St. Paul’s Survives:

St. Paul’s Cathedral, Civilian Morale, and the British Victory During World War II

Madison Smith
The Senior Essay in History
Silliman College, Yale University
Advisor: Michael Brenes
April 13, 2020
Why did the British emerge victorious from World War II? This fundamental question lies at the core of countless secondary works focused on the Second World War, with each author asserting perspectives on the same central inquiry. Military strategy, advanced technology, available resources, personnel capacity, and strong alliances (particularly with the United States) are examples of the primary factors deemed essential to Britain’s eventual victory over the Axis powers. Although historians often disagree about the relative extent that each advantage contributed to the ultimate outcome of the war, studying the integrated literature on the Second World War published over the past sixty years reveals that an amalgamation of factors contributed to Britain’s ultimate victory in 1945. Notably, St. Paul’s Cathedral emerges as a significant aide to Britain's war effort, yet it lacks recognition for its influential role throughout the war. Towering over the city of London amidst Axis’ bombing, St. Paul’s survival represented strength and resilience, a symbolism that lifted morale throughout the nation and ultimately bolstered Britain’s victory during the Second World War.

An unlikely contributor to the most extensive military conflict in global history, St. Paul’s Cathedral emerged as an indispensable factor for maintaining British home front support due to its nationally acknowledged symbolic significance. Strengthened by a two thousand year legacy dating to London’s foundation, the cathedral’s prominence developed alongside Britain’s own historical narrative and contributed to St. Paul’s emanation as both a national symbol within Britain and a globally recognized monument. With its iconic dome dominating London’s skyline, St. Paul’s was continually threatened during the Second World War. Strategically targeted by the Nazi Luftwaffe’s nightly air raids during the 1940-1941 Blitz on London, the cathedral sustained significant damage, yet remained remarkably intact throughout the war’s duration.
Through private papers of cathedral personnel and local London newspapers published during the Blitz, primary accounts testify that the miraculous survival of St. Paul’s Cathedral resonated strongly with the British home front. As a symbolic national monument, St. Paul’s, in its relentless defiance of German attacks, inspired resilience and consequently boosted British civilian morale. Increasingly recognized by sociologists and national leaders as an essential contributor to wartime victory, strong civilian morale proved imperative to successful military strategy during World War II.\(^1\) Understanding this correlation reveals that St. Paul’s Cathedral deserves expanded attention in terms of how it supported civilian morale and thus Britain’s victory during the Second World War.

**St. Paul’s Cathedral’s Rise to Symbolic Significance:**

In order to understand the unique role St. Paul’s Cathedral played during World War II it is essential to assess St. Paul’s rise to symbolic significance prior to the conflict’s outbreak, which enabled the cathedral’s influence on both British and global communities during the twentieth century. With fourteen hundred years since the church’s consecration, the “ever-active, ever-changing, and almost wholly continuous” narrative of St. Paul’s reveals three main factors that validate the cathedral’s presumed status as Britain’s most significant national monument by the outbreak of war in the late 1930s.\(^2\) First, St. Paul’s had engaged in a direct relationship with the city’s original Roman settlement since its establishment, an aspect that strengthened the symbolism of the Cathedral prior to its initial construction in 604 AD.\(^3\) Additionally, the cathedral was plagued by a history of persistent fire and destruction that is accompanied by a

---

legacy of astounding revival, a juxtaposition that cultivated St. Paul’s representation of resilience and prosperity within London. Finally, the structure of the current cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the 17th century, features architectural and locational elements that promote national unity and support the building’s visibility within the city.\(^4\) Woven together into the fabric of modern St. Paul’s, these three factors present a framework that illuminates the cathedral’s multifaceted symbolism, one that uplifted the British community and stimulated morale during wartime. Thus, they are important aspects to explore to gain a holistic understanding of why St. Paul’s Cathedral possessed substantial significance by the outbreak of World War II.

