

Narrative Report

*Graduate Travel-Research Fellowships on the European Union,
European Integration, or EU-Canada Relations 2015*

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Thanks to the generous support of the Centre for European Studies (EUCE) with the Graduate Travel-Research Grant, I was able to conduct primary research in France and the United Kingdom, as well as participate in the European Union Study Tour and Internship Program, during Summer 2015.

My research focuses on historical memory and commemoration within Anglo-French relations. More specifically, I am looking at how each nation takes different events from their past that have involved the both of them, such as the Battle of Waterloo where they last fought against one another in battle, and studying and comparing how these events are discussed, celebrated, and exhibited in each nation. Most of my focus is through museum exhibits and displays, as well as other areas of public history.

This primary research began on the weekend of July 18 when I flew to Paris to see two temporary exhibits, “Napoleon and Paris” at Musée Carnavalet, one of many special exhibitions across Europe during the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, and “Churchill - de Gaulle” at Musée de l’Armée, which celebrated the relationship between the two leaders during the Second World War and beyond. My research continued throughout the month of August following the end of my internship. I spent the first week in France, visiting First World War museums across Picardy and both Second World War and medieval history museums in Normandy. Finally, I spent three weeks travelling through the United Kingdom, visiting a number of special exhibits of varying sizes celebrating the Battle of Waterloo, as well as direct counterparts to many of the French museums, such as the National War Museum in London and the D-Day Museum in Portsmouth.

While I am still in the research stage of my project, looking at the media discussions and reviews surrounding both these exhibits and in remembering events themselves, being able to travel to Europe and visit these museums in person has been integral to my project. For example, going through these exhibits in person has allowed me to observe the exact language being used on the displays, from the more diplomatic and flattering descriptions of the English in Bayeux’s Battle of Normandy Museum to the strong and angry narratives in Rouen’s Musée Jeanne-d’Arc, as well as the range of satirical imagery of Napoleon in the British Museum’s “Bonaparte and the British” exhibition. None of these details would have been fully accessible without being able to experience them first hand.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to the Centre for European Studies (EUCE) for assisting in the funding of my travel, which would not have been possible otherwise.