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Landscapes of Resistance – an exploration of nature and countryside in warfare and dissention

3-day conference to be held at Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield UK, 16/17 September lectures and discussion, plus a 1-day site visit 15th September (to be announced)

We are now organising / planning a conference in September 2020 in our on-going Sheffield series of events - on the theme of 'Landscapes of Resistance - Airfields and other militarised landscapes' and following from our 'War & Peat' event a few years back. [https://www.ukeconet.org/store/p528/War_%26_Peat_and_Exploitation.html](https://www.ukeconet.org/store/p528/War_%26_Peat_and_Exploitation.html)

Overview

The roles of landscape in the theatre of war and in the fostering of dissention or nonconformity are often underappreciated. However, throughout history the nature of countryside and landscape has shaped the tactics of warfare and even determined the outcomes of conflicts. Furthermore, from the medieval English Fens to the twentieth-century Marsh Arabs, landscapes have fostered resistance, nonconformity and dissention. Harnessed and utilised by societies under threat from aggressive neighbours or rival cultures, the landscape has influenced strategies and tactics of defence. Wetlands and rivers, expansive forests or jungle, deserts, and mountain ranges, have all played significant yet often underappreciated roles in human conflicts. The Florida Everglades for example provided the setting for a catastrophic campaign against the few remaining Native Americans holding out there in the nineteenth century. This was described as the USA’s first Vietnam and a conflict in which knowledge of the wetland terrain and conditions allowed a vastly outnumbered and outgunned population to resist an aggressive external force for many years. Terrain and local knowledge were brought to bear in the Franco-Prussian War of the late 1800s, where French generals utilised the wetland landscape to devastating effect. In WW2 the Dutch flooded the drained polders to halt the Nazi advance into Holland and then the Germans flooded Dutch farmland in retaliation. Guerrilla warfare in the mountains of former Yugoslavia in WW2, or in the hills of Afghanistan in the late twentieth century, are other examples of terrain aiding resistance. Similarly, the role of landscape in Scottish conflicts from possibly apocryphal stories of Roman legions despatched by
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Pictish tribes emerging from tractless forests, or the Scots defeating the English at Bannockburn by means of drawing the heavy cavalry into a wetland. These are just a few examples of a widespread but under-researched subject. Mountains, wetlands, deserts, and great forests have all played major strategic roles in conflicts from warfare to civil unrest and religious strife.

We also want to present current research of landscapes and heritage of past conflicts – such as airfields from WW1 and WW2, defensive and offensive structures, and much more.

This conference and the associated volume will consider key topics such as:

1. Landscapes of resistance – an overview
2. Nature, natural resources & conflict
3. Landscapes & resources as twin elements of the theatre of war
4. Landscapes as the terrain of conflict
5. Wetlands & rivers
6. Mountains & barriers
7. Deserts & plains
8. Forests
9. Examples & case-studies
10. Some key issues – from guerrilla resistance to grand strategies, local knowledge & local networks, manipulation of terrain & natural resources in warfare, understanding the countryside
11. Dissension & nonconformity in the landscape
12. Conflict & nature – summary & review to include contemporary issues

Call for papers & support: We are calling for offers of papers, posters, displays etc on these themes; and sponsors, partners, and other support. Suggestions of other key themes are also welcomed.

Please contact us on: info@hallamec.plus.com or telephone 0114 2724227; see the website www.ukeconet.org