, and treasurers on the departmental and local levels.<sup>771</sup> The Federation also encouraged a democratic culture. For instance, during a phase of intense militant action and recruitment in 1970, the FNACA announced that since "it is not PARIS who leads, but the whole of France," it would elevate new permanent employees of the most dynamic departmental sections to join the National Secretariat.<sup>772</sup> But the national leadership kept close track of local activism, encouraging departmental committees to compete in frequent petition campaigns for veterans' recognition.<sup>773</sup>

The UNCAFN's leadership, following a more traditional, elite-based political culture, tended to issue pronouncements from on high through cadres' bulletins and memoranda, with little follow-through on lower levels. The National Committee did keep close watch over the efficacy of local leaders; for example, in 1962, President Porteu de la Morandière pressured the leader of the section in the Nord to quit, and personally chose his successor.<sup>774</sup> But when it came to activism, the UNCAFN's national leaders did not provide concrete avenues for participation. In a late stage of the campaign for

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<sup>771</sup>The first edition of *l'Écho FNACA* came out in May 1969, and continues to be published monthly to this day.

<sup>772</sup>"Conception nouvelle du Secrétariat National," *L'Écho FNACA* 8 (April 1970): 6.

<sup>773</sup>"État de l'envoi des cartes-lettres," *L'Écho FNACA* 15 (March 1971): 5.

<sup>774</sup>*UNCAFN Groupe du Nord/Dixième anniversaire 1958-1968*, 13, BNF, 4-R-Piece-5330.

veterans' recognition, President Porteu de la Morandière visited with the Veterans' Minister numerous times, but to his own members only suggested that local UNCAFN sections should show "great energy to remind [the deputies] of this little problem of ours," giving no guidance on how this should be accomplished.<sup>775</sup>

Financial circumstances had opposed the associations from the start. The FNACA was impoverished by any standards, and especially compared to its rival. In its early years the Federation could not afford heating oil for its headquarters, forcing members to warm themselves by burning "rickety old chairs" during one particularly bitter winter.<sup>776</sup> Its national leaders sometimes had to share beds when they traveled to visit local committees, so that the newspaper's Chief Editor Michel Sabourdy could boast of having "slept" with Maurice Sicart.<sup>777</sup> While the UNCAFN published its monthly newspaper with funds from the Ministry of Defense and the aid of prominent French Algeria activist Léon Delbecque, who had helped the association find a printer, the FNACA was unable to produce a second issue of its newspaper for seven months, and only in 1972, fourteen years after the association's founding, did its newspaper begin to appear on a predictable monthly basis.<sup>778</sup>

The UNCAFN also had initial logistical support from Jacques Soustelle's pro-French Algeria association, the USRAF, as well as potential recourse to some of the four

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<sup>775</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "Quelques vœux pour 1969," *La Voix du combattant* 1342 (January 1969): 1.

<sup>776</sup>William Fort, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 28.

<sup>777</sup>Michel Sabourdy, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 26.

<sup>778</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014; Robert Pelletier, "Plan de rapport sur le journal «l'Ancien d'Algerie»," *L'Écho FNACA* 24 (April 1972): 3.

million Francs in the UNC's coffers.<sup>779</sup> However, the FNACA relied on membership subscriptions to fund its services and its newspaper, which was "eternally" beleaguered by financial problems.<sup>780</sup> In 1963 it began a tradition of holding yearly festivals in support of the newspaper, with shows, musical performances, and a raffle.<sup>781</sup> The association also needed to pay its small permanent staff, and frequently reminded local leaders to ensure members signed up again the next year to avoid potential disaster. But these financial imperatives gave the isolated Federation no choice but to grow stronger, while the UNCAFN, well-heeled at its foundation, knew increasing difficulty once it lost the support of the Defense Ministry and pro-French Algeria groups, when the political tides turned in favor of decolonization. The UNCAFN was eventually unable to pay for its own newspaper, even with advertising.<sup>782</sup> Its once independent *Djebel* became the diminutive *La Voix du djebel*, a one or two-page insert in the UNC's newspaper, *La Voix du combattant*.<sup>783</sup> UNCAFN leaders admitted that the lack of a national newspaper was "our weakness vis-à-vis the FNACA."<sup>784</sup>

The financial circumstances of these associations, as well as the respective political cultures from which they emerged, expressed themselves in opposing

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<sup>779</sup>Gérard Le Marec, transcribed speech, "Congrès séance du matin," UNCAFN archives, 6 July 1958, 60.

<sup>780</sup>Jean Martinet, "Un mot du rédacteur en chef," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 6 (May 1961): 6.

<sup>781</sup>"La fête de notre journal...un grand succès," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 18 (July-August 1963): 4-5.

<sup>782</sup>The FNACA was well aware of the UNCAFN's changing fortunes, and mocked the association's newspaper for advertising royal jelly, a health product made by bees, and services for those seeking to "marry well." "Tartuffe ou Basile?" *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 87 (October 1971): 9.

<sup>783</sup>"Note confidentielle (!) de l'UNC-AFN (Groupe Bourgogne-Franche-Comté.) Comment répondre aux arguments FNACA?" *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 73 (June 1970): 6. The rhetoric and substance of this note do seem to confirm it as a document written by the UNCAFN to educate local leaders on how to respond to the growing threat that the FNACA posed to their recruitment.

<sup>784</sup>*Idem.*

recruitment strategies. The difficulty of earning and then maintaining the trust of skeptical members meant that both associations had to spend much energy on propaganda.<sup>785</sup> The UNCAFN initially felt at leisure to assemble French Algeria's true believers rather than recruiting out of financial need or isolation. During the war, Minister Chaban-Delmas sent President Porteu de la Morandière on several trips to Algeria, where he promoted his association among active soldiers about to be demobilized.<sup>786</sup> The Defense Ministry paid his airfare so that he could appear in uniform before junior officers to distribute UNCAFN pamphlets printed by the Army, giving enormous advantages to his group's early recruitment.<sup>787</sup> This method of recruitment accorded neatly with the UNCAFN's founding logic: an elite-based appeal to military honor and supporting the troops and their war effort.

However, once the UNCAFN lost its Defense Ministry support in 1961, the association's growth stagnated.<sup>788</sup> At a meeting in 1968, cadres identified the "major concern" of the association as recruitment and developing local leaders; a National Vice-President lamented the number of isolated sections "without any intermediary with the National Headquarters."<sup>789</sup> Indeed, national UNC leaders felt the need to instruct local section heads to stop reporting on meetings held by the FNACA, which suggests a certain

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<sup>785</sup>Frank L. Wilson, *Interest-group politics in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 140.

<sup>786</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>787</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>788</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014; François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000), 20.

<sup>789</sup>«Le 13 octobre, à l'Assemblée générale des cadres de l'UNC-AFN: «Nous sommes responsables du civisme de notre génération»,» *La Voix du Djebel* 1340 (November 1968): 4.



lack of dynamism in local UNCAFN meetings.<sup>790</sup> Leaders of provincial UNC sections requested talking points and propaganda helpful for recruiting veterans of Algeria, especially faced with “the competition of Communist groups” such as the FNACA.<sup>791</sup> In 1970, the Vice President confessed that the “association recruits, but we do not ‘structure’ well enough.”<sup>792</sup>

From the start, the hard-up FNACA had been forced to prioritize propaganda and vigorous mass recruitment to compensate for its lack of establishment support. Aware that “the military hierarchy favor[ed] the development” of its rival, the FNACA steered itself to save veterans from the machinations of the UNCAFN, in its view tainted with a “politics that has the consequence of worsening the Algerian War.”<sup>793</sup> Its militants cast as wide a net as possible in towns around France, holding meetings to which they invited all men born between 1932 and 1943 and thus subject to be drafted, whose names they discovered on the electoral lists posted at town hall.<sup>794</sup> Local FNACA chapters also organized public information meetings to sway public opinion in favor of the young veterans and against the war.<sup>795</sup> Militants stressed that a whole generation was at stake: wounded and neglected, young conscripts needed to band together to demand their

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<sup>790</sup>Letter from Jean-Maurice Martin and Dominic Audollent to “Presidents of Group Number 4,” 12 June 1968, 5, UNC archives, “Événements de mai-juin 1968” folder.

<sup>791</sup>Letter from the President of the UNC of the Limousin to Jean-Maurice Martin, 1 July 1968, 1, UNC archives, “AGMG-UNC Juin 1968” folder, 1.

<sup>792</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “La Vie de l’association,” *La Voix du combattant* 1353 (February 1970): 8.

<sup>793</sup>Paul Bébiesse, “Rapport des bureaux nationaux présenté au Congrès,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (December 1958): 2.

<sup>794</sup>Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 21.

<sup>795</sup>Jean Verne, interviewed by Robert Le Pelletier, “Comment en Saône-et-Loire se prépare une Assemblée Publique d’Information,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 21 (January-February 1964): 3.

rights.<sup>796</sup> This rhetoric expressed the collectivist vision derived from the FNACA's Communist, Socialist, and left-Catholic predecessors.

The associations expressed their diverging views of citizenship through opposing attitudes toward services for veterans. Deployment had put conscripts without family wealth in a precarious financial position; they were in the same situation as unemployed people in France subsisting on minimum state aid. Pay for conscripts was only 900 Francs per month, which barely covered the costs of daily necessities, and was not enough for transport costs to take advantage of their 25 days of leave.<sup>797</sup> The FNACA expressed its concern for protecting vulnerable conscripts by offering technical services, including medical and administrative advice, as early as 1958.<sup>798</sup> It also began providing legal consultations in 1959.<sup>799</sup> These services reflected the mission of an association focused on aiding demobilized conscripts, who were young, poorly educated, and at the start of their careers—thus liable to be overwhelmed by bureaucratic procedures with high stakes.<sup>800</sup> The UNCAFN, on the other hand, was unconcerned with establishing formal structures to aid veterans; a notice in the association's newsletter in 1963 stated, "if you need information, advice, or help, come see us or write us."<sup>801</sup> The association's

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<sup>796</sup>Michel Sabourdy, interview, 11 May, 2014.

<sup>797</sup>Ludivine Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge: jeunes et jeunesses en France de l'aube des Trente Glorieuses à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 317.

<sup>798</sup>"Renseignements pratiques pour le Congrès du 21 septembre," *La Fédération nationale des anciens d'Algérie: Bulletin de liaison de la Commission Constitutive*, 7.

<sup>799</sup>"Renseignements utiles," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 2 (July-August 1959): 4.

<sup>800</sup>In summer 1962, the FNACA's National Committee asked the Veterans' Minister to create a "national commission to study the situation of demobilized conscripts," but this demand fell on deaf ears, and no such commission would be created for another decade. "Le Comité National s'adresse au Ministre des Anciens Combattants," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 12 (May-June 1962): 10.

<sup>801</sup>"Si vous avez besoin," *La Voix du combattant* 1289 (July 1963): 8.

leaders were so reluctant to resemble “professional militants” that they did not even seek out a specialist in veterans’ rights until 1966.<sup>802</sup> The associations had different institutional priorities—material support for conscripts, versus moral support for true believers in French Algeria, who tended to be officers or career military, and more confident about navigating military administration.

Through the course of their development, both associations ended up losing leaders for ideological reasons. The UNCAFN faced conflicts over how best to support French Algeria, and whether to sanction illegal actions. The Union’s first major attrition was in 1960, when Dr. J.-F. LeMaire left the National Administration in protest of the association’s support of a civilian colonists’ revolt in Algiers known as the “week of barricades.”<sup>803</sup> The UNCAFN had decided to tacitly support the attempted civilian insurrection, and thus swung further to the right than some of its members were willing to go. After the war’s end, the association maintained a decidedly anti-Gaullist line, but still sided with the state when the political left posed a threat. When the UNCAFN held a “reparative ceremony” at the *Arc de Triomphe* in May 1968 to show veterans’ respect for the flag and the nation, another national leader quit, feeling that the ceremony manifested political support for President de Gaulle and violated the association’s avowed political neutrality.<sup>804</sup> These appear to have been the only high-profile resignations from the UNCAFN, suggesting a high level of ideological unity among its national leaders at least.

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<sup>802</sup>“Le Ministre des Anciens Combattants rend visite au siège national et participe à la magnifique réunion des Cadres UNCAFN du 18 octobre,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1321 (November 1966): 9.

<sup>803</sup>“Après l’arrestation du président de l’UNC, le Docteur J.-F. LeMaire quitte le conseil national de l’association,” *Le Monde* (9 March 1962): 2.

<sup>804</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Confidentiel: circulaire du 10 juin 1968 au Comité directeur,” UNC archives, “AGMG-UNC Juin 1968” folder, 4. For detailed analysis of the UNCAFN’s and the FNACA’s responses in the wake of “the events of May” 1968, see Chapter 6.

The FNACA lost far more national figures, as its leadership tried to navigate the ideological and tactical differences among the members of its founding antiwar coalition. In 1959, with a vote of twenty-two against sixteen, the National Board ejected Adjunct Secretary General and founding member Georges Mattéi. His offense was having testified on behalf of FLN members accused of attempting to assassinate the pro-French Algeria activist and former Algerian Governor-General Jacques Soustelle in Paris on September 15, 1958.<sup>805</sup> The National Board decided that Mattéi's "methods of action [...] endangered the existence and the goals" of the FNACA.<sup>806</sup> On Mattéi's exclusion, six members of the National Board also left to form a separate veterans' association.<sup>807</sup> This splinter group appears to have been short lived because that very year, Mattéi went underground to join the "Jeanson network," composed of French citizens working to aid the Algerian National Liberation Front.<sup>808</sup>

Once the FNACA excluded him, Mattéi had come to see all legal opposition to the war as futile.<sup>809</sup> He had joined the association after drawing national attention to

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<sup>805</sup>“Bureau National,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (December 1958): 4; “À la Fédération des anciens d’Algérie,” *Le Monde* (13 February 1959): 6. Mattéi asserts that his primary motivation for testifying at the trial of Soustelle’s accused attackers was his frustration with the FNACA’s reluctance to end against the war by any means necessary. His testimony at the trial, recounting his wartime experiences, and presumably speaking in support of the FLN’s goals or methods, provoked shouting and threats from paratroopers in attendance. Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 105.

<sup>806</sup>“M. Mattéi est exclu de la FNAA,” *Le Monde* (13 February 1959): 2. The UNCAFN’s coverage of this incident insinuates that the FNACA sought in fact to dissociate itself from Mattei’s “total approval” of the FLN’s methods, and its denunciation of the French Army for committing atrocities. “Querelle au sein de la «Fédération Nationale des Anciens d’Algérie»”, *Djebel* 7 (February 1959): 5.

<sup>807</sup>“À la Fédération des anciens d’Algérie,” *Le Monde* 1(3 February 1959): 6.

<sup>808</sup>Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 105.

<sup>809</sup>*Idem.*

torture with an article, “Les jours kabyles,” published in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1957.<sup>810</sup>

Despite the FNACA’s steadfast opposition to the war, it had no place for veterans like Mattei, who sought more radical methods than diplomatic negotiation, which the association considered “the only possibility to reestablish peace in Algeria.”<sup>811</sup> On the other side of the aisle, founding Secretary General Jean-Pierre Prouteau quit the Federation around 1961 because of its supposed Communist leanings. He became founding President of the *Union démocratique des Anciens d’Algérie*, which aimed for peace in Algeria, but sought to assemble a broad, democratic centrist coalition that excluded Communists.<sup>812</sup>

As national attention focused on the FNACA thanks to its ceaseless campaigns for the veterans’ card, the association was forced to distance itself from increasingly aggressive accusations of Communist influence.<sup>813</sup> In 1970, Jean-Claude Citerne resigned

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<sup>810</sup>Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 82.

<sup>811</sup>“M. Mattéi est exclu de la FNAA,” 2.

<sup>812</sup>“Bureau National,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1 (December 1958): 4; “Les Anciens d’Algérie: déjouer les calculs des aventuriers,” *Le Monde* (8 February 1962): 3.

<sup>813</sup>One of the longest puzzles of my research process has been to try to determine if the FNACA was indeed directly tied to the French Communist Party (PCF), as its detractors asserted for decades—from the UNCAFN, to Minister of Veterans Henri Duvillard, to right-wing think-tanks. Gérard Le Marec, “Plus d’équivoque: UNC-AFN,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1234 (5 February 1958): 4; Form letter from Henri Duvillard to “Mon cher ami,” 17 December 1968, David Rousset papers, BDIC, 1; “L’EMPIRE 1981: l’Appareil du PCF de A à Z,” *Libertés pour la démocratie sociale* 16 (December 1980): 67, UNCAFN archives.

Facts against an interpretation of direct sponsorship include that Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber was an ardent anti-Communist and would not have knowingly signed on to preside the FNACA if it had been sponsored by the PCF; that the French Communist Party devoted much money to anti-war publications aimed at conscripts, yet the FNACA’s unequivocally antiwar newspaper was constantly on the verge of bankruptcy and appeared much less prolifically than did these other publications; and the fact that the FNACA initially received more support for veterans’ card legislation from Gaullist, Socialist, and Independent Republican deputies than from Communist deputies. Jean Bothorel, *Celui qui voulait tout changer: les années JJSS* (Paris: Laffont, 2005), 92; Julian Hage, “La guerre d’Algérie et les publications communistes en France,” 195-213 in dir. Hervé Bismuth and Fritz Taubert, *La Guerre d’Algérie et le*

his post as Editor in Chief of the Federation's newspaper. His campaign on a Communist list for departmental counselor in the Val-du-Marne—for which he cited his work for the FNACA on posters—attracted a smear campaign against the association. Henceforth all FNACA members would be prohibited from advertising their membership for the benefit of any political campaign.<sup>814</sup> Yet despite such high-profile institutional losses over the

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*monde communiste* (Dijon: Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 2014), 201; “Action auprès des élus,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 66 (December 1969): 3.

An informed, although biased, insider view is provided by Jean-Pierre Prouteau, who quit the FNACA as its founding Secretary General to found the UDAA in 1961. He writes that the FNACA functioned “on the basis of a contract of non-Communist majority in the national leadership,” but the majority of rank-and-file members were Communist, and thus “the body of the organization [was] not proportional to the head.” Jean-Pierre Prouteau, “L'UDAA a été présentée à la presse le 18 décembre 1961,” *La Tribune des Anciens d'Algérie* 1 (February 1962): 1, BNF, FOL-JO-12655. However, I have been unable to find any corroboration of such a contract, implicit or explicit, from the FNACA newspaper and archives; the association's archival gatekeepers were very squeamish about allowing me access to internal documents, perhaps because the association has had a culture of secrecy and has contended with anti-Communist attacks since its foundation.

My interpretation is that Maurice Sicart and other early leaders were inclined by their militant backgrounds to steer the FNACA as if it *were* a Communist “mass party” for veterans of Algeria—civic associations in France created to promote the PCF's goals among certain demographics, such as youth, renters, or women, while maintaining plausible deniability of direct connections with the Party. René Dazy, *La partie et le tout: le PCF et la politique franco-algérienne* (Paris: Syllepse, 1990), 84. The FNACA's Communist predecessor association, the *Association Nationale des Anciens d'Algérie*, was likely created by the PCF as a “mass party.” Indeed, Georges Mattéi, who was ejected from the FNACA in 1959, recalls that both the PCF and Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber himself, treated the FNACA as a “pressure-group” to protect veterans' rights. Evans, *The Memory of Resistance*, 105.

This “mass party” approach influenced the association's rhetoric and organizational style, and individual veterans who were Communists or fellow travelers would tend to self-select into an antiwar association with an ethos of collective action and mutual aid. But by no means were all members of the FNACA affiliated with the French Communist Party, and the PCF seems to have had no direct influence in the association's conduct. The FNACA has increasingly distanced itself from any appearance of Communist orientation over the years, because its main goal after veterans' recognition was to become the largest association for veterans of Algeria, so it had to appeal to as wide a demographic as possible. I was not yet able to come up with such a nuanced response when the FNACA's newspaper Editor in Chief, Michel Sabourdy, jokingly asked me at the end of our interview, “So, you're not going to ask if we are a bunch of Commies?”

<sup>814</sup>Frédéric Rouyard, “La bataille du 19 mars,” 545-552 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La guerre d'Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 547; Roger Lajoie-Mazenc, *La guerre de là-bas: Anciens d'Algérie: un demi-siècle de parcours du combattant* (La Primaube: Graphi Imprimer, 2009), 192; “Jean-Claude CITERNE: Chimiste 34 ans, Responsable national des anciens combattants d'Afrique du Nord, candidate du Parti Communiste Français pour l'Union des Forces de Gauche et Démocratiques,” undated campaign poster, François Porteu de la Morandière's personal papers, Sèvres.

years as the association sought to present itself as more centrist, the unity of purpose of the FNACA meant that this association was able to recruit and activists who were deeply committed to building the association. Thus, an “active minority” of true believers in the FNACA’s mission gave the association the “cohesion” it needed to pursue its goals.<sup>815</sup>

In terms of numbers, the deck had been stacked against the FNACA from the beginning. This was in part because French opposition to the war grew very gradually—in 1954, there was a general consensus that Algeria was and should remain French, and even by summer 1958, Metropolitan opinion was still in favor of French Algeria by a slight majority.<sup>816</sup> But the numerical discrepancy also persisted because the FNACA had to build itself from scratch, rather than riding the coattails of an existing association. By 1961, the UNCAFN claimed 80,000 members and a readership of 200,000, while the FNACA had approximately 2,200 members.<sup>817</sup> Even in 1967, the Federation had grown to a mere 20,000 members, and a national Congress in 1968 only attracted two to three hundred delegates.<sup>818</sup>

The FNACA grew steadily because it had no choice, and because membership growth was central to achieving its legislative aims. Through the course of the 1960s, the association’s membership had multiplied by a factor of 35, as an internal cadres’ bulletin reported in 1970. In 1961, it only had two departmental sections with over 300 members,

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<sup>815</sup>Dazy, *La partie et le tout*, 17.

<sup>816</sup>Serge Berstein, “La peau de chagrin de «l’Algérie française»,” 202-217 in dir. Rioux, 208.

<sup>817</sup>“Pour maintenir la sérénité de la cohésion nationale, le Gouvernement a interdit la manifestation «pour la paix en Algérie» organisée le 27 octobre place de la Bastille,” *Le Monde* (21 October 1960): 1; “Caractéristiques des 200,000 lecteurs de Djebel,” *Djebel* 19 (May 1961): 5; Annick Sicart, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 69.

<sup>818</sup>“Partis, syndicats, et mouvements divers,” Paris Police Prefecture Archives, G<sub>d</sub>18, September 1967, 45; Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation!*, 35.

while by 1971 fifty-nine sections were of this size.<sup>819</sup> In 1972, after years of devoted outreach and recruitment campaigns, the FNACA was within sight of its goal of 200,000 members, which it hoped would make it “even stronger, to defend our generation.”<sup>820</sup> That same year, a government commission created to study the topic of veterans’ recognition gave equal representation to the FNACA and the UNCAFN, seating two delegates each, and vindicating the FNACA’s sustaining belief that membership size could eventually compensate for lack of political access.<sup>821</sup>

Thus, the FNACA gained the national platform it desired to advocate for reparations for veterans of Algeria, which it had been demanding since 1958, while its rival would continue to push for moral recognition. The FNACA had finally overcome long-term disadvantages of finances and political access through achieving the pressure of numbers. While the fierce rivalry between the two poles of the Algerian War veterans’ movement might have sapped the effectiveness of its activism and prolonged the fight for veterans’ status, it proved a recruitment tool that ultimately benefitted the FNACA.<sup>822</sup>

These two associations represented diametrically opposed conceptions of French citizenship, views of military service, and lessons drawn from the war. The difference in their organizational growth occurred because they bore fundamentally different political

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<sup>819</sup>“Paragraphe essentiels qui seront traités dans le plan de rapport sur certains problèmes d’organisation,” *Écho FNACA* 8 (April 1970): 6.

<sup>820</sup>“D’un Ministre...à l’autre,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 96 (July-August 1972): 8; “Une étape indispensable pour atteindre notre objectif: 200.000 adhérents 1973. Le succès de l’opération 100%-19 Mars,” *L’Écho FNACA* 30.5 special (February 1973): 1.

<sup>821</sup>“Communiqué du secrétariat national,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 97 (September 1972): 8; “Notre réponse à la constitution d’une commission d’étude,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 100 (December 1972): 5; Claude Pelèrin, “La qualité du combattant aux AFN: un rappel des faits,” *La Voix du combattant* 1383 (February 1973): 7.

<sup>822</sup>With my thanks to Julian Bourg for suggesting this interpretation. Society for French Historical Studies, Nashville, 5 March 2016.



cultures, and drew on divergent legacies of the World War I veterans' movement. The FNACA, despite its initial handicaps, grew so vigorously because of true believers' guiding idea that veterans were citizens who had earned reparations in exchange for their wartime service, and that they could only defend these rights by the strength of numbers. In the minds of its leaders, the growth of their organization was inextricably linked with the goal of achieving the veterans' card. The Federation functioned almost as a 'union' for veterans of Algeria, with the stubborn unity of purpose that a single-issue association could afford. Some of the most influential militants early in the FNACA's history had come of age in Communist-affiliated civic associations, giving resonance to the association's rhetoric on rights and reparation, and lending greater organizational experience to the young association.

The UNCAFN, conceiving of citizenship in the framework of duty, sought to have a public presence, and testify to the nation on behalf of veterans of Algeria, but as discussed above, it was relatively unconcerned with membership growth or efficient organization. It began its existence in a position to take for granted prestige and political access, and never felt the need to validate itself through numbers. In strategy and conduct it was more akin to an officers' club than a union—social groups that already consider themselves elite and powerful generally do not undertake massive recruitment. These differing attitudes toward institutional growth meant that the UNCAFN was very politically active in its early days but would rest on its laurels afterward, while the FNACA gradually gained in political power as its membership increased after the war's end.