The extensive history of St. Paul’s commenced centuries prior to the consecration of the original cathedral, as the church’s selected location within London adds to the building’s monumentality. St. Paul’s is located within the City of London, the oldest of London’s fifty boroughs.\(^5\) This region, covering approximately one square mile, was originally settled in mid-first century AD, following the Romans’ invasion of Britain in AD 43.\(^6\) While the definitive settlement date of Londinium is imprecise, a “favoured foundation date is c AD 50 in most modern reviews.”\(^7\) When establishing new colonies, the Romans prioritized an advantageous location, and thus Londinium “occupied a relatively well-drained piece of ground, readily accessible from the river on the south side and from crossings of the Walbrook and Fleet to east and west.”\(^8\) With land routes to the north and the Thames River encircling the south, the

---

\(^7\) Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 73.
\(^8\) Keene, Burns, and Saint, *St. Paul’s*, 2.
settlement benefited from direct access to multiple pathways for transport and trade. These advantages, tactically selected by the Roman settlers, allowed the territory to prosper and provided the roots for a dominant British neighborhood that persists through the present day.

In 604 AD, the first variation of St. Paul’s was established under the direction of Pope Gregory the Great in the same location that the modern cathedral resides today, a site that now bears the name St. Paul’s Churchyard. “Determined on sending a mission to convert the Anglo-Saxon tribes in Britain,” Pope Gregory employed Augustine, Archbishop of Britain, to consecrate the first Roman Bishop of London, an act that first brought Christianity to the city. Mellitus, the bishop of East Saxons, governed the metropolis now known as “the City of London, situated on the bank of the [Thames] river, and is the mart of many nations resorting to it by sea and land.” Aided by the City of London’s central location, “the word of truth by the preaching of Mellitus” spread quickly, and soon reached King Ethelbert in the city’s outer region, “who had command over all the nations of the English as far as the River Humber.” It was under King Ethelbert that the original St. Paul’s Cathedral was consecrated, as he “built the church of the holy apostle Paul in the city of London, in which Mellitus and his successors were to have their episcopal seat.” The wooden cathedral was endowed to the Manor of Tillingham in Essex, an estate still held by the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s.

---

9 Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 2.
12 Sinclair, Memorials of St. Paul's, 5.
13 Sinclair, Memorials of St. Paul's, 5.
14 Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 5.
Built with the intention of aiding Christianity’s dissemination throughout the region, King Ethelbert’s cathedral strengthened its religious eminence through connecting with the Romans’ pious traditions dating to the foundation of Londinium. In a 1722 map entitled *Londinium Augusta* designed by William Stukeley, the location of St. Paul’s is identified within the original castrum plan of the Roman colony.\(^\text{16}\) The gridded plan, representative of typical Roman colonial settlement, highlights the city block where the cathedral now resides with the label “Lucus & Templum Dianae St Pauls.”\(^\text{17}\) From this map the “concept that St. Paul’s Cathedral stood on the site of a temple dedicated to Diana” is emphasized, a theory indubitably recognized by the British community since the time of William Camden, a prominent British historian of the seventeenth century.\(^\text{18}\) In the 1658 *The History of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London*, William Dugdale draws from Camden’s account to provide supporting evidence for the existence of Diana’s Temple during the Roman period:

> That in the place, where hefo [Ethlebert] built it [St. Paul’s Cathedral], had been a Temple of Diana the Goddess, is probable enough from those instances, which the learned Camden giveth; viz the structure neer at chand, called Diana’s Chambers; and the multitude of Oxe-heads digged up, when the East part thereof was rebuilded which were then thought to be the Reliques of the Gentiles Sacrifices.\(^\text{19}\)

This archaeological evidence associated with the goddess Diana connected the foundation of St. Paul’s to the Romans’ worshipping practices in Londinium. As construction and rebuilding continued at the site of St. Paul’s Churchyard over time, there was a proliferation of “large quantities of Roman material being uncovered and sometimes reused every time a deep foundation was dug.”\(^\text{20}\)

---

\(^{15}\) Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 7.; See Figure 1.  
\(^{17}\) Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 7.  
\(^{18}\) Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 8.  
\(^{20}\) Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 106
Cathedral in recent centuries is essential to understanding “what was clearly an important site in the Roman and prehistoric period.” This relationship has fostered the recognition of St. Paul’s Churchyard as an important territory, not only upon the original cathedral’s foundation but through modern times as well.