As a majority of the French population came to oppose the war, and then to remember the war as a mistake, the UNCAFN consecrated most of its public speech and action to mourning French Algeria and perpetuating a narrative of Gaullist betrayal, while the FNACA, opposed to the war and an outsider from the start, was free to focus on political campaigns for veterans' rights, benefiting from the energetic recruitment and organizational methods it had learned in its early years of hardship. We will see this pattern unfold in Chapter 5, which examines the political activism of both associations from their foundation to the end of the war, and in Chapter 6, which assesses both associations' campaigns for the recognition of veterans of Algeria.

## CHAPTER 5: THE BATTLE IN THE METROPOLE: VETERANS' ASSOCIATION POLITICS DURING THE WAR

When the FNACA was formed in September 1958, it faced an uphill battle to its goals of a negotiated peace in Algeria and rights for veterans. In summer 1958, four years into the Algerian War of Independence, French public opinion was still in favor of maintaining French Algeria by a slight majority, although Metropolitan opposition was increasing, in part because of coverage by leftist journals such as *L'Express*, created by FNACA founder Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber.<sup>823</sup> The UNCAFN, founded in late 1957, was much better situated to pursue its goals: building support for French Algeria and the soldiers fighting in its defense. This well-funded association had ties to the government and prominent Gaullists, in addition to the support of established veterans' and nationalist associations. Yet by the war's end in 1962, the UNCAFN had become discredited and became less overtly political, while the FNACA began a period of growth that would earn it legitimacy to militate for a generation of veterans.

This chapter examines the political stances and strategies of these two associations, each vying to be the voice of the Algerian generation, and investigates the reasons their power began to reverse by the end of the war. It argues that the initial conditions of these associations' creation, and the political cultures they bore, largely determined their reactions in the changing domestic political climate during the war, and

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<sup>823</sup>Serge Berstein, "La peau de chagrin de «l'Algérie française»," 202-217 in dir. Jean-Pierre Rioux, *La Guerre d'Algérie et les Français* (Paris: Fayard, 1990), 208.

thus their level of political power at the war's end. Both associations emerged surrounding the "1958 moment" and de Gaulle's return to power, and the evolution of his Algerian politics would strongly influence their trajectories during the war. This story reflects not only the victory of the anticolonial narrative of the Algerian War in French society, but also reveals the waning of Gaullist networks and the rejection of militaristic nationalism that would come to characterize contemporary French politics.

The French Fourth Republic (1947-1958) offered few distinct ideological choices to politicized veterans desirous to engage on the subject of the war. In the early years of the Algerian war, political parties differed only in the degree of proposed solutions to the situation, reflecting the broad consensus in France in the 1950s that Algeria was and should remain French.<sup>824</sup> The non-Communist left generally opposed Algerian independence in the name of the indivisibility of the Republic, while urging greater assimilation of Algerian Muslims.<sup>825</sup> A small but growing fringe of left-wing intellectuals including Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir did speak and organize against the war, denouncing the government's use of torture and summary executions, and newspapers like the new liberal *L'Express* and the left-Catholic *Témoignage chrétien* raised public awareness of these violations of human rights and French republican values.

However, the French Communist Party (PCF)—maintaining a Stalinist line after 1953 and remaining dismissive of nationalism in the colonies—voted in 1956 for special powers for the government to expand the war effort. After years of internal divisions, the PCF openly opposed the war in Algeria only in 1960, when the Soviet Union recognized

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<sup>824</sup>Berstein, "La peau de chagrin de «l'Algérie française»," 206; Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: the Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006), 7.

<sup>825</sup>Shepard, 64.

the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA).<sup>826</sup> The center-right party *Centre national des indépendants et paysans* (National Center of Independents and Farmers, CNIP) was largely backed by the colonial lobby and thus supported the war. Finally, the Gaullist *Rassemblement du peuple français* (Gathering of the French People, RPF), and its successor, the *Union pour la nouvelle république* (Union for the New Republic, UNR), as well as Gaullists outside of these parties, saw the preservation of French Algeria and the return to power of General de Gaulle as inextricably linked.<sup>827</sup> This political constellation would change considerably through the course of the war, as we will see, but such were the conditions under which the two main veterans' associations emerged.

The associations' positions on the war determined their stances toward the government, and the reception they would receive from legislators and especially the Ministry of Veterans. The UNCAFN and its ally the UNC considered themselves privileged partners of the state, invoking their patriotism and their support of the war effort to justify their political demands. The occasional use of sharp criticism, such as "Our most elementary rights have been ignored by Governments," only underscored the nationalist veterans' expectation of a reciprocal relationship with the state.<sup>828</sup> Moreover, Raymond Triboulet, the Minister of Veterans and War Victims from 1959 to 1962, was a

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<sup>826</sup>Shepard, 78.

<sup>827</sup>Berstein, "La peau de chagrin de «l'Algérie française»," 206.

<sup>828</sup>B. Lanneyrie, "Quand donc le titre d'ancien combattant sera-t-il accordé aux anciens d'Afrique du Nord?" *La Voix du combattant* 1229 (July 15, 1957): 5.

next-door neighbor and family friend of the UNCAFN President, and much more likely to lend the nationalist veterans his ear.<sup>829</sup>

The FNACA, however, began from a confrontational outsider position, skeptical of the government. The fact that Minister Triboulet was an “active member” of the pro-war UNC illustrates the political challenges and isolation facing the FNACA in its early years.<sup>830</sup> Triboulet received a delegation from the leftist association as early as June 12, 1959, promising to study some of its concerns, but never paid the group the same heed that he did the UNC and UNCAFN.<sup>831</sup> Pro-French Algeria politicians were much more likely to be sympathetic to the nationalist veterans, and Triboulet was both pro-French Algeria and an ardent Gaullist.

The political tactics the associations used to pursue their goals followed naturally from their position vis-à-vis the government, and their respective political cultures, discussed in Chapter 4. Benefitting from the prestige of its venerable parent, and confident of its own respectability and patriotism, the UNCAFN relied primarily on press releases, elite delegations, and networking with other nationalist and far-right associations to achieve its aims.<sup>832</sup> The FNACA, however, much less certain to be ‘respectable’ in the era of its founding, sought to use the power of numbers and direct action to appeal to elected officials and the government. The rest of this chapter will examine manifestations of these respective political cultures—elite networking versus

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<sup>829</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 11 February 2014.

<sup>830</sup>“Impressions d’Algérie,” *La Voix du combattant* 1265 (March 1961): 1.

<sup>831</sup>“La FNAA reçue par M. Triboulet, Ministre des Anciens Combattants, le 12 juin 1959,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 2 (July-August 1959): 1.

<sup>832</sup>“Impressions d’Algérie,” 1.

collectivist mobilization—during the war, and discuss why the UNCAFN’s methods were more successful in this period, but also more vulnerable to changing political currents.

Months before the FNACA emerged, the UNCAFN was heavily involved in networks militating for the return of General de Gaulle. Its President, Porteu de la Morandière, similar to many nationalists and Army officers at the time, was a Gaullist by pragmatism: he believed that de Gaulle was “the only man capable” of saving French Algeria and ending the Fourth Republic’s impotence.<sup>833</sup> To this end, the UNCAFN found natural allies with Soustelle’s *Union pour le salut et le renouveau de l’Algérie française*.<sup>834</sup> A moderate civic association in favor of Algerian integration, the USRAF became the intellectual wing of the movement to return de Gaulle to power, launching propaganda and conferences at a feverish pace.<sup>835</sup> UNCAFN President Porteu de la Morandière sat on the Executive Committee of the USRAF, and frequently plugged for the association in the UNCAFN’s newspaper.<sup>836</sup> The USRAF even permitted itself to boast of the UNCAFN’s foundation as one of its accomplishments; this was of course an exaggeration, although Soustelle had contributed its first headquarters and permanent employee.<sup>837</sup>

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<sup>833</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Prise de Position,” *Djebel* 2 (May 1958): 1; Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>834</sup>This organization was launched with a petition published in *Le Monde* in April 1956 calling “for the salvation and renewal of French Algeria.” Catherine Brun and Olivier Penol-Lacassagne. *Engagements et déchirements: les intellectuels et la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2012), 17.

<sup>835</sup>Berstein, “La peau de chagrin de «l’Algérie française»,” 214; Christophe Nick, *Résurrection: naissance de la Ve République: un coup d’état démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998): 204.

<sup>836</sup>Letter to François Porteu de la Morandière from Secrétariat Général of the USRAF, UNCAFN archives, “USRAF” folder, 14 February 1958.

<sup>837</sup>“Union pour le salut et le renouveau de l’Algérie française: bilan de 15 mois d’activité,” USRAF pamphlet, UNCAFN archives, USRAF folder, 1958, 3.

The UNCAFN would do more than network behind the scenes, however. In early 1958, it signed on with the revolutionary *Comité d'action des associations nationales d'anciens combattants* (Action Committee of Veterans' Associations, CAANAC), which shared a headquarters in Paris with the USRAF.<sup>838</sup> Alexandre Sanguinetti, a fiery World War II commando as famous for his far-right revolutionary fervor as for a clanking metal leg that replaced the limb he had lost at Elba, presided over the group.<sup>839</sup> The CAANAC assembled twenty-six associations of veterans of the World Wars and Indochina, including the UNCAFN in February 1958.<sup>840</sup> On March 27, 1958, Sanguinetti led a delegation of veterans representing all the wars to meet with General de Gaulle, and asked Porteu de la Morandière to attend.<sup>841</sup>

The young veteran felt as intimidated as if he were being taken to “go see the pope,” but he posed a pointed question to the venerable General: “I would like very much for you to return, but if you come back, will you save French Algeria?”<sup>842</sup> de Gaulle, typical of his obfuscatory speaking style that helped convince diverse interlocutors he agreed with them, reportedly responded, ““Yes, but you see, France is a very difficult place to govern. [...] I say that because France is the rapprochement of a Left that never wants to have a politics of strength, and a Right that never wants to have a politics of generosity. [...] But, I think we can save French Algeria if we change the Constitution, in

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<sup>838</sup>Rémi Kauffer, “Le temps des réseaux,” 21-43 in dir. Roger Faliot and Jean Guisnel, *Histoire secrète de la Ve République* (Paris: Découverte, 2006), 27.

<sup>839</sup>Nick, 207.

<sup>840</sup>Letter from Alexandre Sanguinetti to François Porteu de la Morandière, 3 February 1958, UNCAFN archives, “Divers” folder.

<sup>841</sup>Nick, 302.

<sup>842</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.



order to give me the means for a solid politics.’”<sup>843</sup> This response, of course, only strengthened the resolve of the UNCAFN President and his colleagues to work toward de Gaulle’s return.

The CAANAC used the threat of the street to achieve its goals of defending French Algeria and installing de Gaulle. Civic veterans’ associations like the CAANAC had a disproportionate weight in Algeria at this time, because the Algerian departments had been denied political representation for two years under the state of emergency, and veterans’ associations there and in the Metropole had developed “a sort of civic cult of Franco-Muslim brotherhood of arms” based in the memory of shared sacrifice in the World Wars.<sup>844</sup> In July 1957, delegates of CAANAC, including UNC President Thomas, met with General Raoul Salan in Algiers to compose an oath that swore “opposition [...] to any measure that would threaten the integrity of the territory and French unity,” Sanguinetti insisting upon adding the revolutionary clause “by any means necessary.”<sup>845</sup> The UNCAFN was not yet a member of CAANAC when veterans in Paris and Algiers swore the oath, but would join soon after Sanguinetti’s deliberate turn toward this insurrectionary rhetoric. The UNCAFN thus made common cause with “the most dangerous” of all Gaullists seeking to overturn the Fourth Republic, the most likely to lead a mob in Paris, and the greatest supporter of revolutionary violence.<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>843</sup>Berstein, *Histoire du gaullisme*, 200, and Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>844</sup>Odille Rudelle, *Mai 58: De Gaulle et la République* (Paris: Plon, 1988), 133.

<sup>845</sup>Nick, 208.

<sup>846</sup>*Ibid.*, 518-519.

The CAANAC coordinated with Gaullist activists in the Metropole and Algeria to seize an event that had the potential to topple the Fourth Republic.<sup>847</sup> It seemed inevitable that the spark would come from Algiers, where the FLN's terrorism campaign was sowing "fear and despair" among the settlers.<sup>848</sup> On May 13, two separate demonstrations were planned in the Algerian capital—one, organized by military and political officials, in memory of three French soldiers recently executed by the FLN; and the second, organized by civilians in anger at the French government's handling of the war.<sup>849</sup> This date seemed propitious for fomenting a revolt: settlers' emotions were hot in response to the soldiers' execution as well as the recent dismissal of pro-French Algeria Governor-General Robert Lacoste, and the National Assembly was due to swear in Pierre Pflimlin as President of a new government that same day.<sup>850</sup>

When a French Algerian activist telephoned Paris to alert the USRAF of the demonstration planned in Algiers, a CAANAC meeting was taking place in the same building.<sup>851</sup> On hearing the news, Max Vignon, a UNC delegate and President of *Les Jeunes de l'UNC* (the UNC's youth branch), proposed that CAANAC plan a demonstration in Paris too, and Sanguinetti insisted that it should be the same date and time as in Algiers.<sup>852</sup> The CAANAC widely publicized a call for protestors on the radio

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<sup>847</sup>Berstein, *Histoire du gaullisme*, 207.

<sup>848</sup>Merry and Serge Bromberger, *Les 13 complots du 13 mai: ou la délivrance de Gulliver* (Paris: Fayard, 1959), 86.

<sup>849</sup>Danielle Tartakowsky, *Les Manifestations de rue en France, 1918-1968* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1997), 650-651.

<sup>850</sup>Nick, 359-360; Berstein, *Histoire du gaullisme*, 208.

<sup>851</sup>Nick, 360.

<sup>852</sup>Max Vignon, "Les Jeunes de l'UNC «Unis comme nos pères»,” *La Voix du combattant* 1241 (November 1958): 5; Nick, 360.

and in the press. The police in Paris feared a large attendance and the possibility of “incidents”: CAANAC leaders might organize and direct “commandos” to attack buildings of the leftist press, embassies of countries that had criticized France’s conduct in the war, or even the National Assembly or President of the Republic.<sup>853</sup> As it turned out, no great riot occurred in Paris, but leading Gaullists involved in the USRAF and the CAANAC did intend to “seize the event to impose [...] a Committee of Public Safety.”<sup>854</sup> This came to pass in Algiers, where pro-French Algeria activists and soldiers, encouraged by the civilian demonstrators present, rioted and seized the Government-General building, and General Jacques Massu announced the creation of a Committee of Public Safety. This would lead the French Interior Minister to declare a state of emergency.<sup>855</sup> And just as this riot in Algiers was bringing the French Fourth Republic to its knees, young nationalist veterans of Algeria stood in solidarity in the Metropole.

On the same day, officials and members of both the UNCAFN and the UNC joined a demonstration in Paris that gathered between the *Place de l’Étoile* and the *Arc de Triomphe*.<sup>856</sup> This protest took up the legacy of right-wing demonstrations from the 1930s—brandishing the threat of insurrection yet legitimizing itself with traditional symbols of nationalism, such as the French flag and the location of *l’Étoile*.<sup>857</sup> The departmental councils of Paris and the Seine showed their support by sending

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<sup>853</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l’Étoile par le ‘Comité d’action des Associations Nationales des Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” APP, B<sub>a</sub>.2453, “Manifestation des CAANAC le 13 mai 1958” folder, 13 May 1958; “A.S. de la manifestation organisée, à 18h.30, Place de l’Étoile,” APP, F<sub>d</sub> carton 4, “Manifestation des CAANAC le 13 mai 1958” folder, 13 May 1958.

<sup>854</sup>Kauffer, 29.

<sup>855</sup>Tartakowsky, 651.

<sup>856</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée à 18h.30, Place de l’Étoile,” *op. cit.*

<sup>857</sup>Tartakowsky, 650.

delegations.<sup>858</sup> Prominent attendees included Jean-Marie Le Pen and Jean-Maurice Demarquet, founders of the *Front national des combattants*, Yves Gignac, representing the extreme far-right *Association des combattants de l'Union Française* (Association of Veterans of the French Union, ACUF), and Jean-Baptiste Biaggi, founder of the *Parti Patriote Révolutionnaire* (Patriotic Revolutionary Party, PPR). About nine hundred protestors gathered initially, and when the Eternal Flame was re-lit under the *Arc de Triomphe*, demonstrators cried “French Algeria,” “Down with the Republic,” “Long live de Gaulle,” and even “Deputies in the Seine!”<sup>859</sup> UNCAFN President Porteu de la Morandière and leaders of other associations placed wreaths on the Sacred Tile under the Arc, as is traditional for the flame lighting ceremony.<sup>860</sup>

At about 6:50 pm, the demonstrators had grown to number about fifteen hundred, and Le Pen and Demarquet encouraged a contingent to march to the Palais Bourbon, the seat of the National Assembly. These demonstrators overturned a police barricade and marched up the Champs-Élysées.<sup>861</sup> Some protestors heaving cobblestones at the windows of the *Le Figaro* headquarters and others launching firecrackers at the police, the march continued, overturned more barricades, and eventually dispersed at the Place de la Concorde.<sup>862</sup> However, some individuals attempted to continue the protest—jeering

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<sup>858</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l'Étoile par le ‘Comité d'Action des Associations Nationales d'Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” APP, B<sub>a</sub>.2453, “CAANAC” folder, 13 May 1958, 2.

<sup>859</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l'Étoile par le ‘Comité d'Action des Associations Nationales d'Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” 3.

<sup>860</sup>*Ibid*, 4; François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise nationale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000), 13.

<sup>861</sup>Tartakowsky, 650; “A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l'Étoile par le ‘Comité d'Action des Associations Nationales d'Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” 4.

<sup>862</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l'Étoile par le ‘Comité d'Action des Associations Nationales d'Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” 4.

at the headquarters of the Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*, rallying around the statue of Jeanne d'Arc, breaking the windows of the Tunisian embassy.<sup>863</sup> In total, the police arrested fifty demonstrators that day, and four police officers were injured.<sup>864</sup> The May 13 protest in Paris was met with such enthusiasm from passers-by that the police worried about a follow-up demonstration on the 14th, and the possibility of attacks against the Elysée, the Hôtel Matignon, the headquarters of the newspaper *L'Express*, or communist associations.<sup>865</sup>

Throughout the country, radicalized rightist veterans joined in the spirit of May 13. UNCAFN-Paris had asked departmental sections to pressure local legislators to secure the resignation of the Pflimlin government.<sup>866</sup> Some individual leaders even took it upon themselves to follow the example of Algiers. A Monsieur Boutet, founder of the UNCAFN chapter in the Aude, announced a Committee of Public Safety, organized a demonstration, and was subsequently arrested; a UNCAFN leader in the Gard undertook a similar mission.<sup>867</sup> Back in the capital, the CAANAC held a plenary session on May 14, declared itself a Committee of Public Safety, and demanded a Government of Public Safety under de Gaulle, “ ‘the only savior of republican legality.’ ”<sup>868</sup> The next day, the UNCAFN President wrote a letter to President René Coty, asking him to call for General

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<sup>863</sup>Tartakowsky, 650.

<sup>864</sup>“A.S. de la manifestation organisée place de l'Étoile par le ‘Comité d'Action des Associations Nationales d'Anciens Combattants’ (C.A.A.N.A.C.),” 5.

<sup>865</sup>“A.S. de la diffusion d'un tract appelant à une manifestation ce jour, à 18 heures, à l'Arc de Triomphe,” APP, B<sub>a</sub>-2453, “CAANAC” folder, 14 May 1958, 1.

<sup>866</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Prise de position,” *Djebel* 2 (May 1958): 1.

<sup>867</sup>Boutet, transcribed speech, “Congrès séance du matin,” UNCAFN archives, Purple folder, 6 July 1958, 87-8.

<sup>868</sup>“Très confidentiel. A.S. de l'activité du C.A.A.N.A.C.,” APP, B<sub>a</sub>-2453, 14 May 1958.

de Gaulle “in the respect of republican legality.”<sup>869</sup> Although the UNCAFN would eventually leave the CAANAC following a dispute with Sanguinetti, it stood solidly with the Committee during the death-throes of the Fourth Republic.<sup>870</sup> The events of May presented a rupture in more ways than one: not only did they bring down the French regime, but they were the high-water mark of widespread Euro-French support for French Algeria.<sup>871</sup> The Metropole’s support for the war would only decline from this point, and as we will see, the new regime’s policies in ensuing years would disappoint and enrage many of the ‘men of May 13.’

While the crisis long-desired by Gaullists erupted in Algiers, not Paris, the CAANAC and its collaborators had played their part in a carefully laid plan to return the man from Colombey to power. At a press conference on May 19, Charles de Gaulle criticized the inability of “the exclusive regime of the parties” to resolve the problems in Algeria, declaring himself ready to reassume leadership of the government “if the people want it.” He promised to respect “fundamental public liberties,” just as he had “restored” them at the end of World War II, ending with what he hoped was a reassuring quip: “You think at the age of 67, I’m going to start the career of a dictator?”<sup>872</sup> Press reports of paratrooper divisions based in Corsica planning to invade mainland France indeed made it seem as though only de Gaulle’s return could save the

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<sup>869</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Lettre au Président Coty,” *Djebel* 2 (May 1958): 2.

<sup>870</sup>Alexis Thomas, transcribed speech, “Compte rendu de la réunion du 6 juillet 1959,” UNCAFN archives, “CECANAC” folder, 6 July 1959, 7.

<sup>871</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 182.

<sup>872</sup>“Conférence de Presse du Général de Gaulle,” APP B<sub>a</sub>2453, 19 May 1958, 1.

Republic from a military takeover.<sup>873</sup> On May 29, President René Coty called on Charles de Gaulle to return under exceptional conditions, until the Constitution for a Fifth Republic could be drawn up. The nation in its “immense majority” gratefully accepted “the founding myth of the Fifth Republic,” that de Gaulle had saved the nation from the brink of civil war.<sup>874</sup>

But some citizens would not acquiesce to this reassuring theater. Along with the widespread appeal to General de Gaulle, the coup of May 13 also “provoked a reflex of republican defense” among certain sectors of the population that feared the ascent of a conservative military strongman backed by the Army.<sup>875</sup> On May 28, the French Communist Party, the *Confédération général du travail* (General Confederation of Labor, CGT), and the *Union de la gauche* led a march “in defense of the Republic” between the *Place de la Nation* and *Place de la République* in Paris, a symbolic route for populist republican demonstrations.<sup>876</sup> Despite lacking a coherent political proposal, the participants in this demonstration united in one reaction: Charles de Gaulle posed a threat to the Republic.<sup>877</sup> Indeed, representatives of the Communist-leaning *Association nationale des anciens d’Algérie*, one of the FNACA’s predecessors, had presented a

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<sup>873</sup>Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization*, 74.

<sup>874</sup>Berstein, *Histoire du gaullisme*, 220.

<sup>875</sup>*Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>876</sup>Tartakowsky, 654; Pierre Nora, “Gaullists and Communists,” 205-239 in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past: Volume I: Conflicts and Divisions*, dir. Pierre Nora, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 233; “Objet: Manifestation de ‘défense républicaine’-Nation-République. 28 mai 1958,” Paris Police Prefecture, B<sub>a</sub>2453.

<sup>877</sup>Tartakowsky, 655.

motion “for the Salvation of the Republic” at the Hôtel Matignon on May 17, 1958.<sup>878</sup>

The FNACA was born in the shadow of de Gaulle’s return, and the date of its constitutive congress was highly symbolic: one week before the heavily promoted September 28, 1958 referendum on de Gaulle’s proposed Constitution for a Fifth French Republic.

Both veterans’ associations regarded the referendum on de Gaulle’s constitution as a plebiscite on the man himself, and on the continuation of the Algerian War. The FNACA at its constitutive congress described the referendum as “the plebiscite of the politics of the government and the military authorities in Algeria.” The newborn association declared “its categorical opposition to [...] the unlimited pursuit of the war,” denouncing “the intervention of the army in national politics, even if it is under the authority of General de Gaulle.”<sup>879</sup> Moreover, the FNACA worried that the proposed Constitution posed obstacles for the veterans’ movement: it feared that “the reduction of Parliament’s powers and the reinforcement of governmental prerogatives” would weaken the voices of veterans’ supporters in politics.<sup>880</sup> Scarce documentation remains from the FNACA in the period before the referendum, but the association’s newspaper decried the manipulation of the electorate, comparing the forceful and pervasive Gaullist “OUI” campaign to the new subliminal messaging techniques of American marketing, albeit “less intelligent and more vulgar.”<sup>881</sup>

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<sup>878</sup>“L’Historique de l’Action Militante des Anciens d’Algérie,” *La Tribune des Anciens d’Algérie* 1 special (February 1962), 1, Bibliothèque nationale française (BNF), FOL-JO-12655; “Délégations à la Présidence du Conseil,” APP, B<sub>a</sub>.2453, “Mai 1958” folder, 17 May 1958.

<sup>879</sup>“La FNAA: «non» à la politique du gouvernement et des autorités militaires en Algérie,” *Le Monde* (23 September 1958): 3.

<sup>880</sup>Bebiesse, “Notre Congrès...”, *op. cit.*, 2.

<sup>881</sup>“Entre les 819 lignes de la RTF,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 1, *op. cit.*, 7.



The UNCAFN also understood that the results of the referendum would indicate France's willingness to continue the war, and proceeded with hesitation. President Porteu de la Morandière affirmed at a Congress meeting in July 1958 that for the present, his association would "continue to consider that there is an identity of views between the [pro-French Algeria] movement of May 13, [...] and the current position of the government," but numerous leaders feared the referendum, knowing that the will of the majority could turn against them.<sup>882</sup> Capeau, leader of the Algiers chapter of the UNCAFN, privately voiced his preference of an authoritarian solution: "We want de Gaulle to say 'it's like this,' without a referendum."<sup>883</sup>

In general, the UNCAFN seemed uneasy regarding the advent of popular democracy under de Gaulle's proposed Constitution. Secretary General Gérard Le Marec observed that he "[did] not like democracy," but did not want the association to stand idly by before the vote in two months.<sup>884</sup> As it turned out, the UNCAFN had nothing to worry about for the moment, as the "OUI" campaign succeeded handily, with 79.3 percent of votes cast.<sup>885</sup> The majority of the French right voted in favor of the referendum, with most of the opposition coming from the left.<sup>886</sup> With the result of his first referendum, President de Gaulle felt he had a mandate to pursue his Algerian politics.