In 1939, awareness of St. Paul’s Roman roots remained present in the minds of cathedral personnel, who were actively preparing for an impending Nazi invasion. W.R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral during the Second World War, provides the most complete published account of the cathedral during wartime, in his 1946 book *Saint Paul’s Cathedral in Wartime 1939-1945*. Although his work was published after Britain's victory, the book offers insight into Matthews’ perspective throughout the conflict, beginning with events leading up to the war. In Chapter One “St. Paul’s in 1939,” Matthews opens with a meeting held on “Saturday 29th April, 1939, at 11 o’clock in the morning” to discuss preparations for St. Paul’s as “the imminence of war was apparent to all.” This organization of cathedral personnel, nearly six months prior to the Blitz, demonstrates their consideration of “the place and the edifice” of St. Paul’s that dates back to Roman times. Matthews states that “it is not an exaggeration to say that the ground on which St. Paul’s is built is one of the most sacred and historical sites of Britain” as the religious use of the area dates back to the “temple of Diana [that] stood there during the Roman period of our [Britain’s] history.” Matthews includes this information due to his belief that “it is necessary to remind the reader of facts which may be familiar enough to him” in order to re-

---

21 Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 106.
22 Clark et al., *Londinium and Beyond*, 106.
emphasize the profound foundational history of the cathedral, one component that contributed to
the importance of St. Paul’s survival during the war.\textsuperscript{26}

In addition to its consideration during pre-war meetings, the impact of St. Paul’s Roman
history was further engaged with during later periods of the war. As Allied forces began their
invasion of Germany in the spring of 1945 and the conclusion of the war drew near, cathedral
personnel composed speeches intended to honor the legacy of St. Paul’s during the war. In a
Allen attached a draft of his speech for an April 14th address to St. Paul’s Watch.\textsuperscript{27} The Watch
was a group of volunteers who helped preserve the cathedral through a nightly guard during the
war, and Godfery Allen, Surveyor of the Fabric to St. Paul's Cathedral, was the appointed
commander of the Watch.\textsuperscript{28} In his letter to Tubbs, Allen includes his speech entitled "Future
Surroundings of St. Paul's," which intends to honor the significance of the cathedral’s site.\textsuperscript{29} He
states that the site of the cathedral “known as St. Paul’s Courtyard” is considered by some
authorities “that an image of Diana and other Roman remains, including impediments for use in
the celebration of sacrificial ceremonies, have been found nearby is evidence that a temple to
Diana having stood here.”\textsuperscript{30} With this dual religious and cultural significance embedded in the
site of the cathedral, Allen declares the monument evolved as “the shrine of our greatest soldiers
and sailors and its site is the heart of that Empire.”\textsuperscript{31} The language he employs connects to the
cathedral’s Roman roots, as he describes the cathedral as a “shrine” in the center of London.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{26} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul's}, 9.
\bibitem{28} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul's}, 19-20.
\bibitem{29} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\bibitem{30} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\bibitem{31} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\bibitem{32} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\end{thebibliography}
Situated within the “heart” of the Empire, the site has maintained its importance from 50 BC to modern times, as Allen concludes it “has become the centre where the Nation expresses its joy and sorrows; where it gives Thanksgiving for its victories and mourns its disasters.” The persistent religious continuum of the cathedral site from Roman settlement to the Second World War, as outlined in Allan’s speech, emphasizes the perpetual influence of the Roman cultural roots in elevating the significance of the site of St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Although St. Paul’s strong connection with its Roman site provides the church with historical symbolic significance, the notability of the cathedral is ironically further heightened due to the continued lack of preservation of the cathedral’s structures since 604 AD. Within his speech to St. Paul’s Watch, Allan alludes to a series of disasters impacting St. Paul’s numerous renditions across previous centuries, stating “the history of the precincts of Old St. Paul’s is one long melancholy story of the destruction of interesting, beautiful ecclesiastical buildings on the one hand and civil encroachment on the other.” As implied by Allan’s statement, the cathedral that towered over London in the 1940s was not the original structure from 604 AD, but rather the fifth variation of the cathedral “to bear the name of London’s patron saint” after the preceding models faced calamitous conclusions. With the cathedral compromised by oppressive fires and Viking attacks, consensus among historians corroborates that three distinct renderings of St. Paul’s were constructed and consecutively destroyed between 604 and 1187. In 675, the original cathedral constructed under King Ethelbert “was destroyed by fire - a peril which through the centuries has beset all five churches.” In the fire’s wake, St. Paul’s “was rebuilt in

---

33 Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
34 Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, X.
35 Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
36 Ewin, St. Paul’s, 3.
38 Ewin, St. Paul’s, 3.
stone in 675-685,” before experiencing destruction by the Vikings and a second reconstruction in 962. 39 This third structure of St. Paul’s stood until 1087, when it “was then destroyed by a fire which devastated London in the time of the Conqueror’s reign.”40

Following the 1087 fire, the Normans, under William the Conqueror, commenced construction on the fourth variation of the cathedral. 41 After seizing the English crown and establishing rule of the Normans, William was determined “to create the longest and tallest Christian church in the world.” 42 Given this prodigious goal, the Normans did not complete their work until 1240: “nearly two hundred years from the time of its foundation elapsed before the structure was completely finished.”43 On two separate occasions, the Normans’ masterpiece narrowly avoided demolition, as “in 1444 and again 1561 fire attacked the spire, which was utterly destroyed on the latter occasion.”44 Miraculously surviving for several centuries, this version of the cathedral, referred to in the modern day as “Old St. Paul’s,” became the “longest standing home for Christian worship on the site to date, surviving for almost six hundred years.”45 It is during this period the prominence of the building emerged considerably, both as a national and global iconic monument, as the Cathedral School was re-established, public activity proliferated throughout the building, and the celebration of Mass invigorated the church’s liturgical life.46

39 Ewin, St. Paul's, 3.
However, the destructive “civil encroachment” that Allen highlighted in draft of his 1945 speech soon compromised the Norman’s iconic cathedral.\textsuperscript{47} During the mid-17th century, tension mounted between England, Ireland, and Scotland as “there were civil wars in each of the kingdoms, but there was for much of the time in addition a single war being fought across all three kingdoms.”\textsuperscript{48} As opposing leaders engaged in combat and placed civil liberties at risk, many groups “began to clamour for the right of the righteous to gather in covenanted communities outside the national system.”\textsuperscript{49} This desire subsequently placed religious freedom at risk, as “religious liberty… became the new burning issue” and bureaucratic leaders desired to squander the growing church communities.\textsuperscript{50} Perceived as the most prominent cathedral in London, Old St. Paul’s suffered extensively from local rioting, as the civil war led to the “abolishment of the Dean and Chapter, the destruction of Paul’s Cross, the seizure of houses and revenues and the conversion of the body of the church into a stable for troopers.”\textsuperscript{51} As a result, by the 1660s, “the desecration of the Cathedral and its churchyard had been carried to an extraordinary extent” and no governing body remained to protect St. Paul’s affairs.\textsuperscript{52} With the cathedral already in ruins and lacking governance, on “Sunday, September 2 [1666], the Great Fire broke out,” during the aftermath of the English civil war and within two days “thus lay in ashes the most venerable church.”\textsuperscript{53}

Although residual tension from the civil war could have compromised the future legacy of St. Paul’s, relative order was restored to England in the aftermath of the Great Fire. “On

\textsuperscript{47} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\textsuperscript{49} Morrill, "The Causes," 27.
\textsuperscript{50} Morrill, "The Causes," 27.
\textsuperscript{51} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\textsuperscript{52} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\textsuperscript{53} Longman, \textit{A History}, 84-85.
September 13th, 1666 a proclamation was published setting out the King’s decisions for the immediate present and his intentions for the future,” in regard to both the general rebuilding of the city and St. Paul’s Cathedral specifically.\textsuperscript{54} This process of restoration granted London an opportunity to enter a renewed era of unification, following the discordance eminent throughout Britain during the civil war. “An entirely new plan for the burnt out area was considered practicable and even urged by the City,” who desired to separate themselves from visual reminders of preceding conflict.\textsuperscript{55} In order to progress from the tumultuous events of prior decades, King Charles II of England commissioned prominent architect Christopher Wren to design an entirely new cathedral at the same site of St. Paul’s Courtyard, a project that commenced construction in 1675 and was completed over the next three and a half decades.\textsuperscript{56}

This narrative of the cathedral’s commitment to rebuilding presents a two-fold effect on elevating St. Paul’s significance. First, through reinstating a new variation of the cathedral in the same location, St. Paul’s conserved its relationship with its foundational legacy. Regardless of several destructive periods, the modern cathedral maintains an unceasing history through consciously preserving a strong connection with its Roman roots and re-establishing new cathedral buildings on the same site where Londinium was founded. In addition to strengthening its Roman association, St. Paul’s history of rebuilding has ingrained an additional symbolic aspect within the monument, through offering an historical narrative of perseverance and resilience. Although the habitual reconstruction of the cathedral could appear to portray a history tainted by devastation and disaster, St. Paul’s reconstruction provides instead a visual

\textsuperscript{54} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\textsuperscript{55} Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
\textsuperscript{56} The Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral, "Cathedral History," St. Paul's Cathedral.
representation of sustained resilience, a perspective confirmed by historical accounts outlining St. Paul’s symbolic nature.