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<sup>882</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, transcribed speech, "Congrès séance du matin, 6 juillet 1958," *op. cit.*, 115.

<sup>883</sup>Capeau, transcribed speech, "Congrès séance du matin, 6 juillet 1958," *op. cit.*, 77.

<sup>884</sup>Gérard Le Marec, transcribed speech, "Congrès séance du matin, 6 juillet 1958," *op. cit.*, 97.

<sup>885</sup>Jean Poperen, *La gauche française: le nouvel âge 1958-1965* (Paris: Fayard, 1972), 103.

<sup>886</sup>*Ibid.*, 104.

De Gaulle became the central figure of the Algerian War, the person around whom all “hopes and disillusionments” would form.<sup>887</sup> The evolution of his policies on Algeria had both immediate and long-term political consequences. He had come to power in 1958 backed by pro-French Algeria activists and officers, and could not immediately alienate this bellicose base; at first he “had absolutely no room to maneuver.”<sup>888</sup> However, in the longer view, de Gaulle considered Algeria an obstacle to his plans to restore France to its “greatness,” and he sought to end the conflict as soon as possible, although not necessarily on the terms originally promised.<sup>889</sup> He needed to tread very carefully, responding to immediate military and political events while also keeping his long-term aim in mind.

In the first years after his return to power, de Gaulle relied on his authority as a military hero, drawing on his celebrated role as leader of the Free French Forces. Algeria had been home to the Provisional Government of the French Republic during the Second World War and had provided many troops to liberate France, and de Gaulle needed to acknowledge this legacy. In June 1958, he visited Algeria dressed in his military uniform, and gave speeches to reassure the settlers, uttering the now notorious phrases “I have understood you” in Algiers, and “Long live French Algeria!” in Mostaganem.<sup>890</sup> Yet in a press conference in October of the same year, de Gaulle called for a “brave men’s peace,”

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<sup>887</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 52.

<sup>888</sup>Jean Monneret, *La phase finale de la guerre d’Algérie* (Paris: Harmattan, 2010), 16.

<sup>889</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 185.

<sup>890</sup>*Ibid.*, 51.

inviting the FLN to put down its arms “without humiliation.”<sup>891</sup> This appeal to the honor of the FLN suggested that the French Commander in Chief’s stance on the conflict in Algeria was more flexible than many of his supporters had expected.

The watershed moment in de Gaulle’s Algerian trajectory, however, was the “self-determination” speech that he gave in September 1959. Regretting “the odious combat and fratricidal attacks” in the colony, de Gaulle asserted that “the future of Algerians belongs to the Algerians, not as the knife and the machine gun would impose it on them, but according to the will that they will legitimately express by universal suffrage.”<sup>892</sup> By acknowledging Algerians’ right to self-determination and the possibility of seceding from France by a vote, de Gaulle was removing the FLN’s major justification for the rebellion, but he was also explicitly renouncing the principle of the territorial indivisibility of the French Republic.<sup>893</sup>

This was a grave departure from republican tradition, but de Gaulle presented his decision as the result of international political pressures: “Given all of the circumstances in Algeria, the nation, and the world, I consider [this] necessary [...]”<sup>894</sup> The FLN had succeeded in internationalizing the conflict through yearly debates at the United Nations, much of the international coverage about France in Algeria highlighted atrocities and the injustice of colonialism, and de Gaulle’s “self-determination” speech was curiously timed

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<sup>891</sup>“Charles de Gaulle ‘Que vienne la paix des braves!’” Press conference, 23 October 1958, Radiodiffusion télévision française, Institut national de l’audiovisuel (INA), <<http://www.ina.fr/video/I00012415>>

<sup>892</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 24.

<sup>893</sup>Monneret, 12.

<sup>894</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 24.

just after a visit of President Eisenhower to Paris.<sup>895</sup> Although he sought to reassure the Army that the military effort was succeeding, visiting Algeria in the summer of 1959 and again in 1960 wearing his military uniform for a “mess hall tour,” President de Gaulle clearly desired a political solution to the conflict, and hoped to be able to negotiate with the FLN from a position of military strength.<sup>896</sup>

In a few short years, the Algerian War had turned “into a subject of interior French politics,” although Metropolitans had regarded it as a distant foreign affair a few years earlier.<sup>897</sup> By 1961, the pro-French Algeria contingent was severely isolated in French public opinion.<sup>898</sup> It became increasingly clear that the conflict required a political solution, even though the French Army had had the upper hand over the ALN on a military level since 1958.<sup>899</sup> When de Gaulle’s referendum on Algerian national self-determination came up in January 1961, the UNCAFN dismissed its political importance, still preferring a military solution to the conflict: “when a Country is disposed to undergo sacrifices during the time necessary to attain success, it wins. With or without a referendum.”<sup>900</sup>

However, the FNACA took hope from the discourse of self-determination and the opening of talks with the FLN. In summer 1961, some of its members traveled to Évian, where the negotiations with FLN spokesmen were beginning, “to demand a frank and

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<sup>895</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 10.

<sup>896</sup>*Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>897</sup>“Union Démocratique des Anciens d’Algérie, Programme,” 1.

<sup>898</sup>Shepard, 73.

<sup>899</sup>Monneret, 11.

<sup>900</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Maintenir,” *Djebel 16* (January 1961): 1.

loyal application of self-determination.” The protestors were eventually kicked out of the Haute-Savoie, the FNACA blaming an “admirable governmental logic, according to which the Sahara becomes French and Évian a foreign land to citizens of our country.”<sup>901</sup> Despite the immediate failure of this mission, the FNACA would rely increasingly on such direct action in the years to come.

In response to the opening of negotiations with the FLN and the perceived governmental abandonment of the war effort, aggrieved generals André Zeller, Edmond Jouhaud, Maurice Challe, and Raoul Salan took control of the Algerian capital on April 21, 1961. This crisis again made civil war seem possible, if not imminent. Although the mass of conscripts did not join the putsch, several regiments of paratroopers and of the Foreign Legion did, revealing a political split between conscripts and professional soldiers. This ultimate break with discipline posed a quandary to the UNCAFN, which likely would have supported another revolt to save French Algeria when it seemed that de Gaulle was ready to ‘abandon’ it, but felt bound to toe the line of republican legality.

Three days into the putsch, President Porteu de la Morandière sent a confidential memo to departmental leaders, urging prudence and seeking to maintain top-down control of the organization: “do not engage yourself anywhere without precise instructions from the National Steering Committee.”<sup>902</sup> Although he acknowledged that he “would have preferred that these events did not happen,” Porteu de la Morandière reminded his cadres to be faithful to the Army, the only force “that [could] stop a civil

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<sup>901</sup>«*«Virtuellement» satisfaits,*” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 7 (July 1961): 1.

<sup>902</sup>«Confidentiel: Présidents départementaux seulement,” UNCAFN archives, “UNCAFN” folder, 24 April 1961, 1.

war and a Communist coup de force.”<sup>903</sup> Publicly, as well, the association refused to take a stand against the instigators of the putsch: “it is infinitely painful to us to judge the men who were our respected leaders while we were in uniform. So we will say nothing.”<sup>904</sup>

In contrast to the nationalist veterans’ silence, the FNACA denounced the grave dangers it perceived in the generals’ putsch. The association took up the growing left-wing discourse of a ‘fascist’ threat emerging in Algeria, the term applied broadly to denounce authoritarian militarism and intended to liken pro-French Algeria officers to Nazis in occupied France. The FNACA felt it had the support of public opinion, “against fascism and for the rapid opening of negotiations that should lead to peace in Algeria.”<sup>905</sup> The FNACA thus positioned itself against ‘fascism’ during a period of growing public opposition to the war, while the UNCAFN was tainted with the brush of *Algérie française*, which was daily becoming more distasteful to the public and much of the government. The putsch was put down in three days, de Gaulle again donning his military uniform to belittle the “handful of retired generals” in a televised appearance. The FNACA celebrated the fact that conscripts resisted the putsch, calling them “guardians of the honor of our Army,” and demanding a purge of all the putschist soldiers and officers.<sup>906</sup>

The putsch foreshadowed the reversal in the associations’ respective power and prestige. Because of the changing trajectory of de Gaulle’s Algerian politics, the FNACA, in opposing the putsch and supporting the President’s desire to negotiate with

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<sup>903</sup>“Confidentiel: Présidents départementaux seulement,” UNCAFN archives, “UNCAFN” folder, 24 April 1961, 2.

<sup>904</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>905</sup>Paul Debiesse, “La F.N.A.A. et l’Algérie,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 6 (May 1961): 7.

<sup>906</sup>“Communiqué de presse,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 6 (May 1961): 2.

the FLN, was *de facto* standing with the military strongman it had opposed just three years earlier. Meanwhile the UNCAFN, which had allied with right-wing revolutionaries to enable de Gaulle's return, found itself marginalized once it refused to stand with de Gaulle against the putsch, because he had decided to open negotiations with the FLN.

By the fall of 1961, the UNCAFN was isolated, as some of its most powerful patrons had lost their political standing. The USRAF had disbanded soon after the events of May 1958, and Jacques Soustelle had been dismissed from the cabinet in 1960. The Ministry of Defense stopped supporting the UNCAFN in 1961 when it remained "too *Algérie française*" for the government's taste, and because it refused to publicly support de Gaulle's Algerian policy.<sup>907</sup> In November of that year, the President of the nationalist group explained that the UNCAFN's newspaper was not published for months since "we are very poor," but the association would start printing a page in the UNC's monthly newspaper.<sup>908</sup> Henceforth, the UNCAFN could legitimately boast of its "independence from political formations and the Government," but the association would have to fund its newsletter with advertisements for Catholic marriage, wine, and royal jelly.<sup>909</sup>

A few months before the generals' putsch was launched, the fiercest remaining supporters of French Algeria including General Raoul Salan and activist Pierre Lagaille had assembled the clandestine OAS paramilitary group, which conducted murders, kidnappings, and bombings in a desperate last attempt to abort Algerian independence, or merely vent blind rage. The pro-French Algeria camp had always

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<sup>907</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014; Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!*, 20.

<sup>908</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "Reprenons le contact," *La Voix du Combattant* 1271 (November 1961): 8.

<sup>909</sup>*Idem.*

claimed to support the “fraternity” of Muslims and Frenchmen, but in the grim final months of the war, the OAS sought only to provoke antipathy between the two communities.<sup>910</sup> Neither the FNACA nor the UNCAFN would emerge unscathed as the OAS waged its scorched earth campaign in Algeria and the Metropole.

Because of their involvement in far right and nationalist networks, both the UNCAFN and its ally the UNC fell into varying degrees of complicity with the OAS. Jean-Yves Alquier, the co-founder and first President of the UNCAFN, was arrested in 1961 on suspicion of belonging to an OAS network.<sup>911</sup> Horace Savelli, who had just been named the UNC’s new National President after Alexis Thomas’ death in January 1962, became the leader of an important OAS cell in western France (*OAS-Ouest*) and was arrested in March 1962.<sup>912</sup> He was imprisoned but would be amnestied in 1966.<sup>913</sup> On top of these high level connections, many rank-and-file UNCAFN members living in Algeria, especially in cities like Algiers, Constantine and Oran, supported the OAS “in varying degrees,” as might be expected of recently demobilized soldiers fearing the loss of their settler colony.<sup>914</sup> Although UNCAFN President Porteu de la Morandière acknowledges he “felt much sympathy” for the OAS because “their backs were against the wall,” and was solicited by several friends to join the paramilitary, he says he did not join because

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<sup>910</sup>Monneret, 24.

<sup>911</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>912</sup>“L’UNC en grand deuil, Alexis Thomas n’existe plus!” *La Voix du combattant* 1274 (February 1962): 1; “Au procès du réseau OAS de l’Ouest, des accusés mettent en cause les méthodes <<anti-subversives>> qu’on leur a enseignés,” *Le Monde* (13 September 1962): 8; “Communiqué de l’Union Nationale des Combattants,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1276 (April 1962): 1.

<sup>913</sup>“Libres,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1313 (January 1966): 1.

<sup>914</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.



he thought they were out of touch with reality and their revolution was futile.<sup>915</sup>

However, his association never publicly disavowed the OAS. Porteu de la Morandière further reports having frequently received death threats in this period from the “Gaullist secret police,” who targeted him and other prominent nationalists to make sure they did not join the terrorist group.<sup>916</sup>

The FNACA loudly criticized the OAS, accusing the group of benefiting from “numerous complicities in the State.”<sup>917</sup> In 1962, the Paris committee organized an anti-OAS protest, in solidarity against a threat received by one of its members; several leaders including Maurice Sicart were arrested.<sup>918</sup> And in February 1962, five days after eight French citizens had died during police repression of an anti-OAS and antiwar protest around the Charonne metro station, the FNACA declared the government’s emergency ban on all demonstrations to be “insane.” It called for France to “truly mobilize” against “the criminal maneuvers of the OAS,” and announced that President Servan-Schreiber, the National Office, and all members of FNACA-Paris would attend a follow-up demonstration at Place de la République.<sup>919</sup> The events of “Charonne” and the protest that ensued remain one of the core memories of the French left from this era—a time of

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<sup>915</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014.

<sup>916</sup>Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014. He likely means the “unofficial auxiliary police force,” composed of Gaullist activists and “armed and financed secretly by the government,” whose mission was to fight the OAS in Algeria and the Metropole. The term de la Morandière used is “*les barbouzes*,” which is a slang term for spy, and how this parallel police force was often colloquially designated. Monneret, 43.

<sup>917</sup>“100 Anciens d’Algérie s’adressent à la nation,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 10 (March 1962): 4.

<sup>918</sup>William Fort, *Tous à jour de leur cōtisation! Témoignages sur Maurice Sicart* (Paris: FNACA de Paris, 2008), 29.

<sup>919</sup>“Les diverses manifestations anti-OAS de lundi: les organisations précisent leurs consignes,” *Le Monde* (13 February 1962): 2.

antifascist union, helping to obscure the left's earlier equivocation on the Algerian question—and the FNACA made good its democratic rhetoric by participating in this march.<sup>920</sup>

The cease-fire was official on March 19, 1962, but the war's bloody wake was far from receding. At the end of the month, just after the cease-fire had gone into effect, and after almost a month of relative calm in Paris, the OAS bombed fifteen locations in the capital during a single night, including the FNACA's headquarters, which also housed the local section of the *Confédération générale du travail* labor union.<sup>921</sup> No one was hurt or killed in this night of plastique, but for the FNACA it was a near miss as the National Juridical Commission had just concluded a meeting in the building.<sup>922</sup> Days after the bombing, the FNACA published a defiant editorial in its newspaper stating that the OAS had punished the group for its steadfast opposition to the war since 1958.<sup>923</sup>

The OAS aimed wide in its campaign of vengeance, however, and the same night it struck other personalities not known for their leftist allegiances or antiwar positions. Targets included the journalist Jean Lartéguy, famous for his dark 1960 Algerian War novel *Les Centurions*, UNC Vice President Paul Galland, and Doctor Jean-François LeMaire, a 'man of May 13' whose politics had evolved. LeMaire had recently quit the National Council of the UNC after President Savelli's arrest, explaining he sought distance from “ ‘the activist orientation that some, who do not hesitate to participate in

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<sup>920</sup>Jim House and Neil MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 256.

<sup>921</sup>“L'Action de OAS en Algérie et en Métropole,” *Le Monde* (30 March 1962): 1.

<sup>922</sup>J. Martinet, “Le plasticage de notre siège: le prix de notre clairvoyance,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 11 (April 1962): 1.

<sup>923</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

subversion against the state, intend to give an association which should be apolitical.’<sup>924</sup>

Apparently the OAS sought to make an example of him. In the months surrounding the end of the war, the harrowing exactions of the OAS in mainland France created a strong public association between the pro-French Algeria camp and far right extremism, one that persists to the present day.<sup>925</sup>

The last year of the Algerian War saw the conflict’s direct appearance in the Metropole: the spectacular violence in the colony as well as events in the mainland were more memorable to average French citizens than the drawn-out progression of eight years of distant war.<sup>926</sup> By 1962, after years of evolution in public opinion, there was nothing radical about de Gaulle’s decision to allow Algerian independence; it was reinforced by the French population’s growing desire for peace, as well as the alienation of most Algerians from France through the course of the war.<sup>927</sup> Yet the fractures of this year would have profound effects on French society and politics in the coming decades.

The advent of Algerian independence in 1962 established the conditions in which the FNACA could rise, and the UNCAFN decline, reflecting political realignments throughout the country. Press releases, delegations, and laudable acts of mutual aid notwithstanding, the UNCAFN had largely rested on its laurels during the war; its elite-based conservative political culture was only effective when politicians sharing its view

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<sup>924</sup>“L’Action de OAS en Algérie et en Métropole,” *Le Monde, op. cit.*, 1, 4; “À propos d’une démission,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1276 (April 1962): 1; “Après l’arrestation du président de l’UNC, le Docteur J.-F. LeMaire quitte le conseil national de l’association,” *Le Monde* (9 March 1962): 2. In addition, LeMaire had left the National Administration of the UNCAFN in 1960, in protest of the association’s support for a short-lived civilian revolt in Algiers known as the “week of barricades.”

<sup>925</sup>Berstein, “La peau de chagrin de «l’Algérie française»,” 216.

<sup>926</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 180-1.

<sup>927</sup>*Ibid.*, 184.

of the war were in power. As de Gaulle's Algerian policies evolved, and it became clear he was seeking a political rather than a military solution to the conflict, the UNCAFN, along with much of the nationalist right and far right, felt bitterly betrayed by the military hero it had helped bring to power to 'save' French Algeria. The nationalist veterans lamented the futility of France's sacrifices in the war; as President Porteu de la Morandière wrote, "We were told that there would be neither victor, nor vanquished, but we had gone to defend a French province."<sup>928</sup>

The FNACA, which had strongly opposed de Gaulle's return, exulted along with the anticolonialist left at the decolonization that he presided over. A FNACA editorial in March 1962 proclaimed, "Our immense hope has finally been transformed into an explosion of joy."<sup>929</sup> After 1962, these associations continued the political methods they developed during the war, but as we will see in Chapter 6, the FNACA's methods saw greater success after the war, as the anti-colonial narrative of the war grew in strength among the population, and as the hold of Gaullists on the government gradually lessened.

De Gaulle's political trajectory, and the evolution through which he led public opinion, resulted in changed prospects for both veterans' associations. By the end of the war, "the overwhelming majority" of France viewed Algerian independence "as a triumph" of de Gaulle's regime, even though at the beginning of the conflict in 1954, French Algeria had been "the object of a national consensus."<sup>930</sup> This transformation in

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<sup>928</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "À propos du cessez-le-feu," *La Voix du combattant* 1278 (April 1962): 8.

<sup>929</sup>Paul Fromonteil, "Un immense espoir: La Paix en Algérie," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 10 (March 1962): 1.

<sup>930</sup>Berstein, "La peau de chagrin de «l'Algérie française»," 259, 203.

political attitudes allowed the FNACA to present itself as a victor along with de Gaulle, for having opposed the war from the beginning. It also meant that the association would need to expend far less energy defending its anticolonial narrative of the war, and could devote its collectivist political culture and direct action tactics to fighting for veterans' rights.

For decades after the war's end, however, those who had supported French Algeria "felt like internal émigrés in the Fifth Republic," and it was these aggrieved veterans who were most likely to join the UNCAFN, attracted by its emphasis on military pride and its narrative of a stolen victory in Algeria.<sup>931</sup> This association would perpetuate the interpretation, widespread on the nationalist right, that de Gaulle had "sold off" Algeria and "duped" those who had supported him in 1958.<sup>932</sup> And the traditional, honor-based elite political culture of this association led the UNCAFN to perceive de Gaulle's "abandonment" of Algeria almost as a personal insult. The following chapter will explore how these two associations' political positions after the war influenced their campaigns for veterans' recognition, and their reactions in the wake of "the events of May 1968."

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<sup>931</sup>Berstein, "La peau de chagrin de «l'Algérie française»," 217.

<sup>932</sup>Stora, *Le mystère de Gaulle*, 185.

## **CHAPTER 6: ELITE SPOKESMEN AND MASS ACTION: THE SECOND “DAYS OF MAY” AND THE STRUGGLE FOR VETERANS’ RECOGNITION**

By the time of the Fifth Republic’s official recognition of veterans of Algeria in 1974, the political fortunes of the two major Algerian War veterans’ associations had largely reversed. Although both associations share credit for major achievements in veterans’ legislation in the 1960s and 1970s, in this period the FNACA was on the ascendant, and the UNCAFN’s power was fading. Examining the reasons behind this reversal helps us understand the unforeseen consequences of the Algerian War in postcolonial France, and highlights the changing political currents in the first decades of the Fifth Republic.

To do so, we must situate Algerian War veterans’ politics between two moments a decade apart, both referred to in France as the “days of May.” Charles de Gaulle had returned to power on the wings of the May 13, 1958 revolt that civilians and soldiers, dismayed with the Fourth Republic’s handling of the Algerian War, had launched in Algiers. As detailed in Chapter 5, the UNCAFN’s leaders plunged headfirst into the movement to bring back Charles de Gaulle, believing him to be the only man who could ‘save’ French Algeria. But many “men of May 13” in the UNCAFN and in society would be disillusioned by de Gaulle’s political evolution toward Algerian independence. And the decade between 1958 and 1968 saw deep political and social changes in France, which would work to the FNACA’s benefit, as greater numbers of French people began

to see the Algerian War as a mistake, and chafed at the monarchical political style of a leader whose return to power the FNACA had opposed ten years earlier. On May 13, 1968, following student protests at the universities of Nanterre and the Sorbonne, a general strike began that would all but shut down the country, manifesting a widespread rejection of the Gaullist program. The protestors of 1968 were well aware of the mirror-image symbolism of the “two Mays”: a common chant heard in demonstrations was, ““Ten years is long enough!””<sup>933</sup>

How did the two major associations for veterans of Algeria respond to this national revolt against the Gaullist order? Furthermore, what political lessons did these associations draw from “the events of 1968” as they worked toward their longtime goal of veterans’ recognition, finally achieved in 1974? The two organizations deployed divergent strategies toward political change—the UNCAFV, with its initial political access, relied on elite networking and incrementalism, while the FNACA, a political outsider in this period, deployed mass mobilization with a confrontational attitude toward the state. The fight for veterans’ recognition was a testing ground for these two strategies under Gaullism.

While social interest groups in modern France have tended to mobilize in reaction against government policy rather than promoting it, this is a rare case in which civic associations pressured the state to enact novel legislation.<sup>934</sup> Moreover, the campaign for recognition of veterans of Algeria, although an important window onto the political

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<sup>933</sup>Pierre Nora, “Gaullists and Communists,” 205-239 in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past: Volume I: Conflicts and Divisions*, dir. Pierre Nora, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 229.

<sup>934</sup>Frank L. Wilson, *Interest-group politics in France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 222.

afterlife of the war in France, has never been studied.<sup>935</sup> This chapter compares both associations' activism toward official recognition of veterans, and will examine how this recognition—itsself an initial state acknowledgment of the Algerian War—is one of the unexamined legacies of “1968” in France.

In the Gaullist period (1958-1974), the Fifth Republic had numerous reasons to avoid recognizing the soldiers who had served in North Africa. After 1962, the state acted as if Algeria had never happened, and its veterans were a reminder of a past the state wished would pass.<sup>936</sup> There was also a generational obstacle: to the World War veterans and former Resistance fighters dominating politics in this period, the Algerian conflict, a counterinsurgency against a non-state adversary, did not always appear to have been a “real” war.<sup>937</sup> Most concretely, recognizing the veterans of Algeria would require the state to promise a considerable sum in pensions and other benefits to the conscripts and reservists sent to fight the war, on top of the compensation and benefits owed to professional soldiers.

Regardless of one's political interpretation of the Algerian War, it was a trauma for French society, and France's desire to forget the war helped render its veterans invisible. Yet with a conservative estimate of 1.1 million conscripts who served in North Africa during the Algerian War—not even considering reservists, Legionnaires and

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<sup>935</sup>Serge Barcellini, “Réflexions sur les associations Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre,” 25-33 in dir. Bruno Benoît and Marc Frangi, *Guerres et associations: actes du colloque de Lyon, 29 septembre 2001* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 2003): 28.

<sup>936</sup>Frank Renken, “De Gaulle et l'effacement de la question coloniale,” trans. Ingebord Rabenstein-Michel, 173-177 in dir. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, *68: une histoire collective [1962-1981]* (Paris: Découverte, 2008): 177.

<sup>937</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, “La dernière génération du feu? Jalons pour une étude des anciens combattants français de la guerre d'Algérie,” *Politique, culture, société* 3 no. 3 (Nov.-Dec. 2007): 6, doi: 10.3917/hp/003.0006.



career military—surviving veterans of Algeria composed well over ten percent of the active male population in 1962.<sup>938</sup> Returning to a society more interested in the growth of the economy and consumer culture than recalling the Algerian War, many veterans became politically active—to promote their views of the war, to serve their comrades in arms, and to achieve official recognition alongside the previous two combatant generations.

The movement for recognition of veterans of Algeria provided a test of the new strong executive model enshrined in the Constitution of the Fifth Republic. Placing executive power in the presidency rather than the legislature was unprecedented in French republican tradition, and it gave the President “wider powers than any other leader of liberal democracies in the world possessed” at the time.<sup>939</sup> President de Gaulle regarded his Ministers as technicians who carried out his policies, rather than as advisers.<sup>940</sup> Indeed, the chief political strategy of Gaullism was to “support the political objectives of the executive power” and to “neutralize Parliament and any potential obstacles it might present.”<sup>941</sup>

The “Copernican revolution” unleashed by the Gaullist victory and the creation of a new Constitution in 1958 gave an initial advantage to the well-connected UNCAFN.<sup>942</sup>

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<sup>938</sup>For the number of conscripts deployed minus fatalities during the war (1,156,327), see Jean-Charles Jauffret, *Soldats en Algérie 1954-1962: Expériences contrastées des hommes du contingent* (Paris: Autrement, 2011), 88. For the active male population according to the 1962 census (12.6 million), see Daniel Noin and Yvan Chauviré, *La population de la France* 6th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 2002): 186.

<sup>939</sup>Serge Berstein, *Histoire du gaullisme* (Paris: Perrin, 2001), 278.

<sup>940</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>941</sup>*Ibid.*, 517.

<sup>942</sup>*Ibid.*, 516.

Under the new constellation of power in the Fifth Republic, Ministers held priority over deputies in the National Assembly and could veto their proposals for the day's agenda.<sup>943</sup> This meant that a civil association would see greater legislative success if the President and relevant ministers already shared its political orientation.<sup>944</sup> Accordingly, the UNCAFN had greater access to the government while Ministers of Veterans and War Victims who shared its nationalist, pro-French Algeria viewpoint were in office. This meant that the FNACA required a different strategy than simply appealing to the Minister in the name of the Algerian generation.

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the two competing veterans' associations bore markedly different political cultures, which combined with specific narratives of the war to guide their action. The FNACA's political culture may best be described as collectivist mobilization, and its militancy reinforced itself with the narrative that all veterans of Algeria shared similar burdens, regardless of wartime experience, and could only defend their rights through the strength of numbers. Its leaders took a consistently confrontational attitude toward the state, assuming cynicism and pandering on the part of the politicians they encountered. The UNCAFN, however, drew on a traditional political culture based in private contacts and personal honor, and acted upon a narrative that veterans of Algeria formed an elite cadre of citizens with political acuity. Confident in their own respectability, its leaders held an accommodationist attitude toward the state, taking politicians to be men of their word unless proven otherwise, and appreciating incremental progress.

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<sup>943</sup>«La guerre d'Algérie a bien eu lieu,» *Le Monde* (7 June 1972): 6.

<sup>944</sup>Wilson, 224.

Both associations claimed unique credit for the state's official recognition of veterans of Algeria in 1974, when the Senate and the National Assembly passed a bill opening the *carte du combattant* (veteran's card) to those who had served in North Africa.<sup>945</sup> For the UNCAFN, this development "vindicated" its "perseverance."<sup>946</sup> Likewise, the FNACA proclaimed the success "incontestably" its own.<sup>947</sup> The *carte du combattant*, a legislative victory won in 1926 by veterans of the First World War, granted both material benefits and a weighty moral standing to veterans, in a society where bureaucratic categories almost seem to precede essence.<sup>948</sup> But the generation of French veterans of Algeria only gained official recognition twelve years after their war ended, following years of militancy—their campaign for recognition lasted longer than the campaign to create the *carte du combattant* in the first place. Today, both the FNACA, and the UNC, which merged with the UNCAFN in 1985, claim predominant credit for winning the *carte du combattant* for veterans of Algeria, but the evidence does not clearly vindicate either self-aggrandizing position.<sup>949</sup>

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<sup>945</sup>The National Assembly unanimously approved the bill on 28 June 1974, the Senate passed it on 17 October 1974, and the National Assembly approved the definitive version of the text on 21 November 1974 on the second reading. Citation from "Message du M. Alain Poher Président du Sénat à l'UNCAFN," *Les Cahiers du djebel* 11 (November 1974): 2.

<sup>946</sup>François Porteu de la Morandiere, "L'Heure du succès," *La Voix du combattant* 1398 (July-August 1974): 1.

<sup>947</sup>Jacques de Jæger, "La carte du combattant," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 120 supplement (October 1974): 1.

<sup>948</sup>The *carte du combattant*, as well as the *Office national du combattant*, a public establishment charged with administration of the card and the services it granted, were both instituted by Article 101 of the "Loi de finances de 19 décembre 1926," published in the *Journal officiel* on the 19th December 1926, p. 13172. The wording of the law itself highlighted the material benefits of the *carte du combattant*: "There is created a veterans' card which will be granted [...] to all persons having the right to receive the aid of the *Office national du combattant*." Citation from "La carte du combattant," *Les Cahiers du djebel* 12 (February 1975): 25.

<sup>949</sup>The FNACA claims "preponderant credit," and the UNC claims to be "at the origin" of the awarding of the *carte du combattant* to veterans of Algeria. "La FNACA," *Fédération nationale des anciens*

Despite fundamental enmity and divergent views of the war, these associations shared one conviction: the young Frenchmen who fought in Algeria *were* veterans. The UNCAFN's parent association held this view before the FNACA had even formed. In 1956, UNC President and World War I veteran Alexis Thomas explained to the Minister of Veterans and War Victims that "our young comrades [...] face the same risks [...] as if they were engaged in operations 'of war' [...]," and that his association demanded "[...] that they not be victims of a fiction imposed by [...] considerations of political opportunity."<sup>950</sup> The FNACA, however, although state recognition of veterans figured on its earliest platform, was a political outsider and did not have the confidence to make such direct demands of the government early on. Its appeals tended more toward pathos and irony, as in this 1966 editorial: "Since the end of the war, nothing has been done for us [...while] Algerian soldiers are recognized [...] by their government [...]."<sup>951</sup>

While both associations urged the recognition of veterans of Algeria, they invested their struggles for the *carte du combattant* with divergent meanings. For the UNCAFN, the veterans' card would confirm the dignity of soldiers sent to fight a morally correct war, whose military victory had been betrayed by politics. As President Porteu de la Morandière reflected in 1965, "The Army is beyond reproach. [...] We obtained our victory 'on the ground.'"<sup>952</sup> Thus, the emphasis was on moral recognition for soldiers

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*combattants en Algérie, Tunisie et Maroc* Web Site, <<http://www.fnaca.org/la-fnaca.aspx>>; and "Les Origines," *Union Nationale des Combattants* Web Site, <<http://www.unc.fr/presentation/les-origines/lhistorique>>.

<sup>950</sup>Alexis Thomas, "Les rappelés d'Algérie sont des combattants," *La Voix du combattant* 1220 (15 November 1956): 2.

<sup>951</sup>Jacques Mathé, "Éditorial," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 34 (March-April 1966): 1.

<sup>952</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, "Continuité et renouvellement," *La Voix du combattant* 1308 (June 1965): 8.

who did their duty. Recognition of veterans was, in the eyes of the nationalist group, critical to their elevation in national politics. President Porteu de la Morandière felt that “our civic mission was not [...] credible if we were not real veterans.”<sup>953</sup> Hence, veterans’ recognition was secondary to the ultimate goal of political prestige for members of the right wing association, a place at the national table in return for their service to the country.

But for the FNACA, the *carte du combattant* was the ultimate prize itself: it promised compensation for the state’s having “used us for many months,” an acknowledgement of “the damage caused” to veterans and their families.<sup>954</sup> The emphasis was thus on reparation for the material and moral suffering caused by an unwanted war. A FNACA editorial early into its campaign excoriated the attitude of the Minister of Veterans, who, like Candide’s tutor, believed there was “no problem with veterans of Algeria and that everything is going for the best in the best of worlds.”<sup>955</sup> The FNACA painted a picture of neglected citizen-soldiers who had earned rights because of their suffering on behalf of the nation.

Demographic differences in membership influenced the associations’ views on whether veterans’ recognition should be primarily symbolic, or material. The UNCAFN’s members and leaders—former reservists and career military predominating—had generally been in their mid-twenties to early thirties on deployment in Algeria, and were thus more likely to be established in careers that they could continue upon

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<sup>953</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>954</sup>Guy Ramis, “La grande misère des démobilisés,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 11 (April 1962): 4.

<sup>955</sup>Paul Fromonteil, “Notre Congrès national: Faire reconnaître notre droit à réparation,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 17 (April 1963): 1.

demobilization.<sup>956</sup> And the professional soldiers who were attracted to the UNCAFN's rhetoric of military pride, nationalism, and colonial nostalgia already had the guarantee of material benefits for their service. The FNACA, on the other hand, was primarily composed of former conscripts, who had been in their late teens or early twenties on deployment, and would be more interested in the promise of material benefits—including professional retraining, loans, and a pension.<sup>957</sup>

Although many national leaders of both associations were already entitled to the veterans' card, either for war injuries or for combat decorations, they came to opposing conclusions about who deserved the veterans' card, and why.<sup>958</sup> In a Congress meeting in 1958, the UNCAFN President confessed it was “a bit of a symbolic gesture” to ask for the veterans' card, but maintained that it was urgent to do so before left wing groups could take political advantage of the situation.<sup>959</sup> The next year the UNCAFN “voluntarily renounced the pension attached to the *carte du combattant*,” seeking to deny the Minister any financial argument.<sup>960</sup> The General Treasurer of the UNCAFN, Henri Bohly, proposed that veterans receive official status “without any particular claim attached,” in order to welcome veterans of Algeria into the fraternity of combat.<sup>961</sup> The

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<sup>956</sup>“Djebel: Le journal d'une génération, 40.000 abonnés,” UNCAFN publicity pamphlet, UNCAFN archives, “1962 Documents divers” folder, undated.

<sup>957</sup>Frédéric Rouyard, “Les commémorations de la guerre d'Algérie,” Master's thesis in history, Université de Paris-X-Nanterre, dir. Philippe Levillain (1989): 50-52.

<sup>958</sup>“La commission «ad hoc» se prononce pour l'attribution de la carte du combattant aux anciens d'AFN,” *Le Monde* (5 July 1973): 7.

<sup>959</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, transcribed speech, “Congrès séance du matin, 6 juillet 1958,” *op. cit.*, 52.

<sup>960</sup>“La carte du combattant,” *Djebel* 6 (January 1959): 7.

<sup>961</sup>“Un Congrès vivant et constructif: Les jeunes,” *La Voix du combattant* 1247 (May 1959): 2.

group eventually formulated a request for a card specific to the Algerian War, and only for those who “merit it.”<sup>962</sup>

The UNCAFN President asserted that awarding the card to all veterans of Algeria “would devalue it,” since so many troops deployed had never seen regular combat, and recognition was only conferred to veterans of the World Wars who had seen three months of sustained combat.<sup>963</sup> But regardless of whether individual conscripts had experienced combat, the FNACA maintained that all veterans of Algeria were victims of the state, subject to the perils of ambushes in North Africa, and silence and neglect back home in France. It thus demanded the same card held by veterans of earlier wars for all veterans of Algeria.<sup>964</sup> It mocked the UNCAFN’s separate and meritocratic veterans’ card, which it disdainfully mocked as only recognizing “ ‘the true’ soldiers.”<sup>965</sup>

Following the logic of their positions, and drawing on their diverging political cultures, both associations pursued markedly different campaigns for the veterans’ card. The UNCAFN lobbied in its elite networks, expecting its nationalist credentials and support of the war to facilitate political access. In April of 1958, months before the return of de Gaulle and the formation of the FNACA, the UNCAFN National President addressed a letter to Loire deputy Georges Bidault, as well as other nationalist politicians including André Morice and Jacques Soustelle, asking them to “urgently” file a bill to

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<sup>962</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “La carte aux A.F.N.,” *La Voix du combattant* 1384 (March 1973): 1.

<sup>963</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Chiche?,” *La Voix du combattant* 1377 (June 1972): 1.

<sup>964</sup>Maurice Sicart, “Pour les trois générations, la même carte!,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 84 (June 1971): 1.

<sup>965</sup>*Idem.*

recognize veterans.<sup>966</sup> The UNCAFN President claimed that “certain Mendésiste and far left groups” were preparing to write their own bill, looking to use it “to electoral and demagogic ends,” and thus he preferred that a proponent of French Algeria first depose the motion.<sup>967</sup> He did add that the veterans’ card would bring “precious aid” to veterans who are “victims of peacetime legislation,” but material considerations were never foremost in his mind.<sup>968</sup> This proposed law did materialize, but the UNCAFN continued its elite networking before the fall of the Fourth Republic. In July 1958, the association wrote to the Ministry of Veterans, suggesting that “this simple card would symbolize the Fraternity of Arms that unites the different combat generations.” By September 1958, the association was surprised to have received no response.<sup>969</sup>

Obtaining the veterans’ card under the Fifth Republic proved more difficult than the UNCAFN had expected. UNCAFN President François Porteu de la Morandière had the opportunity to privately petition the Fifth Republic’s new Minister of Veterans and War Victims, Raymond Triboulet, in late 1958, while they were traveling by airplane together.<sup>970</sup> Not only was Triboulet an “active member” of the UNCAFN’s parent organization, the UNC, but he was a family friend and next-door neighbor of the UNCAFN President.<sup>971</sup> Believing that these ties would give him a sympathetic audience,

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<sup>966</sup>Letter from François Porteu de la Morandière to Georges Bidault, UNCAFN archives, “Proposition de loi” folder, 1 April 1958, 1.

<sup>967</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>968</sup>Letter from François Porteu de la Morandière to Georges Bidault, UNCAFN archives, “Proposition de loi” folder, 1 April 1958, 1.

<sup>969</sup>“Carte du combattant,” *Djebel* 3 (September 1958): 1.

<sup>970</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 15 February 2014.

<sup>971</sup>“Impressions d’Algérie,” *La Voix du combattant* 1265 (March 1961), 1; François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 11 February 2014.



Porteu de la Morandière insisted that the conflict in Algeria was a real war, and young Frenchmen were dying, but Triboulet never deviated from the official government position that Algeria was only undergoing “peacekeeping operations” and not a state of war.<sup>972</sup> It was too much to ask Triboulet—a former Resistance fighter, ardent Gaullist, and newly appointed Minister of de Gaulle—to contradict his government’s position on the “events of Algeria,” and to recognize young men completing their mandatory national military service in North Africa as veterans.

The UNCAFN would eventually begin more visible political efforts, such as asking presidential candidates their positions on the veterans’ card, but did not follow up with concerted political campaigns.<sup>973</sup> The UNCAFN was overly confident in its weight and pursued politics mainly from the top, considering itself the voice of an elite generation of veterans. Although it initially had high-level government support during the war, the UNCAFN’s “privileged contact” with Triboulet and other officials, and attempts to make its demands palatable to them, were not enough to overcome the state’s adamant refusal to acknowledge that Algeria had been a war.<sup>974</sup> That would take a different kind of pressure.

Lacking privileged contacts itself, the FNACA needed to methodically build up “the pressure of numbers” both in its own membership and among elected officials to overcome governmental opposition.<sup>975</sup> Because of the difficulty in disciplining and

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<sup>972</sup>“Impressions d’Algérie,” *La Voix du combattant* 1265 (March 1961): 1.

<sup>973</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Du nouveau pour la Carte du Combattant?,” *La Voix du combattant* 1347 (June 1969): 12.

<sup>974</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 11 February 2014.

<sup>975</sup>Michel Sabourdy, interview, 11 May 2014.

mobilizing individual members, the associations with the largest and most cohesive memberships have tended to be the most successful in pushing policy in modern France.<sup>976</sup> Although the Minister of Veterans and War Victims received its delegations as early as 1959, the FNACA was disappointed by repeated broken promises to study its concerns.<sup>977</sup> While Minister Triboulet did eventually propose the creation of “a special distinction” that would grant veterans of Algeria access to services such as loans and professional education through the state veterans’ office (ONACVG), the FNACA refused to be diverted from its goal of full recognition through the same card as for veterans of earlier wars, and the pension, priority medical care, and loans that it promised.<sup>978</sup> Although frustrated with constant obstruction by the Minister, FNACA leaders reassured themselves constantly that “a stronger FNACA will have even more weight in the eyes of deputies.”<sup>979</sup>

The FNACA’s militants did not overlook “any form of action likely to rapidly lead to its goals.”<sup>980</sup> The association needed as strong a showing as possible in civil society to counter the power of the executive branch in blocking legislation. Early on, it built a network of support among other organizations on the political left. By 1961, unions such as the *Confédération général du travail*, the *Confédération française de travailleurs chrétiens* (CFTC), and the student association, the *Union nationale des*

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<sup>976</sup>Wilson, 227.

<sup>977</sup>“La FNAA reçue par M. Triboulet,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 2 (July-August 1959): 1; “Lettre ouverte à M. le Ministre des A. C.,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 5 (January 1961): 5.

<sup>978</sup>“Dernière minute: En délégation auprès de M. Triboulet (Ministre des A.C.),” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 5 (January 1961): 1.

<sup>979</sup>Maurice Sicart, “Bonne année,” *Echo FNACA* 3 (September 1969): 1.

<sup>980</sup>“Action auprès des élus,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 66 (December 1969): 3.

*étudiants de France* (UNEF), had written letters supporting the FNACA's veterans' card campaign.<sup>981</sup> Also in 1961, the FNACA launched its first of many national postcard campaigns, in which it asked members to collect signatures for a petition asking the government for the veterans' card.<sup>982</sup> After the war's end, the association held frequent public information sessions throughout the country to sensitize the public to the plight of demobilized conscripts, and build awareness of its campaign for state recognition and material benefits.<sup>983</sup> Its political efforts would become more vigorous, however, with the 1965 departure of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber as National President. He was preoccupied with his work for the news magazine *l'Express* and his political organizing, and no longer interested in leading the association he had founded in 1958 principally to end the Algerian War.<sup>984</sup>

In a test of governmental attitudes in spring 1965, FNACA delegates delivered tens of thousands of signed petitions to the Ministry of Veterans and War Victims to demand the veterans' card.<sup>985</sup> Suggesting the association's confrontational attitude, the delegates had apparently made no appointment, as they boasted of almost being ejected by security police. When they were finally invited to meet a delegate of Minister Sainteny, they were informed that the government had no intention of granting veterans'

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<sup>981</sup>“Pour nos droits: 27 mai: journée nationale des délégations,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 6 (May 1961): 4-5.

<sup>982</sup>“Édito,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 6 (May 1961): 1.

<sup>983</sup>“La difficulté des jeunes démobilisés d'Algérie,” *Le Monde* (2-3 February 1964): 20.

<sup>984</sup>Michel Sabourdy, interview, 11 May 2014.

<sup>985</sup>“Action revendicative: matinée de délégation,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 28 (March-April 1965): 4.

status, but “preferred instead to offer a diploma to which no material benefits would be attached.”<sup>986</sup>

Despite the Gaullist stonewalling, to which they were well accustomed by now, the FNACA’s leaders claimed that the Minister’s delegate had hinted “the government would give in, according to how our movement gains in power and size.”<sup>987</sup> Accordingly, the association began more forceful campaigns for the veterans’ card, and even directed its members to request the card from departmental offices of the ONACVG, pressuring bureaucrats as well as policymakers.<sup>988</sup> On numerous occasions through the 1960s and 1970s, FNACA delegates personally delivered “tens of thousands” of signed petitions at a time to the President or the Minister of Veterans.<sup>989</sup>

While the FNACA sought to gain political weight to overcome the obstruction of Gaullist ministers, the nationalist association’s political access facilitated at least a preliminary recognition for veterans of Algeria. Although the UNCAFN had lost the financial support of the Ministry of Defense in 1961 for remaining “too French Algeria” for the government’s taste, it maintained the sympathy of those politicians who had supported French Algeria, and thus regretted the outcome of the war.<sup>990</sup> In October 1966, Minister of Veterans and War Victims Alexandre Sanguinetti attended the UNCAFN’s

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<sup>986</sup>“Action revendicative: matinée de délégation,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 28 (March-April 1965): 4.

<sup>987</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>988</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>989</sup>“Une délégation du secrétariat au Ministère des A.C.V.G.,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 93 (April 1972): 1.

<sup>990</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, interview, 12 February 2014; Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne!, Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000): 20.

annual executive congress.<sup>991</sup> The fierce right-wing World War II veteran had worked with the leader of the UNCAFN almost a decade before, toward the common goal of bringing back Charles de Gaulle.<sup>992</sup>

At the October congress, along with evoking their disgust for recent anticolonial works such as *The Battle of Algiers* and *Les Paravents* to demonstrate their nationalist credentials, UNCAFN leaders brought up the topic of veterans' recognition, but emphasized that they "refused to be professional activists."<sup>993</sup> This was both a reminder that they were reasonable and sought accommodation with the government, and a not-so-subtle jab at their rival FNACA, which took pride in its energetic militancy for veterans' rights. Despite the fellow feeling he shared with the UNCAFN as a colonial nostalgist and former "man of May 13," Minister Sanguinetti did not break ranks with his government's position. He explained that the state could not grant veterans of Algeria the *carte du combattant*, since they had participated in a "civil war without a front of operations," rather than a war defending France against a foreign enemy.<sup>994</sup> This suggests the strength of the Gaullist structure of government; the UNCAFN could no longer rely solely on its nationalist respectability, nor its ties with sympathetic elites in politics.

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<sup>991</sup>"Le Ministre des Anciens Combattants rend visite au siège national et participe à la magnifique réunion des cadres UNCAFN du 18 octobre," *La Voix du combattant* 1321 (November 1966): 9.

<sup>992</sup>Christophe Nick, *Résurrection: naissance de la Ve République: un coup d'État démocratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1998): 207-8; Letter from Alexandre Sanguinetti to François Porteu de la Morandière, 3 February 1958, UNCAFN archives, "Divers" folder.

<sup>993</sup>"Le Ministre des Anciens Combattants rend visite au siège national..." *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>994</sup>"Communiqué de presse publié à l'issue de cette réunion," *La Voix du combattant* 1321 (November 1966): 9.

Building on ideas developed by his predecessors, Sanguinetti did, however, propose a *Titre de reconnaissance de la Nation* (TRN), an ‘Award of the Nation’s Gratitude’, accompanied by a *Croix de la pacification*, a medal rewarding loyalty to the Republic and the sacrifices soldiers made while “pacifying” North Africa. Sanguinetti added that he would support allowing recipients of the TRN to access veterans’ services at the ONACVG, including loans, professional re-education, and mutual savings accounts.<sup>995</sup> In a press release, the UNCAFN announced its interest in the creation of such an award, but insisted that the veterans’ card should still be available to veterans of Algeria, for the same criteria that applied to veterans of the World Wars.<sup>996</sup>

Seemingly in response to the UNCAFN cadres’ meeting, the Ministry of Veterans invited the leaders of the FNACA and the UNCAFN to a round table to discuss veterans’ recognition in February 1967.<sup>997</sup> Minister Sanguinetti could not attend, and was represented by the leaders of his Cabinet and by the Director of the Veterans’ Office.<sup>998</sup> As this meeting was a month before the legislative elections scheduled for March, the leaders of the FNACA suspected that it had the “taint of electioneering” behind it, and even the UNCAFN wondered if anything would come of the talks, given the timing, right before the government was due to change.<sup>999</sup> The FNACA’s statement reflects its

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<sup>995</sup>“Communiqué de presse publié à l’issu de cette réunion,” *La Voix du combattant* 1321 (November 1966): 9. It must be noted, however, that without the administrative status of “veteran,” these men still would not receive a pension or priority medical treatment for war-related wounds or illnesses.

<sup>996</sup>“Communiqué de presse publié à l’issu de cette réunion,” *La Voix du combattant* 1321 (November 1966): 9.

<sup>997</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Table ronde au Ministère pour les Anciens d’AFN,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1325 (March 1967): 12.

<sup>998</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>999</sup>“Après la table ronde: notre conférence de presse,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 41 (March-April 1967): 4; “Table ronde au Ministère pour les Anciens d’AFN,” *op. cit.*, 12.

assumption of cynical pandering on the part of politicians, but also its confidence that veterans of Algeria and their supporters comprised an important voting bloc.

The UNCAFN, perhaps also recognizing the demographic weight of veterans, and certainly because of the vociferous militancy of its rival association, began to change its rhetoric toward the government around this time. The UNCAFN reported after the round table that its position on veterans' recognition was "irreconcilable" with that of the government, since the Minister's representatives would only discuss the Award of the Nation's Gratitude and not the full veterans' card. Nevertheless, it accepted the proposed Award as a "first step" toward recognition, saying the association was "open to any reasonable suggestion" going forward.<sup>1000</sup> The FNACA's response to the meeting was more openly critical, partly because it did not have the political access to the Minister that its rival association enjoyed. While it also held out for full veterans' recognition, it castigated the Minister's representatives for retracting public promises the Minister had made previously, about holders of the Award being able to access state veterans' services.<sup>1001</sup>

The government elected in March 1967 did indeed seat a new Minister of Veterans, Henri Duvillard, a veteran of the Battle of France who had entered the Resistance in 1941.<sup>1002</sup> He received a FNACA delegation in June and presented himself as sympathetic to the Algerian War veterans' movement. But he reminded representatives that he could only go so far, since his policies were "subordinate to the decisions of the

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<sup>1000</sup>“Table ronde au Ministère pour les Anciens d’AFN,” *op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>1001</sup>“Après la table ronde: notre conférence de presse,” *op. cit.*, 4.

<sup>1002</sup>“M. Henri DUVILLARD: Nouveau ministre des A.C.V.G.,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 43 (May-June 1967): 11.

Cabinet and, above all, the Head of State.”<sup>1003</sup> While he may simply have been evading a straight answer on the topic of veterans’ recognition, in principle Duvillard was right. Under the political structures established by the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, there was only so much that an individual Minister could do to pursue policies that the President and the Cabinet refused to discuss. The Constitution enabled the government to be “very adept at maneuvering away from unwanted questions and in steering toward its own preferences,” in this case by giving plausible deniability to the Minister when faced with a question from the very category of citizens with whose care he was charged.<sup>1004</sup>

Duvillard also received a UNCAFN delegation in June, and signaled his favor for conservative veterans’ associations by promising to send a representative to the UNC’s upcoming congress.<sup>1005</sup> The UNCAFN recounted to him the outcome of the round table with Minister Sanguinetti back in February before Duvillard’s election, and reminded him of the symbolic value of veterans’ recognition, which would “officially affirm [...] our fundamental belonging to the family of combatants.”<sup>1006</sup> This moral appeal—combined with the UNCAFN’s avowed disinterest in material benefits--seemed to sway the Minister. In October, the government backed a budgetary amendment bill proposed by Alain Griotteray, *Républicain indépendant* deputy of the Val-du-Marne, to create the Award of the Nation’s Gratitude for veterans of North Africa.<sup>1007</sup> A distinguished

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<sup>1003</sup>“Les Ministres changent, la position de fond demeure,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 44 (July-August 1967): 2.