In a fourteen hundred year biography of St. Paul’s, *St. Paul’s: The Cathedral Church of London 604-2004*, authors Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint state that for centuries, “St. Paul’s has dominated the landscape of its city in a manner unmatched by any other English cathedral. The monumental churches on the site have thereby served as unique symbols of the city and of national identity.” Instead of appearing overshadowed by destruction, the cathedral’s symbolism is amplified by the multiple renderings that repeatedly reinforced British nationalism. Additionally, the authors reveal that “the way in which St. Paul’s has risen again after destruction by three Great Fires of London (in 962, 1087 and 1666)... has added to its significance as an expression of the strength and endurance of London.” Instead of St. Paul’s history reflecting a division between five different churches, the unity of the cathedral’s narrative underscores the strength of London. William Longman’s 1873 history of St. Paul’s states that “before the building of the present church,... cathedrals, dedicated to St. Paul, each rising, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of its predecessor, have successively stood on its site.” With this persistence, “it is impossible not to feel that there is a unity in the [cathedrals], and in relating their history it seems quite natural to consider them as one Cathedral.” These historical testimonies of St. Paul’s impact reveal the tenacious nature of the monument, as it serves as a visible symbol for London through inspiring hope and resilience during periods of hardship - an aspect of its symbolism that would prove indispensable during the Second World War.

---

The duality of St. Paul’s Cathedral’s reinforced relationship with its Roman roots through its familiarity with destruction supports a narrative of resilience while providing ample justification for the building’s unanimous recognition as a national symbol. However, the current rendition of St. Paul’s, designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the wake of the English Civil War, is embedded with structural elements designed to strengthen the impact of St. Paul’s following decades of conflict, and thus emphasize the cathedral’s significance within the London community. Originally constructed in the late 17th century and periodically renovated in the centuries leading up to World War II, the church designed by Wren represents the contemporary legacy of the cathedral, as it is the maintenance of Wren’s physical masterpiece that garners extensive concern during the war. Most notably, the building is recognized by the monumentality and imagery of its iconic dome structure, which promotes the cathedral’s symbolism through drawing on underlying themes of unity that Wren incorporated into his work. Furthermore, the elevated position of St. Paul’s Churchyard within the City of London supports the magnitude of the cathedral and increases St. Paul’s visibility within the city. Integrated into one modern cathedral, St. Paul’s physical components of its dominant dome and structural height build upon the cathedral’s previous significance and provide St. Paul’s with its ultimate symbolic elements.

At the time Christopher Wren was drafting the plans for the new cathedral, domed buildings were “much in vogue on the Continent” and Wren possessed a great personal desire to incorporate the rounded structure into his cathedral. This trend stemmed from “the great

---

62 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 15 and 19.
prestige of the sixteenth century dome of St. Peter’s, Rome, [that] spurred architects of the next century to attempt solutions of the problems of dome construction and of combining a dome with the mass of building supporting it."\(^{64}\) As the original iconic domed structure, St. Peter’s is frequently assumed to possess the largest dome in the world, a theory supported by St. Peter’s prominent position within Vatican City. However, during the Second World War era, an alternative theory was introduced by W.P. Prole, presumably a member of the St. Paul’s Watch. In his essay entitled *St. Paul’s Cathedral: During the Great War No. 2 1939-1945*, Prole claimed that St. Paul’s dome subjugates St. Peter’s - “the dome is far more massive than that of St. Peter’s, Rome, and considered by many architects to be superior in every way, although somewhat resembling it in appearance."\(^{65}\) Asserted with confidence and endorsed with distorted data, Prole’s statement took hold within the British community, despite their inability to verify his supporting evidence.\(^{66}\) To London citizens, the concept that Wren’s masterpiece dwarfed St. Peter’s further promoted the recognition of St. Paul’s and built its importance within the community throughout wartime.