<sup>1004</sup>Wilson, 134.

<sup>1005</sup>“M. Duvillard, Ministre des A.C. et V.G., a reçu une délégation de l’UNC,” *La Voix du combattant* 1328 (June 1967): 4; “L’UNCAFN chez le Ministre des A.C.,” *La Voix du combattant* 1329 (July 1967): 1.

<sup>1006</sup>“L’UNCAFN chez le Ministre des A.C.,” *op. cit.*, 1, 3.

<sup>1007</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “L’amendement!”, *La Voix du combattant* 1331 (December 1967): 12.



Resistance network leader during World War II, Griotteray was a member of the UNCAFN—although not a veteran of Algeria—and likely wrote this bill in consultation with the association.<sup>1008</sup> He announced its success at a press conference at the UNCAFN headquarters.<sup>1009</sup> Griotteray was a natural ally of the UNCAFN: a former “man of May 13,” he had left the Gaullist party in 1960 because of his continued belief in French Algeria.<sup>1010</sup>

Griotteray’s bill passed the National Assembly in October 1967, and was declared law in March 1968. The *Titre de reconnaissance de la Nation* was created, in the words of the law, to “recognize the services rendered to the Nation by soldiers having participated in the operations of North Africa.”<sup>1011</sup> Minister Duvillard, in his remarks to the National Assembly before the vote, had described the award as a fitting recognition for service in the Algerian conflict, which had a “special character without precedent in our national history,” but which was nevertheless “not service in war, because there was no war, in the international sense of the term.”<sup>1012</sup>

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<sup>1008</sup>Sophie Landrin, “Alain Griotteray, ancien résistant et cofondateur de l’UDF,” *Le Monde* 5 September 2008; Alain Griotteray, “Incompatibilité parlementaire,” *Les Cahiers du djebel* 3 (January-February-March 1972): 5.

<sup>1009</sup>“Après les déclarations du Ministre des AC, les Anciens d’AFN ne sont que partiellement satisfaits et les déportés mécontents,” *Le Monde* (22-23 October 1967): 7.

<sup>1010</sup>Sophie Landrin, “Alain Griotteray, ancien résistant et cofondateur de l’UDF,” *Le Monde* (5 September 2008). Griotteray would make his name as a conservative journalist: he was one of the cofounders of the far-right weekly newspaper *Minute*, as well as the *Figaro Magazine*. He also co-founded the *Union pour la démocratie française* (UDF), a center-right coalition party created in support of Valéry Giscard d’Estaing’s incumbent presidential run.

<sup>1011</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Le Titre de reconnaissance de la Nation,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1337 (May 1968): 7.

<sup>1012</sup>“Réponse du gouvernement,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 46 (November-December 1967): 3.

The Award would be available on demand to all soldiers of French nationality who had served at least ninety consecutive days in Algeria, Morocco, or Tunisia, during the periods of the respective decolonization conflicts, with the requirement of ninety days waived for those evacuated for illness or injury. However, recipients initially did not have access to veterans' services through the ONACVG, until Minister Duvillard proposed an amendment to the law, which was passed in October 1969.<sup>1013</sup> Thus, in its initial form, the Award of the Nation's Gratitude was a moral, and not material, recognition.

In principle, this legislation should have satisfied the leaders of the UNCAFN, who prioritized symbolic and moral recognition, and displeased the leaders of the FNACA, who emphasized veterans' need for material support. But the associations' reactions were more ambiguous, reflecting their distinct political strategies toward gaining veterans' recognition. The UNCAFN criticized the measure for not granting moral recognition widely enough. According to a press release, the UNCAFN regretted "that the status of combatant was not generously accorded to the last combat generation on the same level as for our elders."<sup>1014</sup> Its main critiques were that the Award did not recognize the unique contributions of veterans of Algeria explicitly; it did not include *harkis*, colonial *Tirailleurs*, or other security personnel not directly incorporated in the Army, even though members of the Foreign Legion were qualified; and that the

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<sup>1013</sup>The amendment opening state veterans' aid to bearers of the *Titre* was Article 70 of Law 69-1161 of 24 December 1969 concerning laws of finance for 1970, and conditions for admission were set with Decree 70-531 of 19 June 1970. "Les avantages de l'ONACVG sont accordés aux AFN, titulaires du Diplôme de Reconnaissance de la Nation," *La Voix du Combattant* 1350 (November 1969): 1; "Les avantages sociaux de l'Office," *Les Cahiers du djebel* 12 (February 1975): 16.

<sup>1014</sup>"Les avantages de l'ONACVG sont accordés aux AFN, titulaires du Diplôme de Reconnaissance de la Nation," *La Voix du Combattant* 1350 (November 1969): 1.

requirement of ninety consecutive days in combat was the same criterion for the veterans' card itself, lessening the distinction between the two documents.<sup>1015</sup>

While the UNCAFN concluded that the Award “presents some insufficiencies,” it reminded its members that Minister Duvillard was aware of these flaws, and that it “was no small feat that the President of the Republic signed this decree.”<sup>1016</sup> Overall, the nationalist association was pleased with the incremental progress and preliminary symbolic recognition seen in this “friendly gesture of the Government,” while vowing to continue to fight for full veterans' recognition.<sup>1017</sup>

Although opposed on principle to any separate recognition of veterans of Algeria, the FNACA was initially pleased by what it saw as a “first retreat of the government,” a *de facto* recognition of the unique experience of those who served in North Africa.<sup>1018</sup> A FNACA newspaper headline exulted that “Action pays off!”, and claimed that the Award's existence “was the result of our efforts.”<sup>1019</sup> It prided itself on the presence of several criteria that it had originally proposed to the Minister, such as the requirement of ninety days in combat rather than a longer period, and the exclusion of non-military personnel—a category containing some political undesirables in the eyes of the FNACA, including the *harkis*, intelligence and psychological operations agents, and police. These

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<sup>1015</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Le TRN,” *La Voix du combattant* 1337 (May 1968): 7. In 1971, President de la Morandière wrote to Minister Duvillard on behalf of those veterans who had served in Algeria in the police forces, and who often had difficulty obtaining the Award of the Nation's Gratitude from departmental ONACVG offices. François Porteu de la Morandière, “Un cas particulier: nos camarades Policiers en Algérie et le TRN,” *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 2 (October-November-December 1971): 9.

<sup>1016</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Le TRN,” *La Voix du combattant* 1337 (May 1968): 7.

<sup>1017</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Continuons...,” *La Voix du combattant* 1337 (May 1968): 8.

<sup>1018</sup>“Nos problèmes devant l'Assemblée Nationale lors de la discussion budgétaire,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 46 (November-December 1967): 2.

<sup>1019</sup>“L'Action est payante!”, *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 46 (November-December 1967): 1.

categories of combatants did not accord with the FNACA's "*malgré nous*" narrative—that soldiers served for France not out of patriotism, but against their will.

But the FNACA also accused the Ministry of going back on promises made at the round table in February 1967, where the FNACA felt it had been agreed that the Award would grant material benefits.<sup>1020</sup> The association derided the measure as a “diploma void of any content,” since it recognized neither the “STATUS of veterans” nor their “right to reparations.”<sup>1021</sup> It praised by name the deputies who had voted against the bill, since in the association's view, the proposal was so flawed as to be unworthy of passing into law.<sup>1022</sup> Hence, the FNACA, ever eager to boost its appeal in the eyes of potential members, criticized the government for seeking to pacify veterans of Algeria with a meaningless award, all while taking credit for this “first result,” which it had in fact refused to contemplate since at least 1961.<sup>1023</sup>

The Award of the Nation's Gratitude was indeed a first step, although implicit, toward recognizing veterans of Algeria. The fact that two politicians adamantly opposed to acknowledging Algeria as a war—Minister Duvillard and President Charles de Gaulle himself—supported the bill, suggests that it was intended only to placate veterans in the hope that their activism would end. The FNACA's confrontational strategy led it to take credit for this symbolic legislation while simultaneously criticizing it as meaningless. But the creation of the Award of the Nation's Gratitude is more directly attributable to the

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<sup>1020</sup>“Communiqué de presse du Comité National,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 49-50 (May-June 1968): 4.

<sup>1021</sup>“Communiqué de presse de la F.N.A.C.A.: La F.N.A.C.A. demande une nouvelle fois la carte du combattant,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 46 (November-December 1967): 3. Capitals in the original.

<sup>1022</sup>“Note de la rédaction,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 46 (November-December 1967): 2.

<sup>1023</sup>“Communiqué de presse du Comité National,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 49-50 (May-June 1968): 4.

UNCAFN, whose incremental political strategy as well as sympathetic alliances with Veterans' Ministers and colonial nostalgic politicians had allowed the idea of moral recognition to take root. The UNCAFN proved the importance it attached to this first step by ensuring that its leaders were among the first to receive the Award; the Minister had announced that he would present it personally to the "first hundred or two hundred" veterans who requested it.<sup>1024</sup>

At a ceremony at the Ministry of Veterans in February 1969, Minister Duvillard presented UNCAFN President François Porteu de la Morandière, Vice President Hugues Dalleau, and Secretary-General Jean Pézard with the *Titre de reconnaissance de la Nation*.<sup>1025</sup> Individual members and regional leaders of the FNACA were also among the sixty-eight veterans in attendance awaiting awards, but no national official seems to have been there.<sup>1026</sup> Henceforth, the FNACA would denigrate the Award of the Nation's Gratitude as an empty half-measure—almost an insult—that demanded further efforts toward the veterans' card, while the UNCAFN would draw on its good-faith acceptance of the Award to press for wider recognition of veterans from the government.

The nationalist association continued its politics of respectability and elite networks as it looked toward the fiftieth anniversary of the armistice of 1918. In 1967, the UNCAFN joined a commission of several large national veterans' associations in

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<sup>1024</sup>À l'Assemblée Nationale: La réponse de M. Henri Duvillard, Ministre des A.C. et V.G.,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 56 (January 1969): 4.

<sup>1025</sup>Henri Duvillard, Ministre des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, a remis les premiers titres de reconnaissance de la Nation aux anciens d'AFN,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1344 (March 1969): 4.

<sup>1026</sup>F. Kœnis, “Remise des premiers titres,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 58 (March 1969): 2. The newspaper surely would have mentioned high-ranking officials by name if they had been present at the ceremony. Michel Sabourdy, who became the Editor-in-Chief of the FNACA's newspaper in 1970, did receive his Award in 1969. Interview, Michel Sabourdy, 14 May 2014.

order to collaborate toward the 1968 commemoration.<sup>1027</sup> Sponsored by the UNC and the *Association générale des mutilés de guerre* (General Association of Disabled Veterans, AGMG)—the oldest extant World War I veterans’ association in France, founded in 1915—this commission had a venerable parentage.<sup>1028</sup> It also included the far-right, colonial nostalgist *Anciens combattants de l’Union française*, and the anti-Gaullist *Organisation de résistance de l’Armée* (Resistance Organization of the Army, ORA). At the initial meeting of the commission, UNCAFN President Porteu de la Morandière suggested inviting the Veterans’ Minister to the joint Congress that was planned, but also stressed the need to define the distinction between “civic action” and “political action.”<sup>1029</sup> However, national events would quickly disrupt the Commission’s plans, and provide the UNCAFN another opportunity to blur the line between civic duty and political activism. As we will see, the FNACA would mostly hold back from engagement on a national level during this turbulent time in France.

Nationalist veterans were alarmed when the flames of a recently radicalized students’ movement at the Université de Paris-X-Nanterre in April 1968 spread into the Sorbonne, eventually triggering sympathetic workers’ strikes.<sup>1030</sup> Rumors of a particularly shocking insult to French nationalism would compel the UNCAFN and its nationalist allies to jump into the fray. On the evening of May 7, a detachment from a student protest led by Daniel Cohn-Bendit around the *Arc de Triomphe* was spotted

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<sup>1027</sup>“Réunion de la commission AGMG-UNC relative au Congrès de Strasbourg,” undated meeting minutes, 1967, UNC archives, “Regroupement des associations” folder, 1.

<sup>1028</sup>Prost, *Les Anciens combattants et la société française*, vol. I, *Histoire*, 29.

<sup>1029</sup>“Réunion de la commission AGMG-UNC relative au Congrès de Strasbourg,” *op. cit.*, 3, 5.

<sup>1030</sup>Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, “1962-1968. Le champ des possibles,” 15-55 in dir. Philippe Artières and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, *68: une histoire collective [1962-1981]* (Paris: Découverte, 2008), 49-50.

waving red flags and singing “The Internationale.” One of the students reportedly attempted the “crude gesture” of urinating on the “sacred tile” on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe, but his comrades discouraged him.<sup>1031</sup>

Despite the fact that this was an “imaginary event,” rumors of the supposed desecration of the “sacred tile,” especially on the eve of V-E day and months before the fiftieth anniversary of the Armistice of 1918, was too much for many nationalist veterans to countenance.<sup>1032</sup> It presented an opportunity for veterans to bear witness, in the tradition of World War I veterans, and to intervene on behalf of the forces of patriotism. The very next day, the UNCAFN received word from Veterans’ Minister Duvillard that he would give them an audience in the coming weeks.<sup>1033</sup> On May 10, the Vice-President of the UNCAFN sent a telegram to Duvillard, sharing the association’s “emotion to see the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier soiled, [...] and demanding that sanctions be taken.” The association also announced an upcoming “restorative ceremony,” inviting its own members as well as students to attend, in the hopes of demonstrating unity between the generations.<sup>1034</sup> In apparent recognition for its rapid show of patriotism, the UNCAFN was selected to relight the Eternal Flame at the *Arc de Triomphe* on May 11. National

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<sup>1031</sup>“La Tombe du Soldat Inconnu a-t-elle été profanée?” *Le Monde* (17 May 1968): 4-5.

<sup>1032</sup>Antoine de Baecque, “L’épicerie,” 209-275 in dir. Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, *op. cit.*, 244.

<sup>1033</sup>“L’Action de l’UNCAFN pendant la crise,” *La Voix du combattant* 1338 (June-July 1968): 8. I have been unable to determine whether the initiative belonged with the Minister or the UNCAFN, but they did have a cordial and mutual relationship.

<sup>1034</sup>Hugues Dalleau, carbon copy of telegram to the Minister of Veterans and War Victims, 10 May 1968, UNC archives, “AGMG-UNC Mai-Juin 1968” folder.

President François Porteu de la Morandière and the recently widowed Madame le Maréchal Juin, a star in the pantheon of French nationalism, shared the honor.<sup>1035</sup>

The UNCAFN's restorative ceremony took place soon thereafter on May 13, with a revival of the Eternal Flame at the *Arc de Triomphe* by Minister Duvillard. Attendees included the leaders of the UNC and the UNCAFN, those of numerous other nationalist veterans' associations, as well as members of the far-right students' association *Occident*, mostly composed of young nationalists who would have liked to serve in Algeria.<sup>1036</sup> The General Touzet de Vigier and a representative of the Minister of the Army were also present.<sup>1037</sup> The UNCAFN explained in an internal bulletin to cadres that the goal of the ceremony was "to remember that the three-colored flag must be respected, and remain the symbol of French unity."<sup>1038</sup> After the ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe, however, some demonstrators took it upon themselves to protest in front of the Chinese embassy, throwing stones and shouting, "'The Vietcong are killers!'"<sup>1039</sup> Although only several hundred demonstrators attended the ceremony, it prefigured attempts the state itself would make to frame the demonstrators as anti-French subversives seeking civil war.<sup>1040</sup> Indeed, a very Gaullist-sounding "Committee to Defend the Republic" had sent out tracts

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<sup>1035</sup>Hugues Dalleau, "L'UNCAFN à la Flamme," *La Voix du combattant* 1338 (June-July 1968): 8. The late Marshall Alphonse Juin had numbered among the Army officers who had broken ranks with President De Gaulle in 1960 over the evolution of his Algerian politics toward decolonization. "Déclaration du Maréchal de France, Alphonse Juin, le 11 novembre 1960," half-page tract, Jacques Delarue papers, BDIC.

<sup>1036</sup>Jean-Maurice Martin, "Tout a commencé là," *Résistance-France* 3 (July-August-September 1968): 4; de Baeque, "L'épicentre," 244.

<sup>1037</sup>"En réplique à la soirée du 7 mai, manifestation de jeunes nationalistes de l'Étoile à l'Alma," *Le Monde* (15 May 1968): 5.

<sup>1038</sup>"Circulaire aux cadres UNCAFN no. 79," undated, UNC archives, "AGMG-UNC Juin 1968" folder.

<sup>1039</sup>"En réplique à la soirée du 7 mai," 5.

<sup>1040</sup>de Baeque, "L'épicentre," 243, 245.



advertising the ceremony, and warning against an impending “Communist revolution, following more and more violent riots.”<sup>1041</sup> While the UNCAFN and the UNC indicated that the demonstration was intended to be apolitical, in the atmosphere of crisis rapidly unfolding across France, it could not be perceived as such.<sup>1042</sup>

While right wing veteran activists had been central to the events of May 13, 1958, the second “May 13” in Gaullist history is not remembered for the UNCAFN’s restorative ceremony. This day saw the beginning of a general strike called by the major national labor unions “against police repression” of student protests at Nanterre and the Sorbonne.<sup>1043</sup> One million people are estimated to have marched in Paris that day, responding to calls to “question the State” by “pursuing action through direct democracy.”<sup>1044</sup> The limited television coverage of the nationalist veterans’ ceremony at the *Arc de Triomphe* seemed to place it in opposition to the large populist march taking place that day between *Place de la Bastille* and *Denfert-Rochereau*, to slogans including “Goodbye, de Gaulle,” and “Ten years is long enough.”<sup>1045</sup> This narrative amplified popular perceptions that veterans were out of touch with modern society’s concerns, and worried leaders of other veterans’ associations that the government sought to foment

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<sup>1041</sup>“Parisiens! Mardi 7, le Tombeau du Soldat Inconnu a été outragé d’une manière obscène par des agitateurs révolutionnaires,” full page flyer, Comité de Défense de la République, undated, BDIC, Nanterre, “Mouvements anti-contestataires, 1968,” F delta res 0062.

<sup>1042</sup>And indeed, at least one national leader quit the UNCAFN after the May 13 protest, feeling that the association was defying its avowed political neutrality by participating in what was essentially a demonstration in support of President De Gaulle. François Porteu de la Morandière, “Confidentiel: circulaire du 10 juin 1968 au Comité directeur,” UNC archives, “AGMG-UNC Juin 1968” folder, 4.

<sup>1043</sup>Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, “Chronologie France,” 789-798 in dir. Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, *op. cit.*, 791.

<sup>1044</sup>Antoine de Baecque, “L’épïccentre,” 209-275 in dir. Artières and Zancarini-Fournel, *op. cit.*, 222.

<sup>1045</sup>*Ibid.*, 224.

division between veterans and students.<sup>1046</sup> Indeed, the very same night, students occupied the Sorbonne.

A wave of student activism and workers' militancy snowballed after the May 13 general strike, beginning with the occupation of the Renault factory in Boulogne-Billancourt on the 16th and quickly spreading to other factories in the Parisian suburbs. Contestation diffused even to the farthest corners of France.<sup>1047</sup> By May 20, the country came to a standstill with a nationwide general strike.<sup>1048</sup> It was in this atmosphere of rejection of the social, economic, and political status quo that Minister Duvillard privately received representatives from fifty-five national veterans' associations, among them leaders of the UNCAFN, on May 21.<sup>1049</sup> President Porteu de la Morandière, Vice President Hugues Dalleau, and Executive Committee member Claude Pèlerin discussed

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<sup>1046</sup>Jean-François Henry, "Nous ne sommes pas d'accord," article clipping from *Le Mutilé combattant et toutes victimes de guerre* 461 (May-June 1968), UNC archives, "AGMG-UNC Juin 1968" folder, 1; Étienne Nouveau, press release, "Après la soirée du 7 mai," *Le Monde* (17 May 1968), article clipping, UNC archives, "Événements de mai-juin 1968" folder.

The concern these veterans' association presidents shared was not unfounded, as the mandates of Gaullism certainly diffused through the chain of command of French television. In 1964, the *Office de radiodiffusion-télévision française* (ORTF) was created as a public establishment directly supervised by the Ministry of Information. Jérôme Bourdon, *Histoire de la télévision sous de Gaulle* (Paris: Anthropos/Institut national de l'audiovisuel, 1991), 299.

<sup>1047</sup>Xavier Vigna, *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 68.

<sup>1048</sup>Zancarini-Fournel, "Chronologie France," *op. cit.*, 791.

<sup>1049</sup>More than 200 separate national veterans' associations and federations existed in France as of 1967, according to "Le Congrès de l'UNC se déclare favorable à un regroupement des associations," *Le Monde* (9 May 1967): 9. The great diversity of veterans' associations was a precedent established by the veterans' movement after World War I, when associations were chiefly divided by type of injury, along professional lines, and by politics. See Antoine Prost, *Les Anciens combattants et la société française 1914-1939* vol. I, *Histoire* (Paris: Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977), 88-89. By the time of the Algerian War, further divisions made the field of veterans' associations even more complex: the combat generation (and whether the association was cross-generational or specific), associational memory related to the French Resistance and the collaborationist Vichy government, as well as views on the French empire. Political scientist Frank Wilson explains the dazzling array of French civic associations in general by "the transference of traditional French individualism into group individualism." Wilson, *Interest-group politics in France*, 148.

with the Minister “the crisis sweeping the country, and the problems particular to” the Algerian generation.<sup>1050</sup> The leaders explained the UNCAFN’s position on the Award of the Nation’s Gratitude—which, as the association had just declared in its newspaper of May 1968, was a positive first step, but should be accompanied with access to veterans’ services, and the creation of a medal.<sup>1051</sup>

Representatives of other veterans’ associations that met with Minister Duvillard that day requested a meeting in the coming days with President de Gaulle.<sup>1052</sup> Two days later on May 23, Jean-Maurice Martin, First Vice President of the UNC, announced the creation of an “Action Committee of Veterans and War Victims for National Unity,” at a press conference at the Hôtel Lutétia.<sup>1053</sup> The press assumed that the Action Committee was created with Minister Duvillard’s encouragement or at least approval, and this is a plausible explanation, given the penchant of Gaullist activists for seeding civic groups to demonstrate, or feign, popular support.<sup>1054</sup> The group’s emergence was timely; the day

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<sup>1050</sup>“L’Action de l’UNCAFN pendant la crise,” *La Voix du combattant* 1338 (June-July 1968): 8.

<sup>1051</sup>*Idem*; Hugues Dalleau, “Le TRN,” *La Voix du combattant* 1337 (May 1968): 7.

<sup>1052</sup>“L’Action de l’UNCAFN pendant la crise,” *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>1053</sup>“Les anciens combattants préconisent l’unité nationale,” *Le Figaro* 24 May 1968 article clipping, UNC archives, “Événements de Mai-Juin 1968” folder; “L’Action de l’UNCAFN pendant la crise,” *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>1054</sup>“Cinquante-cinq associations: notre conviction est que la violence ne peut rien régler,” *Le Monde* 24 May, 1968. As the UNC and UNCAFN had a tight working relationship with the Ministry of Veterans, it may well have been officials from both associations who jointly came up with the idea for an Action Committee, or who eagerly agreed to it when Duvillard proposed it. The Action Committee likely drew on the precedent of the abortive 1967 Commission intended to commemorate the Armistice of 1918, as it had many of the same members, mostly right-wing and nationalist associations for veterans of the World Wars and colonial wars, and numerous officers’ associations.

According to UNC records, the Action Committee consisted of: *Les Médailleurs militaires*; *l’Union nationale des combattants* (UNC); *l’Union nationale des combattants d’Afrique du Nord* (UNCAFN); *la Fédération des amicales régimentaires*; *Rhin et Danube*; *l’Organisation de Résistance de l’Armée* (ORA); *la 1ère Division de Français Libres*; *l’Union nationale de la cavalerie de l’Armée blindée et des chars*; *l’Association générale des mutilés de guerre et l’Union nationale des mutilés réformés et anciens combattants réunies* (AGMG-UNRAC); *l’Association nationale des combattants volontaires de la*

previous, ten million workers had struck nationwide, and there appeared no end in sight to the quickly worsening national crisis. The night of the 23rd, there were street battles in Paris, as students and other militants erected barricades and faced down riot police.<sup>1055</sup>

The UNCAFN's presence on the "Action Committee" demonstrated its tactical reliance on elite nationalist networks, and its incremental, accommodationist approach to the state. The political context of May 1968 posed a double bind to far right organizations: should they oppose the peril of Communism, thus giving *de facto* support to a President whom they despised?<sup>1056</sup> While the UNCAFN's leaders were sincerely shocked by what they believed to be the desecration of a solemn national memorial, they also likely expected to receive greater political respect and access if they circled the

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*Résistance; l'Association des prêtres anciens combattants (PAC); l'Association «Ceux de Verdun»; les Forces navales françaises libres; les Anciens des Dardanelles; les Évadés de France internés en Espagne; l'Association des Résistants du 11 Novembre 1940; l'Union sud-est des anciens combattants des chemins de fer; la Section française de la confédération européenne des anciens combattants; la Comité d'action de la Résistance; l'Union des Résistants pour une Europe unie; la Confédération nationale des déportés, internés et ayants droits de la Résistance; l'Union nationale des poilus d'Orient; l'Association et entr'aide des veuves de guerre et orphelins; l'Association des écrivains combattants (AEC); l'Association des Français libres, l'Association des anciens combattants résidant hors de France, l'Association nationale des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre d'Indochine (ANAI); la Semaine du combattant; l'Association des Résistants d'Indochine; Les Fils des tués; l'Union des combattants vosgiens; la Confédération nationale des combattants volontaires de la Résistance; les Anciens du corps expéditionnaire en Italie; les Anciens combattants français de l'Inde; l'Association du souvenir aux morts des anciens de Champagne; l'Association nationale des déportés, internés de la Résistance (FNDIR); l'Union nationale des déportés internés et familles de disparus; les Commandos d'Afrique; le Mouvement de Résistance des évadés français; les Combattants de la RATP; l'Union nationale des officiers de réserve (UNOR); l'Union nationale des parachutistes; la Deuxième division blindée (2ème DB); la Fédération des engagés volontaires anciens combattants juifs des deux guerres; la Fédération des engagés volontaires alsaciens-lorrains des armées françaises; la Fédération nationale André Maginot; la Fédération nationale de l'artillerie; l'Union des sous officiers de réserve du service de santé; l'Amicale des officiers de réserve inter-armes, district de Paris; la Fédération des marins anciens combattants (FAMAC); l'Association nationale des officiers honoraires terre, mer, air; l'Amicale des officiers de réserve de l'Armée de l'Air Algérie; l'Amicale du 8ème cuirassier; l'Association nationale des anciens combattants des services de renseignements; les Défenseurs du fort de Vaux; and l'Union nationale des chars et blindés. "Liste des associations ayant donné leur adhésion au Groupement d'Associations des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre pour l'Unité française," UNC archives, "Événements de Mai-Juin 1968" folder, 1-2.*

<sup>1055</sup>Zancarini-Fournel, "Chronologie France," *op. cit.*, 791.

<sup>1056</sup>Valérie Igounet, *Le Front National de 1972 à nos jours: le parti, les hommes, les idées* (Paris, Seuil, 2013), 15.

wagons of “national unity” when support for the government was at its nadir. Indeed, whether an interest group falls into the “preferred” or “disliked” category has tended to be the strongest indicator of political access to politicians and Ministers in twentieth century France.<sup>1057</sup> Regardless of their opinions of President de Gaulle, and his “abandonment” of Algeria, it was not too bitter a pill for conservative veterans to show their support for law and order, and their distaste for the methods of the young revolutionaries.<sup>1058</sup>

Accordingly, the UNCAFN followed the Action Committee’s orders and appealed to veterans of North Africa to attend a “ceremony of Memory, rigorously apolitical, which places itself above all partisan action,” organized at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on June 7. The aging hero of Bir Hakeim and retired Gaullist politician, General Marie-Pierre Kœnig, presided over the ceremony, as the newly elected head of the Action Committee.<sup>1059</sup> This ritual formed part of the state’s counterrevolution, which had included a massive demonstration organized on the Champs-Élysées on May 30, just before President de Gaulle announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and new elections.<sup>1060</sup> The Executive Committee of the UNCAFN attended the ceremony, flanked by many rank-and-file members.<sup>1061</sup> Their presence manifested the support of younger generations that the State and Nation still commanded. The State needed this show of support to justify itself before public opinion; that same day, workers and university and

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<sup>1057</sup>Wilson, *Interest-group politics in France*, 223.

<sup>1058</sup>de Baeque, 247.

<sup>1059</sup>“L’Action de l’UNCAFN pendant la crise,” *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>1060</sup>de Baeque, 257.

<sup>1061</sup>“L’Action de l’UNCAFN pendant la crise,” *op. cit.*, 8.

high school students had confronted the police at the Renault-Flins factory, resulting in the death of one student. And in return for its show of support for the state, the Action Committee would soon be granted the most prestigious audience of all, as the meeting it had requested of Minister Duvillard with President Charles de Gaulle—“in his quality as first magistrate of the State”—was scheduled for the very next day.<sup>1062</sup>

At the audience on June 8, President de Gaulle informed the representatives of the Action Committee that he appreciated their efforts, and invited them to discuss “the moral problems” of the veterans’ community, as well as “problems of an entirely different nature.”<sup>1063</sup> Jean-Maurice Martin of the UNC had received the UNCAFN’s mandate to speak on its behalf.<sup>1064</sup> Martin brought up the topic of veterans’ recognition, noting that “the principle” of the Award of the Nation’s Gratitude “was appreciated since it gave our comrades of North Africa the sentiment of having led a useful action,” but that they still desired “substantial content.”

Martin continued with the two talking points that the UNCAFN leaders had provided: they wished for access to state veterans’ services, as well as “an insignia or a medal” which would indicate the amount of time served in Algeria, and thus “establish a

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<sup>1062</sup>Jean-Maurice Martin, “Audience du Président de la République, samedi 8 juin 1968,” manuscript draft, UNC archives, “Comité national des associations d’Anciens Combattants pour l’Unité française, Mai 1968” folder, 2. I have been unable to determine if the audience, originally requested on May 21, was scheduled in advance for June 8. This is the simplest and least cynical explanation, but its proximity to the highly publicized Champs-Élysées demonstration on June 7 understandably looked suspicious to outside observers.

<sup>1063</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>1064</sup>While President Porteu de la Morandière of the UNCAFN had gladly gone to meet Charles De Gaulle in 1958, seeking a savior for French Algeria, his bitterness at the outcome of the Algerian War and his disappointment with De Gaulle as a leader may have made him feel that he had better things to do than meet with the aged President of the Republic ten years later.

sort of hierarchy—bronze, silver, and gold—among the holders of the diploma.”<sup>1065</sup>

Martin reports, although de Gaulle forbade him from “interpreting his words,” that the President began by emphasizing that he, ““above all, respected”” young soldiers’ service in North Africa. However, the President seemed to fear that access to ONAC services might become “a foot in the door” to demands for veterans’ pensions, the largest financial impact on the State of veterans’ status. Minister Duvillard responded that “this was not the case,” and moreover that he supported bearers of the Award receiving state aid.<sup>1066</sup>

While UNC and UNCAFN leaders prided themselves on having “seized every occasion to bring up the material and moral rights of veterans” during May and June 1968, very little of substance was accomplished for veterans of Algeria through this audience.<sup>1067</sup> When the UNCAFN received the rare opportunity to privately petition the President of the Republic, it kept to its incremental line. It did not bring up the topic of full veterans’ recognition through the veterans’ card, which it had supported since at least 1966.<sup>1068</sup> It reiterated the same points to President de Gaulle that had previously been raised with Minister Duvillard; the only new measure it proposed was a differentiated medal to mark the length of time served in North Africa.<sup>1069</sup> The UNCAFN’s accomodationist approach to the state meant that de Gaulle gained more from nationalist

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<sup>1065</sup>Jean-Maurice Martin, “Audience du Président de la République, samedi 8 juin 1968,” manuscript draft, UNC archives, “Comité national des associations d’Anciens Combattants pour l’Unité française. Mai 1968,” 3.

<sup>1066</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>1067</sup>Jean-Maurice Martin, “Tout a commencé là,” *op. cit.*, 4.

<sup>1068</sup>“Communiqué de presse publié à l’issu de cette réunion,” *La Voix du combattant* 1321 (November 1966): 9.

<sup>1069</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Continuons...,” *La Voix du combattant* 1337 (May 1968): 8.

veterans' support during "the events of May 1968" than they gained in return for that support.

Regardless of the effectiveness of this audience, other veterans' associations were jealous of the UNCAFN and UNC's political access, and distrustful of their motives. The *Association général des mutilés de guerre*, co-sponsor of the 1918-1968 commemoration planning Commission with the UNC and UNCAFN, decided to leave the "Action Committee of Veterans for National Unity," believing it to be a political tool of the State. The President-General of the AGMG alleged that the Action Committee had been transformed into the "only valid spokesman" for veterans and "immediately presented to the President of the Republic," in return for "having demonstrated on the Champs-Élysées" when the government needed nationalists to rally to its defense.<sup>1070</sup> He concluded with his disappointment that Veterans' Minister Duvillard continued to "discriminate between good and bad veterans' associations," but suggested this was because "we are in the full swing of the electoral season."<sup>1071</sup> The delegate-general of *La Semaine du combattant*, a loose confederation of World War I veterans' associations founded in 1923, wrote to the President of the UNC, insisting that his organization had "at no moment agreed" to join the Action Committee; it had never even been asked.<sup>1072</sup> This is suggestive that the UNC and UNCAFN assembled the Committee rather haphazardly, and perhaps at the Minister's behest.

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<sup>1070</sup>Jean-François Henry, "Nous ne sommes pas d'accord," *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>1071</sup>*Idem.*

<sup>1072</sup>Letter from "Le délégué général" to "Monsieur le Président de l'UNC," 19 June 1968, UNC archives, "AGMG-UNC Juin 1968" folder, 1.



Other veterans' associations questioned the Action Committee's origins. Étienne Nouveau, President of the *Fédération des Amputés de Guerre de France* (Federation of War Amputees of France), intimated that the Action Committee was created only "at the initiative of the Ministry of Veterans and M. Duvillard." According to Nouveau, despite the fact that the *Comité National de Liaison* (National Liaison Committee, CNL), an umbrella organization including the UFAC (*l'Union française des anciens combattants*) and other national veterans' groups, had asked the government to "receive its qualified delegation of representatives of some 90% of the veteran community," it was only the newborn Action Committee, "unknown to everyone," which received an audience with the President.<sup>1073</sup> The UFAC represented a diverse set of veterans' organizations—ranging from nationalist to socialist and communist ideologies—and it may be that Duvillard and de Gaulle snubbed it for this reason, feeling they would have an easier time handling veterans who self-selected into right-wing nationalist associations.<sup>1074</sup>

It appears that President de Gaulle outmaneuvered right-wing veterans in this period. On May 30, a massive march down the Champs-Élysées in support of law and order boosted its numbers by appealing to nationalist veterans.<sup>1075</sup> On June 17, President de Gaulle amnestied General Raoul Salan, one of the putschist generals and a co-founder of the OAS, and on July 31, he amnestied all OAS members remaining in prison.<sup>1076</sup> This

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<sup>1073</sup>Letter to "Mon cher camarade" from Étienne Nouveau, 19 June 1968, UNC archives, "Événements de Mai-Juin 1968" folder, 1.

<sup>1074</sup>Wilson, *Interest-Group Politics in France*, 53.

<sup>1075</sup>"Anciens Combattants, Patriotes, Parisiens!," half-page tract, Comités pour la Défense de la République, "Mouvements anti-contestataires, 1968" collection, BDIC.

<sup>1076</sup>Zancarini-Fournel, "Chronologie France," *op. cit.*, 792; Stéphane Gacon, *L'Amnistie: de la Commune à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), 286, 289.

was a bid to receive electoral support from conservative and far right veterans as well as repatriated *pieds noirs*. These amnesties ended up erasing crimes of one of the darkest phase of the war, and the phase when it touched mainland France most directly.<sup>1077</sup>

As for the UNCAFN's rival, on the day of the May 23 press conference, the FNACA declared by press release that it would not join the Action Committee. It warned its members not to follow any marching orders the Committee might issue, and launched an "urgent request" for its own meeting with Minister Duvillard, which would remain unanswered.<sup>1078</sup> Furthermore, the FNACA refused to criticize the revolutionary aspect of "the events of May," much as the UNCAFN had failed to disavow the generals' putsch in 1961—implying tacit support. In an editorial published in July discussing "the grave events that have shaken our country," the FNACA disassociated itself as a whole from the violence and disorder. However, reminding readers that "our leaders, our members, are an integral part of the living forces [*forces vives*] of the nation," the association explained that "they were thus led" to act in "domains other than that of the FNACA," for their own "reasons" and "needs."<sup>1079</sup>

The FNACA was a left-leaning association of former conscripts where workers predominated, and it could not have criticized strikes and other forms of militancy without alienating its base. The Algerian War formed a "negative reference point for a generation of young workers," whose managers might have reminded them of the junior

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<sup>1077</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 30.

<sup>1078</sup>FNACA press release, *Le Monde* (24 May 1968) article clipping, UNC archives, "Événements de Mai-Juin 1968" folder.

<sup>1079</sup>"Merci, chers amis," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 51 (July-August 1968): 1.

officers who used to lord it over them in Algeria.<sup>1080</sup> While it is too much to claim that by itself, “the Algerian War created a generation of militant workers,” the antiauthoritarianism and collective frustrations engendered by the war in many former conscripts, who were in their early 30s around 1968, certainly influenced individual veterans’ participation in labor militancy in 1968 and afterward.<sup>1081</sup>

By emphasizing the central demographic importance of Algerian veterans, and continuing that, naturally, they would be involved in the political ferment of May and June, the FNACA normalized the nationwide revolt against ten years of Gaullism. The FNACA also recognized the general malaise through reprinting a protest written by the *Comité National de Liaison*, which represented several million members of various veterans’ associations. While the FNACA did not belong to the CNL, the association reprinted its press release in full, which lamented the “period of contempt” that the veteran’ community had been suffering under the current political regime.<sup>1082</sup>

The major lesson that the FNACA drew from “the events of May” was that its confrontational position would be stronger if amplified with other voices dissatisfied with the constraints of Gaullism. The FNACA’s political culture of collectivist mobilization had found confirmation in larger society during the national revolt. The left-wing

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<sup>1080</sup>Vigna, *L'insubordination ouvrière dans les années 68*, 191-2.

<sup>1081</sup>Xavier Vigna, "Le crible de la mémoire: usages du passé dans les luttes ouvrières des années 68," 145-156 in eds. Maryline Crivello-Bocca, Patrick Garcia, and Nicolas Offenstadt, *Concurrence des passés: usages politiques du passé dans la France contemporaine* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'université de Provence, 2006), 155.

<sup>1082</sup>“Justice pour les Anciens Combattants! Un appel du Comité national de liaison,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 51 (July-August 1968): 1. In late May 1968, the CNL, representing nearly 4 million members in four major groupings of veterans and war victims, published a press release sympathizing with the national political protests, since, “for many years, [...] the dispute between public officials and veterans has only gotten worse.” “Une déclaration du Comité national de liaison des anciens combattants et victimes de guerre,” tract, “Mouvements anti-contestataires, 1968” collection, BDIC, series F delta res 0062.

association had been planning the celebration of its tenth anniversary just as the disorders of broke out in May.<sup>1083</sup> September 1968 would also be the tenth anniversary of the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, which enshrined a strong executive role that seemed made to order for General de Gaulle. The FNACA had opposed the 1958 referendum to approve the Constitution, partly for fear of how executive supremacy would affect veterans' politics.

Charles de Gaulle disdained veterans' associations and their political engagements. In 1959, to explain the government's decision to repeal the veterans' pension established in 1930, de Gaulle said, "if veterans are made to take the place of honor, they are not made to make demands."<sup>1084</sup> In 1960, at the celebration of Bastille Day at *l'Étoile*, Charles de Gaulle reportedly asked François Porteu de la Morandière not to ally the UNCAFN with the UNC, because, Porteu de la Morandière reflects, "I believe he did not like the 'demanding' side of certain veterans."<sup>1085</sup> This manifest hostility to veterans' politics explains why even associations representing veterans of the World Wars—including the CNL and the UFAC—felt so neglected by the most famous Resistant, who was himself a World War I veteran.

Since its founding, the FNACA had proudly maintained its position as an association unique to veterans of Algeria. But in September, the FNACA's National President Jacques de Jæger published an editorial arguing that the association "must

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<sup>1083</sup>"Dix ans d'action de la FNACA," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 49-50 (May-June 1968): 1.

<sup>1084</sup>Charles De Gaulle, press conference on 10 November 1959, quoted in Henry Rousso, "Identités et mémoire sous la Ve République," 383-398 in dir. Jean Garrigues, Sylvie Guillaume, and Jean-François Sirinelli, *Comprendre la Ve République* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2010), 389.

<sup>1085</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, *Sacrée Marianne! Fausse crise politique et vraie crise morale* (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 2000), 21.

participate concretely in the work of organizations which decide the grand actions to undertake to safeguard the rights of all generations” of veterans, and stated that the FNACA would seek to join the UFAC on a national level.<sup>1086</sup> It finally gained admittance in 1973, and the national organization, representing some 2.5 million veterans and war victims, would support the FNACA in its veterans’ card campaign.<sup>1087</sup> The FNACA rightly concluded that in its ongoing fight for veterans’ recognition, it could draw on widespread dissatisfaction among the public and older veterans’ associations with the Gaullist regime.

The UNCAFN for its part also sympathized with the national discontent with Gaullism, although it loathed the ideology it perceived behind the students’ revolt, and the forms it took. The association spoke for reservists and career military, who tended to be older on deployment than the conscripts, and it felt no compunction to sympathize with the revolting students or striking workers. The UNCAFN National President penned an acerbic critique of the violence and tastelessness of the students’ protests: “a bit like juvenile acne, it was perhaps inevitable, but it was not pretty.”<sup>1088</sup> However, he conceded that the protests were founded in reality: “we know that there are problems, and that the government has no more understood those of the university than it has those of veterans of Algeria.”<sup>1089</sup>

In a press release at the end of May, the UNCAFN described the national disorders as “the logical result of a profound malaise that was neither foreseen nor

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<sup>1086</sup>Jacques de Jæger, “Unité et avenir du monde combattant,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 52 (September 1968): 1.

<sup>1087</sup>Jacques de Jæger, “Enfin à l’UFAC!” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 103 (March 1973): 1.

<sup>1088</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “L’Acné,” *La Voix du combattant* 1338 (June-July 1968): 8.

<sup>1089</sup>*Idem.*

understood.” While refusing to sanction the revolutionary ferment as the FNACA did, the association nonetheless “deplor[ed] that it was on the heels of riots that the Government should be forced to consider the worry and the problems faced by the youth and a large part of the active French population.” Concluding by emphasizing the need for the calm and orderly pursuit of “vigorous reform measures in national education, the economy and social affairs, as well as in the methods of government,” this press release seemed to position the UNCAFN as a moderate civic force seeking democratic dialogue.<sup>1090</sup>

Privately, the UNCAFN President went further in his analysis, noting in a confidential memo to the Executive Committee that “if to govern is to foresee, we have been very badly governed for ten years.”<sup>1091</sup> He located the long origins of the revolt in the fact that “the current government has done everything to destroy intermediary forces” such as legislators, moral authorities, and local and regional government, in order to “let the Head of State dialogue with the crowd.” But instead of political engagement, he continued, the crowd expressed its discontent through “the street.”<sup>1092</sup> The right-wing UNCAFN President felt that the young revolutionaries were “too spoiled,” lacking in “discipline” and “ideals,” and had been “skillfully led” into their revolt by ideologues “acting as good technicians of revolutionary war.” Yet his assessment that “the long absence of dialogue, of which we have been the victims as veterans of North Africa, has created an identical discontentment in other domains,” was more or less the same

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<sup>1090</sup>“Divergences dans les associations d’anciens combattants,” *Le Monde* 30 May 1968; “Communiqué de presse” draft, undated, UNC archives, “AGMG-UNC Juin 1968” folder.

<sup>1091</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Confidentiel. Circulaire du 10 juin 1968 au Comité Directeur,” UNC archives, “AGMG-UNC Juin 1968” folder, 3.

<sup>1092</sup>*Idem.*

conclusion that the left-wing FNACA had drawn.<sup>1093</sup> Both associations agreed that the nationwide revolt was understandable and natural, given the political constraints on the country for a decade.

Another important lesson for the UNCAFN was the demographic and political importance of the generation it claimed to represent, which it manifested by its presence at nationalist ceremonies in May and June. In the words of Vice President Dalleau, the men who served in North Africa were now “the transitional generation” between those who had lived through World War II as adults, and the young revolutionaries, who had known neither ration cards in childhood nor national military service in adolescence. By comparing the hard-earned wisdom of the generation of veterans of Algeria with the impatience of the young “*contestataires*” of May, the leaders of the UNCAFN reinforced their narrative of elite respectability, elevating themselves and their members as “the leaders of industry and the politicians of tomorrow.”<sup>1094</sup>

It is noteworthy—but in the end unsurprising—that two competing associations for veterans of Algeria with fiercely opposed politics agreed that “the events of May” were symptomatic of a decade of political stalemate in France. Historians attribute much of the explosive contestation in France in the late 1960s to a postwar “crisis of consent and of authority relations” engendered by the “refusal to acknowledge social conflict” under the Fifth Republic.<sup>1095</sup> Both the FNACA and the UNCAFN sought impact in a

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<sup>1093</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Confidentiel. Circulaire du 10 juin 1968 au Comité Directeur,” *op. cit.*, 2.

<sup>1094</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “La signification profonde du titre,” *La Voix du combattant* 1348 (February 1969): 5.

<sup>1095</sup>Xavier Vigna and Jean Vigreux, “Introduction,” *Mai-juin 1968: Huit semaines qui ébranlèrent la France* (Dijon: Éditions universitaires de Dijon, 2010), 10; Rosemary Wakeman, *Modernizing the Provincial City: Toulouse, 1945-1975* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 10.

society where Charles de Gaulle's monarchical style had largely reduced citizens' political participation to referenda and the "bipolar logic of the institutional game."<sup>1096</sup> Many sectors of society were displeased with de Gaulle's centralized, technocratic system, and the heightened power that the government—specifically the executive branch and the Cabinet—had over elected officials, who were in principle direct representatives of the Nation.

These very conditions made it difficult for both the FNACA and the UNCAFN to function, in a period when neither the President nor his Minister of Veterans wanted to hear about young men who had fought in a war they did not even consider as such. Both associations had been engaged in what the French call a *dialogue des sourds* (dialogue of the deaf) with the state—a metaphor that can be extended to much of French society in the 1960s. The second "days of May" hardened both associations' convictions that they were uniquely positioned to speak for a forgotten generation of veterans: the FNACA, through mass mobilization and confrontational protest of Gaullist constraints, and the UNCAFN, through setting an example of elite, incremental leadership *despite* Gaullist constraints.

Both associations had the chance to test their newly confirmed strategies when two separate Senate bills for veterans' recognition came up for discussion in fall 1968. In October, Antoine Courrière, president of the group of Socialists and allies, and Jacques Duclos, president of the group of Communists and allies, submitted a bill to give veterans' status to those who had simply served three months, consecutive or not, in recognized units in North Africa. The bill may have been partly intended to garner public enthusiasm for the Communists and Socialists after both lost seats in the legislative

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<sup>1096</sup>Vigna and Vigreux, 13.



elections in June. It was unanimously backed by the Commission of Social Affairs, and written with the cooperation of the FNACA. In presenting the bill, Courrière and Duclos used the association's rhetoric to describe the insufficiencies of the Award of the Nation's Gratitude as a "diploma void of any content," and referring to veterans of Algeria as the "third combat generation."<sup>1097</sup> The proposed law was meant to show support for an identical bill submitted a year earlier.

The earlier bill had been presented in June 1967 by centrist Republican Martial Brousse—a veteran of both World Wars and President of the Club of Veterans in the Senate—after meeting with leaders of the FNACA.<sup>1098</sup> It was backed by a wide coalition of populist Republicans, left democrats, and Independent Republicans.<sup>1099</sup> While Brousse had submitted a bill identical to one written by the FNACA and submitted by the Socialists and Communists, he attempted to make it more acceptable to conservative colleagues by emphasizing in his speech the "moral interest" of veterans' recognition, and the fact that conscripts "did their duty where they were assigned by the Government."<sup>1100</sup> The existence of two bills submitted by opposing contingents of Senators should have convinced the government of the wide bipartisan support for recognizing veterans of Algeria.

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<sup>1097</sup>“Communiqué de presse du Comité national de la FNACA,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 57 (February 1969): 1; “Suite aux démarches de la Fédération: Une nouvelle proposition de loi a été soumise aux sénateurs,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 53 (October 1968): 2.

<sup>1098</sup>“Les débats,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 45 (September-October 1967): 3.

<sup>1099</sup>“Les Interventions des Sénateurs,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 56 (January 1969): 2; “Marcel Darou: Extrait de la table nominative 1968,” *Sénat* website, <[http://www.senat.fr/table-nominative-archives/darou\\_marcel000683/5R/1968.html](http://www.senat.fr/table-nominative-archives/darou_marcel000683/5R/1968.html)>.

<sup>1100</sup>“Martial Brousse: Extrait de la table nominative 1967,” *Sénat* website, <[http://www.senat.fr/table-nominative-archives/brousse\\_martial000760/5R/1967.html](http://www.senat.fr/table-nominative-archives/brousse_martial000760/5R/1967.html)>.

Nevertheless, Minister Duvillard rejected both bills according to article 40 of the Constitution, which allows the government to challenge proposed laws based on negative financial impact, since the propositions attached material benefits to the veterans' card.<sup>1101</sup> But in the same speech Duvillard also cited article 41, suggesting that the bill was not in the domain of the law, since, as he argued, awarding the veterans' card without any material benefits would make it no different from the recently created Award of the Nation's Gratitude.<sup>1102</sup> This is thus the clearest evidence that Minister Duvillard and the government he represented had no intention of recognizing veterans of Algeria, with or without material benefits!

The President of the Senate, Alain Poher, called for the proposition to pass under review by the *Conseil constitutionnel*. In November 1968, this body decided that veterans' status did fall under the realm of legislation.<sup>1103</sup> The bill passed the Senate in December 1968 with a resounding 242 votes against 3, to the FNACA's great joy.<sup>1104</sup> However, the battle still remained to enter the bill on the agenda for the National Assembly, and to pass a vote there.<sup>1105</sup> The government tasked Gaullist deputy Marcel Béraud with writing a report on the proposition. However, he delayed submitting his report, and eventually the government was able to rally a weak majority of 245 deputies

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<sup>1101</sup>“Au Sénat: Proposition de loi,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 56 (January 1969): 4.

<sup>1102</sup>“Législation AFN,” *La Voix du combattant* 1342 (January 1969): 5; “Au Sénat: Proposition de loi,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 56 (January 1969): 4.

<sup>1103</sup>“Législation AFN,” *op. cit.*, 5; “Décision no. 68-8 FNR du 27 novembre 1968,” *Conseil Constitutionnel* website, <<http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-con..decision-n-68-8-fnr-du-27-novembre-1968.7119.html>>.

<sup>1104</sup>“Vers la reconnaissance de notre qualité de combattant: Une double étape franchie,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 56 (January 1969): 1.

<sup>1105</sup>*Idem.*

to reject discussion of the bill, so the bill never made it out of the Senate and into the National Assembly.<sup>1106</sup> In the Senate in particular, it was relatively easy to make electorally-minded gestures in favor of veterans “without much actual consequence on government policy.”<sup>1107</sup>

Naturally, both veterans’ associations observed these proceedings with interest. The UNCAFN’s cautious, incremental approach can be seen in the insistence of Vice-President Hugues Dalleau that “our readers know well that we will not ask for impossible things, or things that are undesirable for them and for the country.” He continued by urging “our leaders to put themselves at the disposition of the state and legislators, to have them better understand our point of view,” proposing more patient dialogue between elites.<sup>1108</sup> President Porteu de la Morandière wrote of his hope that the National Assembly would “follow the beautiful example of the Senate,” and wished “much courage and independence of mind” to the deputies, while urging the UNCAFN’s sections “much energy to remind [the deputies] of this little problem of ours.”<sup>1109</sup> However, the UNCAFN did not back up these wishes with effective political campaigns. Just a few months later, Dalleau wrote an article regretting the lack of organizational structure in departmental and local chapters, and urging that “the multiple activities of the veterans of

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<sup>1106</sup>“1968...1972: Le long périple vers la carte du combattant,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 470 sup. (October 2008): 16; Maurice Sicart, “La 3ème génération du feu n’oubliera pas la nuit du 5 au 6 juin,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 106 (June 1973): 1.

<sup>1107</sup>Wilson, 53.

<sup>1108</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “La prochaine session parlementaire,” *La Voix du combattant* 1342 (January 1969): 5.

<sup>1109</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Quelques vœux pour 1969,” *La Voix du combattant* 1342 (January 1969): 1

North Africa of a department be truly coordinated by a departmental commission.”<sup>1110</sup>

The UNCAFN, long accustomed to a sympathetic ear in the government, may have shown too much “aloofness” at the very time it was critical to “exercise influence in order to sway government decision-making.”<sup>1111</sup>

The FNACA, on the other hand, was fully aware of the necessity of focused political action, and possessed the internal organization to undertake it. In October 1968, the leaders of the local committee of Bordeaux had met with Mayor Jacques Chaban-Delmas, President of the National Assembly and the third most powerful politician in the country, securing his agreement that veterans of Algeria deserved the veterans’ card, and his word to bring it up with Minister Duvillard.<sup>1112</sup> And rather than losing heart following the stillbirth of the bill in the National Assembly, the FNACA launched a “militant trimester” of intensive activism in February, March, and April. It declared March 9 a “national day of petitions,” on which local and departmental committees would collect signatures from the public to transfer to the national headquarters, to bolster delegations to the Veterans’ Ministry.<sup>1113</sup>

After Charles de Gaulle’s resignation from the presidency in 1969 following a failed referendum, the climate became somewhat more conducive to the cause of Algerian War veterans’ recognition.<sup>1114</sup> The FNACA asked the main presidential

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<sup>1110</sup>Hugues Dalleau, “Vie de l’association,” *La Voix du combattant* 1345 (April 1969): 12.

<sup>1111</sup>Wilson, 148.

<sup>1112</sup>Jacques Chapa, “Entrevue avec M. Chaban-Delmas,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 57 (February 1969): 1-2. Chaban-Delmas was an important and somewhat unexpected ally for the FNACA to win over, given his Gaullist credentials and his involvement in creating the UNCAFN.

<sup>1113</sup>“Communiqué de presse du Comité national de la FNACA,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 57 (February 1969): 1.

<sup>1114</sup>Evans, “Rehabilitating the traumatized war veteran,” 77.

candidates their stances. The results were more promising than they had been in 1965, when the only candidate on the left, François Mitterrand—who had supported veterans’ recognition and criticized the way “the executive [took] no account of the will of Parliament”—was narrowly defeated in the second round by incumbent President de Gaulle. Unsurprisingly, de Gaulle had never responded to the FNACA’s request for a statement.<sup>1115</sup> But in 1969, Socialist Gaston Defferre, center-right *Centre démocrate* Alain Poher, and Communist candidate Jacques Duclos all went on record in favor of veterans’ recognition, promising to consult with “qualified representatives of the third combat generation” on a law project.

However, both Prime Minister Georges Pompidou and, strangely enough, *Parti socialiste unifié* (PSU) leader Michel Rocard, who had militated against the Algerian War a decade earlier, refused to meet with the FNACA.<sup>1116</sup> The association continued its pressure once the election was over, making “several attempts” to send a delegation to President Pompidou, who finally consented to allow a representative to receive them in September 1969. Although the *chargé de mission*, Michel Bruguière, would not make any firm commitments on veterans’ recognition, even when reminded of Pompidou’s documented commitment earlier in the presidential campaign, he perceptively noted that

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<sup>1115</sup>c“Notre lettre aux candidats à la Présidence de la République,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 31 (November-December 1965): 7.

<sup>1116</sup>c“Une délégation FNACA reçue par 3 candidats à la Présidence de la République,” *Echo FNACA* 2 (June 1969): 3. A charitable interpretation of Rocard’s refusal is that he did not feel himself to be impartial enough to meet with veterans of a war he had vehemently opposed, or that he did not know that the FNACA had been fighting against the Algerian War since its foundation. In any case, Rocard, as leader of the PSU, did eventually receive a FNACA delegation in early 1973, on that occasion signaling his support for recognition of veterans of Algeria. “La FNACA rencontre les formations politiques,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 102 (February 1973): 2.

the whole matter revolved around whether the government could acknowledge the events of Algeria as having been a war.<sup>1117</sup>

Pressuring presidential candidates was important for public relations with their members and the general public, but FNACA leaders knew that the real battle lay in confronting the Ministry of Veterans.<sup>1118</sup> Although Veterans' Ministers Raymond Triboulet, Jean Sainteny and Alexandre Sanguinetti had resisted state recognition of veterans of Algeria from 1958 onwards, Minister Henri Duvillard was the fiercest opponent, and his tenure, 1967 to 1972, overlapped with a period of energetic political action for the Federation. He openly regretted the outcome of the Algerian War, telling FNACA delegates during a rare audience that the Accords of Évian "represented the end of a great hope: that of French Algeria."<sup>1119</sup> Moreover, the FNACA had refused to sanction veterans' ceremonies for 'national unity' in May 1968, and this seemed to earn it Duvillard's personal enmity. He snubbed the association in February 1969 by failing to invite it to the "traditional reception organized at the start of each year" to welcome veterans' associations, and by 1971 would only have invited the FNACA to two out of four of these receptions held during his tenure.<sup>1120</sup> On several occasions, Duvillard mailed letters and documents to all deputies in the National Assembly, dismissing the

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<sup>1117</sup>"Une délégation FNACA reçue à la Présidence de la République," *Echo FNACA* 3 (September 1969): 2. During the presidential campaign, Pompidou had written to the FNACA, "It appears desirable to me that veterans' status should be recognized for those who participated in the operations to maintain order in North Africa." Cited in "À Saint-Nazaire, le Congrès des Anciens d'AFN décide le lancement d'une campagne pour la carte du combattant," *Le Monde* (28 September 1971): 16.

<sup>1118</sup>Wilson, 140.

<sup>1119</sup>"Tout est clair," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 82 (April 1971): 7.

<sup>1120</sup>Jean-Claude Citerne, "Éditorial," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 57 (February 1969): 1; "Glané dans la presse," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 81 (March 1971): 2.

representativeness of the FNACA and denigrating its militancy as “inspired by political considerations” on behalf of a certain “party,” by which he doubtless meant the French Communist Party.<sup>1121</sup>

Not only did Duvillard discredit the FNACA in writing, but he also may have attempted to sabotage its local organization. Michel Sabourdy, Editor in Chief of the FNACA’s newspaper since 1970, reports that the Minister paid 500,000 Francs to René Poujaud, a member of the National Committee and President of the FNACA Committee of the Creuse, to switch allegiances to a right-wing group allied with the UNC, possibly the UNCAFN.<sup>1122</sup> Whether or not this anecdote is true, Duvillard’s documented punitive campaigns indicate that the FNACA’s strategy of mass mobilization to garner the support of the population and elected deputies seemed to pose a threat to the Gaullist balance of power. While the UNCAFN was not completely in the pocket of Minister Duvillard, he certainly bestowed his good graces on the association. For example, a working lunch visit from Minister Henri Duvillard in 1970 revealed that “the path leading to a perfect accord” would not be “traversed in a single step,” although the UNCAFN did feel it was faced with a man of “good will.”<sup>1123</sup>

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<sup>1121</sup>Form letter from Henri Duvillard to “Mon cher ami,” 17 December 1968, David Rousset papers, 1.

<sup>1122</sup>Michel Sabourdy, Interview, 11 May 2014. Former National President Jacques de Jæger recalls that he and other national leaders were able to prevent this attempted sabotage, and retain the loyalty of 90% of the Creuse committee. Jacques de Jæger, *Tous à jour de leur cotisation! Témoignages sur Maurice Sicart* (Paris: FNACA, 2011), 40. I have not been able to find sources from outside the FNACA confirming this story, but it is highly suggestive of the Minister’s manipulation that Poujaud, once voted out of the FNACA’s National Committee, was selected by the Veterans’ Ministry to represent bearers of the Award of the Nation’s Gratitude on the Board of Directors of the ONACVG, even though the Ministry had rejected all of the FNACA’s previous attempts to present candidates for this position. “Réuni le 6 décembre 1970, le nouveau bureau national a approuvé la mise en application d’importantes décisions.” *Echo FNACA* 13 (January 1971): 2.

<sup>1123</sup>François Porteu de la Morandière, “Entretien avec notre Ministre,” *La Voix du combattant* 1355 (April 1970): 8.

In late 1969, the FNACA's National Committee had asked all local leaders to "intensify their efforts" in lobbying elected officials, to overcome government opposition.<sup>1124</sup> The association sought to make veterans' rights a campaign issue among deputies, noting in an internal directive that "in this [electoral] period, they are more sensitive to our demands."<sup>1125</sup> FNACA National Secretary Wladyslaw Marek corresponded with all deputies regardless of political affiliation, appealing to them by pointing out the political constraints of Fifth Republic institutions. For instance, in form letters condemning Minister Duillard's "categorical decision" to refuse veterans state recognition, Marek denounced, with Gallic sarcasm, the tight reins that the government held over elected officials: "We are persuaded that all parliamentarians [...] will duly appreciate how little their opinion is taken into account, before they are even able to express themselves."<sup>1126</sup> Marek also made sure that elected officials knew they were being watched specifically. For instance, he wrote to Gaullist deputy David Rousset—a Résistant, former déporté, and anticolonialist militant—thanking him for his recent intervention on the topic of the Veterans' Ministry budget, but urging him to explicitly address the recognition of veterans of Algeria as soon as possible.<sup>1127</sup>

In this lobbying campaign, the FNACA received responses from over one hundred and ninety deputies, or just over forty percent of the National Assembly.<sup>1128</sup> The rates of favorable responses from the main parties were 30% for the Gaullist *Union*

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<sup>1124</sup> "Action auprès des élus," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 66 (December 1969): 3.

<sup>1125</sup> "Le Comité National de Langogne," *Écho FNACA* 1 (May 1969): 4.

<sup>1126</sup> Form letter from Wladyslaw Marek to "Monsieur le député," 13 May 1969, David Rousset archives, 1.

<sup>1127</sup> Letter from Wladyslaw Marek to David Rousset, 13 November 1969, David Rousset archives, 1-2.

<sup>1128</sup> "Le Comité National de Langogne," *op. cit.*, *ibid.*



*démocratique républicaine* (81 out of 269), 34% for the center-right *Républicains indépendants* (20 out of 58), 68% for the Socialists (38 out of 56), and only 19% among the Communists (6 out of 32).<sup>1129</sup> This reveals support distributed widely across the political spectrum, as well as a distinct lack of Communist support for an association whose detractors had accused it of PCF domination for a decade. And the approximately equal support for veterans' recognition among the Gaullist party and the *Républicains indépendants* indicates an important split between elected officials and the government. Although conservatives of various stripes—including Gaullists—were in favor of veterans' recognition, the steadfast refusal of the President and the Veterans' Minister prevented them from being able to discuss the question.

The FNACA turned to local politics in this period as well. In 1970, the association launched a campaign to request town and departmental councils to pass resolutions in support of veterans' status, reminding its cadres that “the massive and oh! how precious support of our local elected leaders cannot help but aid us in gaining our rights.”<sup>1130</sup> This campaign met with rapid success; by summer 1972, the FNACA had collected nearly 5,500 such resolutions throughout the country.<sup>1131</sup> Perhaps the greatest success of the FNACA's campaign in this period, however, was impressing a certain deputy, *Républicain indépendant* Louis Joanne, with the energy of the local FNACA chapter in the Charente-Maritime. In December 1970, Joanne submitted a bill for the recognition of

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<sup>1129</sup>“Action auprès des élus,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 66 (December 1969): 3.

<sup>1130</sup>“Ami responsable... Avez-vous pensé à faire adopter par votre Conseil Municipal le voeu proposé par la FNACA en faveur de la reconnaissance de votre qualité de combattant?” *Echo FNACA* 21 (January 1972): 1.

<sup>1131</sup>“Voeux des conseils municipaux: le cap de 5000 est franchi!” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 96 (July-August 1972): 7.

veterans of Algeria.<sup>1132</sup> However, the bill failed to be listed in the National Assembly's agenda for years, while the FNACA continued its vigorous efforts to rally elected officials to its position.<sup>1133</sup>

By the early 1970s, the Federation had attained the power in numbers that it hoped would achieve its goals. It had close to 200,000 members nationwide in 1972.<sup>1134</sup> This would be a propitious year, as some governmental obstacles fell, allowing a strengthened FNACA a more sympathetic audience. The new Minister of Veterans that year, André Bord, immediately showed himself more open to dialogue than his predecessors. A former Resistance fighter from Alsace, he was the President of the UFAC organization in the Bas-Rhin, and in June 1972, he had convinced his departmental chapter to pass the FNACA's resolution in support of veterans' recognition.<sup>1135</sup> On meeting with a FNACA delegation in September, he promised to create a commission to study the question of veterans' recognition, the first Veterans' Minister to commit himself thus.<sup>1136</sup> In November of 1972, Bord announced before the National Assembly that the government would no longer use the administrative argument that the Algerian War "was a simple matter of peacekeeping operations" to deny veterans of North Africa veterans' status. Furthermore, he denounced previous governments,

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<sup>1132</sup>“Seul l'action paie!” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 79 (January 1971): 1.

<sup>1133</sup>Maurice Sicart, “La 3ème génération du feu n'oubliera pas la nuit du 5 au 6 juin,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 106 (June 1973): 1.

<sup>1134</sup>“D'un Ministre...à l'autre,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 96 (July-August 1972): 8.

<sup>1135</sup>“1968...1972: Le long périple vers la carte du combattant,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 470 sup. (October 2008): 19.

<sup>1136</sup>“Communiqué du secrétariat national,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 97 (September 1972): 8. The FNACA seems to have originally proposed the idea for such a commission as early as 1958, in a letter to Minister Triboulet, who naturally enough had rejected it. “Nos droits,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 5 (January 1961): 4.

“especially those of the Fourth Republic,” for having erected this barrier in the first place.<sup>1137</sup> The commission Minister Bord created was ecumenical, comprising about sixty representatives from various ministries and from every generation of veterans’ associations.

The twenty-one-person working group formed to report to the commission gave equal representation to the two competing Algerian veterans’ associations, seating Secretary General Maurice Sicart, and National Secretary and Legal Council Guy Ramis of the FNACA; and National President François Porteu de la Morandière and Executive Committee member Claude Pèlerin of the UNCAFN.<sup>1138</sup> Along with representing associations for veterans of the World Wars, the working group included some nationalist veterans’ groups of the Indochina and Algerian generations, including the far-right *Anciens combattants de l’Union Français*, and the right-wing *Union nationale des anciens combattants d’Indochine, des théâtres d’opérations en Afrique du Nord* (UNACITA). Finally, the working group sat one delegate from the ONACVG, three from the Ministry of Defense, and four from the Veterans’ Ministry.<sup>1139</sup> The working group

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<sup>1137</sup>Claude Pelèrin, “La qualité du combattant aux AFN: un rappel des faits,” *La Voix du combattant* 1383 (February 1973): 7; Hugues Dalleau, “La reconnaissance,” *Les Cahiers du Djebel* 5 (November 1972): 10.

<sup>1138</sup>“Droit à la carte du combattant: où en sont les travaux de la commission?” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 102 (February 1973): 12; “Notre réponse à la constitution d’une commission d’étude,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 100 (December 1972): 5; Claude Pèlerin, “La qualité du combattant aux AFN,” *op. cit.*, 7. The working group also included a relative newcomer, the *Fédération nationale des combattants prisonniers de guerre-combattants d’Algérie, Tunisie, et Maroc* (FNCPG-CATM), originally a POW association founded in 1948 that began opening its doors to veterans of Algeria in 1963, based on the similarly ambivalent homecoming experience facing both groups. “Historique,” Fédération Nationale des Combattants Prisonniers de Guerre-Combattants d’Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie website, <<http://www.fncpg-catm.org/index.php/la-federation/historique>>.

<sup>1139</sup>Claude Pelèrin, “La qualité du combattant aux AFN,” *op. cit.*, 7. Unofficially, the UNCAFN had more voices on the working group than did the FNACA, as its Vice President, Hugues Dalleau, was seated as a representative of the Executive Board of the ONACVG. “Composition de groupe de travail,” *Les Cahiers du djebel* 12 (February 1975): 13.

first met on January 17, 1973, which suggests that it was an “absolute priority” for the Minister, as the Minister’s *chargé de mission* noted.<sup>1140</sup>

But the chief dispute between the FNACA and the UNCAFN persisted in the working group, as UNCAFN President Porteu de la Morandière held fast to his ideal of a separate, symbolic card unique to veterans of Algeria, while the FNACA leaders demanded “a chamois-colored card identical to those held by our elders” with all the material benefits it entailed.<sup>1141</sup> Sicart and Ramis gained the upper hand in this conflict by categorically refusing to participate in any discussion of a separate card, which, they claimed, “would do nothing but definitively amplify the divisions in the world of veterans.”<sup>1142</sup> Eventually, after about ten meetings, the working group came to agree unanimously that soldiers who served in the Algerian conflict deserved veterans’ status.<sup>1143</sup>

However, its report concluded that it was “imperative” to keep the criteria of “the notion of combat” and “minimum presence in a fighting unit,” given that many men who fought in Algeria had not seen combat for three consecutive months, which was a criterion for recognizing veterans of the World Wars.<sup>1144</sup> Indeed, no more than 10% of French forces saw sustained combat during the war, although all troops deployed were

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<sup>1140</sup>Jean Deliau, “La loi Bord et la troisième génération du feu,” *Les Cahiers du djebel* 12 (February 1975): 2.

<sup>1141</sup>“Droit à la carte du combattant: où en sont les travaux de la commission?” *op. cit.*, 12.

<sup>1142</sup>“Notre réponse à la constitution d’une commission d’étude,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 100, *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>1143</sup>Jean Deliau, “La loi Bord et la troisième génération du feu,” *op. cit.*, 3.

<sup>1144</sup>“Le rapport final,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 107 (July-August 1973): 2.

exposed to the dangers of ambushes and bombings.<sup>1145</sup> The commission urged legislators to “preserve all of the moral and civic value of the veterans’ card” by keeping the criteria as close as possible to those for veterans of previous wars, “all while taking into account the specificity” of combat in Algeria.<sup>1146</sup>

In acknowledgement of the irregular nature of combat in the North African conflict, the commission defined “fighting units” as “those units implicated in at least three distinct actions of fire or combat over the course of thirty consecutive days.” A veteran would have to prove his presence in a “fighting unit” for at least three months, not necessarily consecutive, to qualify for the veterans’ card.<sup>1147</sup> This compromise likely pleased veterans of earlier wars, because it did not extend the veterans’ card for lighter criteria than they themselves had faced. But this framework also restricted the total number of veterans of Algeria who would have access to the card, which might have made this proposal more acceptable to the state.

The sudden death of President Georges Pompidou in April 1974 marked the end of the Gaullist era of the Fifth Republic. After the closest presidential election in French history that May, *Républicain indépendant* President-elect Valéry Giscard d’Estaing

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<sup>1145</sup>Martin S. Alexander, “The ‘War Without a Name,’ the French Army and the Algerians: Recovering Experiences, Images, and Testimonies,” 1-39 in eds. Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and J.F.V. Keiger, *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962 Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (Houndsmills: Palgrave, 2002), 23.

<sup>1146</sup>“La commission «ad hoc» se prononce pour l’attribution de la carte du combattant aux anciens d’AFN,” *Le Monde* (5 July 1973): 7.

<sup>1147</sup>Jean Deliau, “La loi Bord et la troisième génération du feu,” *op. cit.*, 3. The commission also proposed an “adjustment parameter” (*paramètre de rattrapage*), which allowed veterans unable to prove three months in a combat unit to cite instead six combat actions, whether as a soldier or as a civilian, in order to be granted the veterans’ card on an exceptional case-by-case basis (*dérogation*). The UNCAFN had supported the *paramètre de rattrapage* in a press release, and also in letters sent to deputies before the vote on June 28. Claude Pelèrin, “Les Sénateurs adoptent la thèse de l’UNCAFN,” *La Voix du combattant* 1400 (November-December 1974): 8.

sought to distinguish himself from Gaullism as well as win over constituents of the new Socialist-Communist coalition under François Mitterrand whom he had just narrowly defeated.<sup>1148</sup> Giscard d'Estaing presented himself as a consensual leader desirous of social reform, in part because he had failed to attract widespread support from young, urban, and blue-collar voters.<sup>1149</sup> He desired to “transcend the traditional clash between Gaullists and communists that had defined French politics since 1945,” offering himself as a modern, third way to lead France out of the shadow of 1968.<sup>1150</sup> And recognizing veterans of Algeria was one way for Giscard d'Estaing to move beyond de Gaulle's legacy in order to pursue his own agenda.

Although a National Assembly bill to recognize veterans of Algeria had been proposed in 1970 by *Républicain indépendant* deputy Louis Joanne, the government had used various devices to block the National Assembly from discussing it for years.<sup>1151</sup> On April 5, 1974, however, between Pompidou's death and Giscard d'Estaing's inauguration, the Cabinet itself proposed a law to recognize veterans of Algeria, following the recommendations of Minister Bord's commission.<sup>1152</sup> Minister Bord presented the bill in the National Assembly on June 28, and it passed unanimously, among those deputies who had not yet left on vacation.<sup>1153</sup> This led to one of the earliest

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<sup>1148</sup>Ian Derbyshire, *Politics in France: From Giscard to Mitterrand* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1988): 37.

<sup>1149</sup>*Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>1150</sup>Émile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State, and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 247.

<sup>1151</sup>“Après le Sénat, l'Assemblée Nationale: Une nouvelle proposition de loi a été déposée sur le bureau de l'Assemblée,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 79 (January 1971): 1.

<sup>1152</sup>Guy Ramis, “Le nouveau projet de loi gouvernemental,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 116 (May 1974): 2.

<sup>1153</sup>Jacques de Jæger, “Une première étape...une victoire pour la FNACA!,” *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 118 (July-August 1974): 1.

laws passed under President Giscard d'Estaing. He had pronounced himself in favor of recognition of veterans of Algeria before the presidential election in May, and his Prime Minister, Jacques Chirac, was even a FNACA member.<sup>1154</sup> As opposed to Charles de Gaulle and Georges Pompidou, President Giscard d'Estaing had openly supported French Algeria to the end, and had even been suspected of OAS sympathies; he was thus more inclined to support recognizing veterans of the war, especially if nationalist veterans made the case.<sup>1155</sup> Even before the final law on the veterans' card passed in December 1974, Giscard d'Estaing had amnestied all those convicted of crimes during and after the Algerian War.<sup>1156</sup>

The terms of the veterans' card law were a compromise between the goals of the two associations that had been fighting for veterans' recognition, but they aligned more with the nationalist veterans' position.<sup>1157</sup> The UNCAFN was satisfied with the law because it "maintained the essential [...] notions of intensity of combat and of fighting unit," criteria that appealed to leaders' sense of military tradition and hierarchy.<sup>1158</sup> As

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<sup>1154</sup>La F.N.A.C.A. et l'élection présidentielle," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 116 (May 1974): 3; "Nos adhérents qui sont-ils?," *L'Ancien d'Algérie* 71 (April 1970): 9. It is unknown whether Chirac was an active member of the FNACA, or if he even signed on again for multiple years, but in any case, a Prime Minister with sympathies for this vociferous left wing group that insisted on reparations for national military service in Algeria would have been all but unthinkable under a Gaullist government.

<sup>1155</sup>*Le Monde*, 21 May 1974, cited in Stora, *La gangrène et l'oubli*, 188.

<sup>1156</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d'une mémoire: de «l'Algérie française» au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Découverte, 1999), 83.

<sup>1157</sup>And indeed, the UNCAFN had devoted a great deal of energy to convincing Senators on the final form the bill should take. In mid-October 1974, its leaders personally lobbied the presidents of the Commission of Social Affairs, of the Commission of Laws of the Senate, of the group of the Union of Democrats for the Republic (the Gaullist party), of the group of unaffiliated Senators, of the Independent Republicans for Social Action, and of the Independent Republicans. Jean Pézard, "L'UNCAFN au Sénat," *La Voix du combattant* 1400 (November-December 1974): 7.

<sup>1158</sup>Claude Pelérin, "Les sénateurs adoptent la thèse de l'UNCAFN," *La Voix du combattant* 1400 (November-December 1974): 7.

the association had informed its cadres leading up to the law's passage, "[r]egardless of the number of beneficiaries [...] it is an entire generation which will be recognized as veterans, and that is what matters."<sup>1159</sup> The UNCAFN was also pleased that *harkis* were qualified to receive the veterans' card, if they had served in auxiliary units recognized by the state.<sup>1160</sup> As for the FNACA, it exulted in this symbolic recognition of the Algerian generation, but its fight was not over.

Determined that all conscripts who had served in Algeria be recognized, regardless of their war experience, the Federation vowed to loosen numerous restrictions, such as minimum number of days in a "combat unit," in order to "obtain the veterans' card for the largest possible number among us."<sup>1161</sup> For instance, the law excluded veterans who had never served in operational units; despite the risks they faced in ambushes, mines, and bombings, logistics personnel who could not prove six "combat actions" did not qualify.<sup>1162</sup> Thus, the opening of the veterans' card to veterans of Algeria was initially a symbolic recognition, since these administrative barriers would remain in place blocking access to the card for many veterans for years to come. While the final version of the law followed the FNACA's vision in offering the same veterans' card as for veterans of earlier wars, with the promise of material compensation, the initial combat restrictions as well as the inclusion of *harkis* came from the UNCAFN's vision.

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<sup>1159</sup>“La carte du combattant...partie remise!” *Les Cahiers du djebel* 9 (February 1974): 2.

<sup>1160</sup>Claude Pelèrin, “Commission spéciale UNCAFN,” *La Voix du Combattant* 1400 (November-December 1974): 8.

<sup>1161</sup>Jacques de Jæger, “La carte du combattant,” *L’Ancien d’Algérie* 120 sup. (October 1974): 1.

<sup>1162</sup>Jauffret, 348.



However, the clear success of the FNACA's single-minded activism for over a decade proved a major recruiting boon after 1974.<sup>1163</sup>

This story of the fight for the veterans' card illustrates the constraints of party politics on civic activism in Fifth Republic France. Only in the post-Gaullist era could the state be persuaded to recognize veterans of Algeria. The two warring veterans' associations could not have been more different, in terms of political orientation, culture, and tactics—not to mention, of course, the fact that they pursued diametrically opposed visions of “recognition.” Regardless of the UNCAFN's connections in elite nationalist circles, and its sympathetic ties with pro-French Algeria politicians, and despite the FNACA's successes raising public awareness and support among elected officials, neither association was able to achieve its goal under the presidencies of Charles de Gaulle or Georges Pompidou.

This deadlock demonstrates the early Fifth Republic's allergy toward the memory of Algeria, and the general impenetrability of executive power to the demands of civil society, which made the unrest of 1968 seem inevitable to many observers. Similar to how, from 1958 through 1969, President de Gaulle successfully “pushed through decolonization, subsidies for private schools, major structural changes in agriculture, regional governments, social security, and medical insurance reforms, and a major overhaul of higher education, all of which went against the positions of the groups most directly affected by these changes,” the highly centralized state and strong executive power allowed him to resist years of pressure from veterans' associations and their

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<sup>1163</sup>Claude Liauzu, “Le contingent entre silence et discours ancien combattant,” 507-516 in dir. Rioux, 512.

supporters in Parliament.<sup>1164</sup> The relationship between President de Gaulle and veterans in this period offers a case study of how Gaullism constrained civic dialogue by removing power from intermediaries, such as elected deputies, and ignored constituents' appeals through associations. From 1958 to 1968, Charles de Gaulle had used his unprecedentedly strong executive powers to lead France on a trajectory of his own choosing, and civil society could only adapt in response.

This story also illustrates the symbiotic relationship of civil society movements working from within and outside of the political system. Although institutions remained the same, the new political context after Gaullism provided the conditions wherein the FNACA and the UNCAFN achieved their legislative victory. Once a government was in power whose self-image did not rely on obscuring the nature and impact of the Algerian War, it was the political and tactical competition between these two associations, rather than the perseverance of either one alone, that led to the success for which they both claim unique credit today. The UNCAFN's political access and nationalist moral standing eventually rendered symbolic veterans' recognition palatable to conservatives and colonial nostalgists in the government, while the FNACA garnered widespread support for material recognition of veterans among citizens and elected officials, who were less likely than the government to scorn the sacrifices of a generation of conscripts.

By 1974 the UNCAFN had lost much of the prestige it had known since its founding, whereas the FNACA was near the height of its power. The UNCAFN had been born during the death-throes of the Fourth Republic, and followed a traditional political culture based in honor and elite personal contacts, whose currency would fade with the advent of popular democracy under Gaullism. The FNACA, however, had been born in

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<sup>1164</sup>Wilson, 219.

opposition to the establishment, and thus was forced to learn how to mobilize the wide support that would allow it to succeed under Gaullism and popular democracy. The FNACA's success winning over the French population and elected deputies to its campaign owes certainly something to the events of May 1968, which reactivated memories of anti-fascist opposition kindled during the Algerian War, and demonstrated the power of coalitions in national politics, as diverse sectors of society realized they shared similar grievances against the government.

Paradoxically, the French Fifth Republic had recognized veterans of Algeria—in 1967, with the Award of the Nation's Gratitude, and in 1974, with the veterans' card—decades before the state would acknowledge the Algerian War itself, in 1999.<sup>1165</sup> Already by the war's end in 1962, a “positive” national consensus on the memory of the Algerian War was impossible.<sup>1166</sup> Owing to the long cult of the veteran in France and the “emotional debt” that society felt toward veterans, it was simpler to build consensus on the recognition owed to veterans of Algeria than it was to decide how to confront the memory of the war itself.<sup>1167</sup> Although the French state would only term the events of Algeria a “war” in 1999, the veil had been parted with the close of the Gaullist era, and thanks to the unwitting but symbiotic collaboration of two veterans' associations born from the same war as the Fifth Republic itself, the government could at least acknowledge that the young French citizens sent to fight in Algeria were real veterans.

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<sup>1165</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 42.

<sup>1166</sup>Evans, “Rehabilitating the traumatized war veteran,” 77.

<sup>1167</sup>Wilson, 52.

## CONCLUSION

During my year of research in France, I received frequent reminders of the continuing weight of the Algerian War, and how disputed its memory remains. Peers sometimes recoiled on learning of my dissertation topic, expressing their discomfort by saying things like, “Oh, that dirty war—we were nothing but torturers down there.” When the volunteer paratrooper and former OAS member turned far-right ideologue Dominique Venner shocked France by shooting himself in Notre-Dame-de-Paris, National Front President Marine Le Pen saluted what she called his “eminently political gesture” in protest of immigration.<sup>1168</sup> These and other incidents reflect the deep legacy of the Algerian War in the French political imaginary. Such examples suggested to me the great divide between popular memories of this war on the Left and the Right, which make national commemoration so difficult to this day.

In an era of increasingly palpable “cultural insecurity” in France, it is important to understand the origins of the memorial divide over France’s colonial legacy, for which the Algerian War frequently stands in by synecdoche.<sup>1169</sup> Since mainland France only became directly affected by the Algerian War in the phase of OAS violence at the end of

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<sup>1168</sup>“Marine Le Pen rend hommage à l’acte ‘politique’ de Dominique Venner,” *Le Monde* (21 May 2013), <[http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/05/21/marine-le-pen-rend-hommage-a-dominique-venner\\_3414943\\_823448.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/politique/article/2013/05/21/marine-le-pen-rend-hommage-a-dominique-venner_3414943_823448.html)>.

<sup>1169</sup>Political scientist Laurent Bouvet uses this term to define the “worry, concern, even fear” underlying new populist mentalities that express themselves in terms of cultural and ethnic identity in France, which is a taboo in Republican tradition. Individuals and groups on the right as well as the left now draw on the discourse of “cultural insecurity” to explain socioeconomic struggles. Bouvet states that the discourse and the political appeal of the National Front find “direct confirmation” in “cultural insecurity.” Laurent Bouvet, *L’insécurité culturelle* (Paris: Fayard, 2015), 9-10.

And Michel Houellebecq’s satirical novel *Soumission* (Paris: Flammarion, 2015) instantly became seen as a divisive statement on cultural insecurity in France. It forecasts a near future in which the Socialists ally with Islamists in order to deny the National Front national dominance, and the book happened to be released the very day of the *Charlie Hebdo* and kosher market attacks.

the war, popular memories of the war tend to project the political context of 1961-1962 backward in time, as if a multi-racial republican empire had only ever been a reactionary project, and decolonization an historical inevitability.<sup>1170</sup> But fuller examination of the Algerian War, the evolution of the political context, and soldiers' experiences reveals how deeply implicated French society was in the conflict, and how profoundly French Republican values and national identity had been undermined by the final phase of the war.

This dissertation speaks to this broader discussion about the legacy of colonialism, and what decolonization did to France. In the period under examination, the main image of veterans of Algeria in broader society was as torturers. Revelations of the Army's systematic use of torture shook French national self-conceptions, as the self-proclaimed "nation of the rights of man" was itself recovering from the traumas and martyrdoms of World War II. The fact of widespread torture belied the benevolent "civilizing mission" narrative that France had told about itself for a century. Moreover, the state's recourse to torture was a dramatic indication of its failure to convince subjects that they were in fact French, a project the Third Republic achieved within mainland France itself by the close of the nineteenth century.<sup>1171</sup> While decolonization did not begin with Algeria, because the land had been administered as integral French territory, the end of French Algeria in 1962 suggested the death of the ideal of universalism.<sup>1172</sup>

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<sup>1170</sup>Todd Shepard, *The invention of decolonization: the Algerian War and the remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

<sup>1171</sup>Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 485.

<sup>1172</sup>The translated title of Todd Shepard's book *The invention of decolonization*, rendered in French as *1962: comment l'indépendance algérienne a transformé la France* (Paris: Fayot, 2012), hints that the

Although both major veterans' associations examined here only represented a small fraction of the generation of veterans of Algeria, their sharp rivalry illustrates the limits of the possible for France's memory of the war in the Gaullist period. The memorial debates between the FNACA and the UNCAFN centered on what the Algerian War had done to French soldiers, the direct embodiment of the nation. These associations could only agree that French soldiers were victims—either of a state that had sent them to fight an unjust war, or of a state that had negotiated away a military victory that was within reach. While most French veterans of Algeria did not immediately the veterans' movement, these two competing narratives offered them frameworks for thinking about their relationship to the state and their place in society. The silence of the last French conscript generation in the twentieth century, as well as the vociferous demands of the associations acting in its name, both reflected a growing sense of alienation between the nation and the state.

Indeed, the founders of the Algerian War veterans' movement addressed this alienation—the idea that the nation had been betrayed by its leaders—with their respective political programs developed after the war's end. Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's inclusive village-style republicanism, calling for citizens to vote far more frequently on the issues that affected them most directly, and François Porteu de la Morandière's depoliticized corporatist representation and his promotion of veterans as a new elite, represented attempts to reconceptualize the Left and the Right in a new period of mass democracy. While neither veteran's political program succeeded, suggesting the strength and conservatism of Fifth Republic institutions, they both reflected the political

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outcome of the Algerian War required reconceptualizing the nation in France after the dream of multi-ethnic republican empire was put to bed.

discontent and disillusionment that can occur on the homefront at the conclusion of a divisive, unconventional war in which citizens have been asked to serve for ever-changing war aims. Both men felt betrayed by the politicians that led France through the war, and abandoned by the nation they were supposed to represent.

More than fifty years since the end of the Algerian War, historians have made great strides in moving beyond polemic to uncover the many complexities and traumas of this conflict for Algeria and for France. And recently, the veterans' movement itself has seemed less divided. In 1987, for instance, the FNACA, the UNC, and three other associations representing veterans of Algeria launched a "United Front," organizing a massive march of 50,000 veterans in Paris in October 1988 to demand the government's attention to long held concerns, including broader access to the veterans' card.<sup>1173</sup> With retirement on the horizon and concrete benefits of utmost importance, perhaps it was finally possible for militant veterans to set aside political divisions.

But for many among the generation of veterans of Algeria, whether they are within or outside the veterans' movement, the lack of an inclusive collective memory of the war in French society remains painful. Most veterans whom I interviewed seemed to hope I would tell the story of "their" Algerian War, an impossible task within the confines of historical objectivity. The crystalization of the Algerian War veterans' movement into two mutually exclusive memory communities suggests the impossibility of recounting any universal story of veterans beyond their shared suffering in a war that some either did or did not believe in, and that most of them did not understand. And indeed, the state's very belated official acknowledgement in 1999 that Algeria had been a

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<sup>1173</sup> "Grogne et rogne: Des Combattants en Afrique du Nord 1952-1962," pamphlet, Front Uni des Organisations Nationales Representatives des Anciens Combattants en Algerie du Nord (March 1988), UNCAFN archives, "Punch Box."

war only seemed to underscore “the idea that these soldiers were, or had been, victims.”<sup>1174</sup>

Even aside from their long and calculated neglect by the state, French veterans could think of themselves as victims of the Algerian War because of political complexities that most had little chance of understanding. The mass of conscripts was apolitical and ideology was foreign to them; they often felt that “they were the toys of a history that was writing itself simultaneously with them and without them.”<sup>1175</sup> Those politicized veterans who opposed the war suffered from the *raison d'état* that allowed Charles de Gaulle to use the Army until it served his own political aims, which he conflated with those of France. And those soldiers who had truly believed in the mission to defend French Algeria fell victim to the reality of the “exterior maneuver,” since France was defeated through factors external to the battlefield itself.<sup>1176</sup> The convergence of these two abstract processes does much to explain the impossibility of a single interpretation of the war within the veterans’ movement, especially when each soldier had experienced “his own” war. And of course, the traumas of the Algerian War for France go well beyond the community of veterans—Benjamin Stora estimates that by the close of the twentieth century, four to five million people possessed a painful “living memory” of the Algerian War—including *pieds noirs*, *harkis*, and veterans and their

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<sup>1174</sup>Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: une histoire apaisée?* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 103.

<sup>1175</sup>Ludivine Bantigny, *Le plus bel âge? Jeunes et jeunesses en France dès l'aube des Trente Glorieuses à la Guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 381.

<sup>1176</sup>André Beaufre, “Indirect Strategy in the Nuclear Age,” 1023-1049 in ed. Gérard Chaliand, *The Art of War in World History from Antiquity to the Nuclear Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1026. Incidentally, it seems that Gérard Chaliand joined up with former FNACA co-founder Georges Mattéi in his work supporting the FLN during the Algerian War. Martin Evans, *The memory of resistance: French opposition to the Algerian War (1954-1962)* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), 87-89.



families, making a bitter narrative of the war such a powerful mobilizing force for the National Front.<sup>1177</sup>

The divided memory of Algeria remains a politically potent reference in France to this day. To the far right's chagrin, the FNACA, after decades of lobbying, achieved in 2012 its long-term goal of elevating March 19 as an official day of commemoration of the end of the Algerian War. At the first official ceremony at the *Arc de Triomphe* that year, Paris mayor Bertrand Delanoë, Senate President Jean-Pierre Bel, and Minister-delegate of Veterans Kader Arif—the son of a *harki*, an overtly symbolic appointment—all attended, reflecting the Fifth Republic's consecration of the FNACA narrative that the end of the Algerian War was a victory for France and for peace.<sup>1178</sup> On the eve of the March 19 commemoration in 2016, and amid protests from certain politicians on the right including Marine Le Pen and Nicolas Sarkozy, the French Minister of Veterans urged French citizens to “overcome this ‘war of memories’” and cease to “cultivate the rancors of the past.”<sup>1179</sup>

Attempting to understand and to see beyond the seemingly inescapable “memory wars” has been an enjoyable challenge of this research project. But these political divisions do not explain the whole story of Algerian War veterans' experience in France, since most of this generation did not join associations for decades. For many veterans, the “duty of memory” goes beyond any question of ideology. As General Marcel Bigéard

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<sup>1177</sup>Benjamin Stora, *Le transfert d'une mémoire: de «l'Algérie française» au racisme anti-arabe* (Paris: Découverte, 1999), 82.

<sup>1178</sup>“Première commémoration officielle du 19 mars,” FNACA website, April 2012, <<http://www.fnaca.org/actualites/142-premiere-commemoration-officielle-du-19-mars>>.

<sup>1179</sup>Jean-Marc Todeschini, “Commémorer le 19 mars pour dépasser les rancœurs de la guerre d'Algérie,” *Le Monde* (18 March 2016), <[http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/03/18/jean-marc-todeschini-commemorer-le-19-mars-pour-depasser-les-rancœurs-de-la-guerre-d-algerie-4885853\\_3232.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2016/03/18/jean-marc-todeschini-commemorer-le-19-mars-pour-depasser-les-rancœurs-de-la-guerre-d-algerie-4885853_3232.html)>.

stated, echoing the sentiments of many veterans I interviewed, ““I go everywhere there are ceremonies for the dead. I don’t give a damn if they are on the right or the left. I just think of all our men fallen in Algeria...”<sup>1180</sup> If this dissertation could not hope to convey the “Algerian War” of each individual veteran I interviewed, perhaps it can at least serve to reflect the feelings of invisibility and betrayal that their generation experienced, and locate their overlooked engagements in some of the central events of the early Fifth Republic.

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<sup>1180</sup>General Marcel Bigeard, quoted in Georges Durand, “Anciens combattants d’Algérie: du Lobby à l’Association Culturelle,” 75-80 in dir. Bruno Benoît and Marc Frangi, *Guerres et associations: actes du colloque de Lyon, 29 septembre 2001* (Lyon: Presse universitaire de Lyon), 80.

## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO FNACA MEMBERS (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

[NB: The official assisting me at the FNACA edited the French version of the questionnaire I composed, intending to render it more comprehensible to the subjects, and more useful to me. I am grateful for his help, but this arrangement meant that I did not have full control over the final version of the questionnaire that was sent out. For instance, I would not have chosen to pose questions in multiple parts in sentence fragments, and I think this might have confused some of the subjects. In addition, the official completely excised any mention of the Award of the Nation's Gratitude, perhaps because his association thought so little of it.]

Department:

Surname:

First name:

Address:

Family status:

Studies accomplished:

Diplomas obtained:

Profession(s):

Dates of military service:

Locations of military service:

Unit served in:

Rank at the end of military service:

Town of residence when drafted:

Town of residence on demobilization:

Did you receive the veterans' card?

If so, which year?

Do you belong to a veterans' association?

If so, which one?

Since what year?

Did your military service influence to an important extent your experiences in France after the war?

Why or why not?

How did you experience your return home?

What were your relationships with your family like?

Relationships with your friends?

Relationships with colleagues?

Relationships with your neighbors?

Do you think that the State and politicians showed recognition/gratitude for your service?

Granting of rights?

Commemoration of the ceasefire?

Did your military experience and your status as a conscript influence your professional life?

Your return to civilian life, even much later?

Did your military experiences and your conscript status influence a political engagement?

A social engagement?

An associative engagement?

Would you be interested in participating in an interview with a Ph.D. student in History at UNC (United States)?

## APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO FNACA MEMBERS (FRENCH ORIGINAL)

Département:

Nom:

Prénom:

Adresse:

Situation familiale:

Études effectuées:

Diplômes obtenus:

Profession(s) exercée(s):

Dates du service militaire:

Lieux du service militaire:

Unité d'affectation en Algérie:

Grade à la fin du service militaire:

Ville d'habitation au moment de la mobilisation:

Ville d'accueil au retour:

Avez-vous obtenu la carte du combattant?

Dans l'affirmative, précisez l'année:

Appartenez-vous à une association d'anciens combattants?

Si oui, laquelle?

Depuis quelle année?

Votre service militaire a-t-il influencé d'une manière importante vos expériences en France après la guerre?

Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?

Comment avez-vous vécu les conditions de votre retour?

Relations avec vos proches (parents, épouse, enfants):

Relations avec vos amis:

Relations avec vos collègues de travail:

Relations avec votre voisinage:

Pensez-vous avoir bénéficié de la reconnaissance de la part de l'État et des hommes politiques?

Attribution des Droits?

Commémoration du Cessez-le-feu?

Votre expérience militaire, votre Statut d'appelé ont-ils influencé votre carrière professionnelle après la libération de vos obligations militaires?

À votre retour à la vie civile, voire plus tard?

Votre expérience militaire, votre «Statut» d'appelé ont-ils influencé:

Un engagement politique?

Un engagement social?

Un engagement associatif?

Sériez-vous intéresser [*sic*] d'avoir un entretien avec un Doctorant en Histoire de l'Université de la Caroline du Sud [*sic*] (États Unis)?

**APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO UNC/AFN MEMBERS (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)**

Name:

Surname:

Dates of military service in Algeria:

Branch(es) and arm(s) of service:

Rank at the end of your service:

The town or village you lived in before being conscripted:

Your work before your military service:

Your family situation when you were drafted:

The town or village you returned to after your military service:

In several words or phrases, how was the welcome that you received in your town or village when you returned?

Did you receive an Award of the Nation's Gratitude or a veterans' card? If so, in which years?

After your return, what kinds of civic engagement did you do (unions, associations, political parties, sports clubs, volunteering, etc.)?

In your opinion, did your military service have an important influence on your career prospects after the war?

When did you sign up for the UNCAFN?

Does it interest you to meet the researcher to give an interview?

**APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO UNC MEMBERS (FRENCH ORIGINAL)**

Nom:

Prénom:

Dates de service militaire en Algérie:

Branche(s) et arme(s) de service:

Grade militaire à la fin de votre service:

La ville ou le village où vous habitiez avant d'être appelé en Algérie:

Votre emploi avant de votre service militaire:

Votre situation familiale lors de votre (r)appel sous les drapeaux:

La ville le village [*sic*] où vous êtes rentré après votre service militaire:

En quelques mots ou phrases, comment est-ce que c'était, l'accueil que vous avez reçu dans votre ville ou village une fois rentré de votre service?

Avez vous obtenu un titre de reconnaissance de la nation ou une carte de combattant? Si oui, en quelle année(s)?

Après votre retour, quelles sortes d'engagements civiques avez-vous fait (syndicats, associations, partis politiques, clubs sportifs, du bénévolat, etc.)?

À votre avis, est-ce que votre service militaire a eu une influence importante sur vos perspectives de carrière après la guerre?

En quelle année vous êtes-vous inscrit à l'UNC/UNCAFN?

Est-ce que cela vous intéresse de rencontrer le chercheur pour faire un entretien?



## APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORIES

[NB: Because of slight discrepancies between the questionnaires edited and sent out by the UNC and FNACA officials, I have not included some of the categories of responses here, including 'civic engagements' and 'commemoration of the cease fire.']

Professionals versus conscripts:

**Career soldier:** 1.    **Conscripts:** 18.

Region of origin:

**Brittany:** 16.                    **Île-de-France:** 2.                    **Normandy:** 1.

Employment at time of mobilization:

**Trade/industry:** 9.    **Student/white collar:** 3.                    **Agriculture/work on family farm:** 5.

**Other (fishing/itinerant vendor):** 2.

Year of mobilization:

**1955-56:** 3.                    **1957-1958:** 6.                    **1959-1960:** 7.

**1961-1962:** 3.

Rank by the end of service:

**Private 1st class:** 7.    **Private 2nd class:** 3.                    **Sergeant:** 5.

**Sub-lieutenant:** 1.    **Lieutenant:** 1.                    **“Junior officer”:** 1.

**Adjutant chef:** 1.

Return to civilian life:

**Positive:** 3.                    **Negative:** 3.    **Mixed:** 2.                    **Neutral/“Normal”:** 10.

**No reply:** 1.

Impact of military service on career:

**Positive:** 3.                    **Negative:** 3.    **Mixed:** 2.                    **No impact:** 10.

**No reply:** 1.

Association membership:

**FNACA:** 5.                    **UNC/UNCAFN:** 12.                    **Both at some point:** 1.

**Never joined:** 1.

Year of joining an association:

**Before veterans' recognition (Nov. 1974): 9.**

**After recognition: 8.**

**Never joined: 1.**

**No reply: 1.**

Position in veterans' association:

**Official: 7. Rank and file: 11.**

**Never joined: 1.**

Era of receiving veterans' card:

**1970s: 10. 1980s: 5.**

**No response: 4.**

## APPENDIX F: BREAKDOWN OF INTERVIEWEES BY CATEGORIES

[NB: The categories of data presented here are quite different from those in the questionnaires, because I had intended the questionnaires as a preliminary step to collect quantitative data before conducting more qualitative interviews. However, my veterans' association contacts sent the questionnaires out at the same time as they were organizing interviews for me, resulting in two separate bodies of data.]

**Total count: 25**

Geographic origin:

**Île-de-France: 10. Brittany: 10. Haute-Savoie: 3. North Africa: 2.**

Conditions of entry into military:

**Conscript/reservist: 21. Professional: 1 (Foreign Legion). Volunteer: 3.**

Association membership:

**FNACA: 4. UNC/UNCAFN: 17. None: 1. UDC: 3.<sup>1181</sup>**

Position in association:

**Official: 13. Rank and file member: 11. None: 1.**

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<sup>1181</sup>The UDC or *Union départementale des combattants* is a proudly regional veterans' association founded in the Haute-Savoie in 1963. I was informed by its founder (whom I will not cite here, to preserve his anonymity) that no UNC branch had existed in the region before the Algerian War. The UDC has had ties to the UNCAFN since its foundation, but was more centrist than either the UNCAFN or the FNACA, and does not seem to have as much institutional enmity with this latter association.

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### Questionnaires

Nineteen questionnaires completed by French veterans of Algeria, distributed through veterans' associations: 16 from residents of Finistère and Morbihan in Brittany; 1 from Orne in Normandy; 2 from Paris. Given code names for anonymity. See Appendices A-D for full versions and translations of the surveys, and Appendix E for breakdown of categories.

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