With Londoners confident in St. Paul’s status as the largest domed cathedral, it is not surprising the W.R. Matthews emphasized in *Saint Paul’s Cathedral in Wartime 1939-1945* that “the great Dome is the most important part of the building.”\(^{67}\) It is the most prominent example of “Wren’s originality and mastery,” as the principal “wonder of his achievement is that the

---

\(^{64}\) Whinney, "Introduction," introduction, 5.
\(^{66}\) William Longman’s *A History of the Three Cathedrals Dedicated to St. Paul in London*, published in 1873, provides a clear comparison of the two cathedral domes with a drawing that embeds St. Paul’s Cathedral within St. Peter’s (Figure 2). Longman’s image and modern sources confirm that St. Paul’s is smaller than St. Peter’s. However, Prole’s confidence in St. Paul’s superiority reveals the perspective held in Britain at that time, which further increased in the importance of St. Paul’s wartime survival. Regardless of this inaccuracy, St. Paul’s actual position as the second largest cathedral in the world is worthy of the same increased recognition.; The Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral, "Explore the Cathedral," St Paul's Cathedral, accessed April 10, 2020, https://www.stpauls.co.uk/history-collections/history/explore-the-cathedral.
Dome appears to be perfectly proportioned and harmonious with the rest of the structure both externally and internally. This unity of the structure goes beyond foundational structural purposes, to represent an explicit desire to promote the theme of unification throughout the new cathedral. In the wake of the civil war, England faced remnant discontinuity among its citizens, and thus both government leadership and Wren identified the rebuilding of St. Paul’s as a visible opportunity to instill a symbol of unity into the fabric of the city. Turning to St. Paul’s “for space and solemnity, for symmetry and style,” the community attained “something of momentous value” through Wren’s architectural masterpiece. Through its iconic dome, St. Paul’s succeeds in “displaying the necessity (and simultaneously the grandeur) of true unity in architecture,” a visible representation that inspired renewed unification throughout Britain during the centuries succeeding its era of civil war.

In addition to the symbolic significance behind the imagery of the dome, the physical size and height of the cathedral proved essential for promoting the presence of the cathedral within London and elevating the visibility of the dome. Wren’s design for the 17th century cathedral is fundamentally strengthened by the topography of St. Paul’s Courtyard, as “it is well to remember that the site is a hill and that a building set on a hill, particularly when it is one of great national and architectural significance, should not be hid.” The site is more than simply a hill, as the Cathedral “occupies a dominant position on the highest point within the boundaries of the ancient City of London.” As the modern fabric of the City developed, “office blocks, warehouses, and churches all huddled under the grey dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral, which

---

68 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 13.
69 Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
70 Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
71 Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
72 Allen to Tubbs, "Future Surroundings."
dominated the entire area from atop Ludgate Hill” and remained the central focal point of the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{73}

The added elevation of the cathedral’s location is responsible for promoting the building’s far reaching visibility throughout the City of London, across the Thames River, and beyond. During the mid-20th century, the most famous views of St. Paul’s were “probably those obtained from the south, south-west and south-east - namely, from the river and its bridges and embankments within a distance of about 6,000 feet of the Dome.”\textsuperscript{74} Cutting directly through the heart of the city, the Thames river and the bridges traversing it constitute the most densely traveled region of the city, thus providing countless citizens and tourists with daily views of the cathedral. Although recent development within the City of London has contributed to the partial loss of Wren’s idyllic skyline, “sufficient of it [the skyline] still remains for the Cathedral with its great Dome to rank among the most splendid sights in the world.”\textsuperscript{75} The maintenance of this skyline reflects Wren’s original 17th century intentions, as he deliberately integrated the dome and the cathedral’s elevated height as a means of “rendering the cathedral a conspicuous landmark which could be neither camouflaged nor concealed.”\textsuperscript{76}

This multifaceted examination into the journey of St. Paul’s rise to global significance provides the context necessary for understanding the building’s paramount role during World War II. By the 20th century St. Paul’s had emerged as an iconic monument supported by its Roman history, continued recovery from destruction, and combined features of its dome and elevation that promoted its symbolic importance. As a document surviving from the St. Paul’s

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{73} Johnson, The London Blitz, 21.
\item\textsuperscript{74} Allen, A.11 W.G. Allen, Correspondence and Lecture Notes, 15.
\item\textsuperscript{76} Matthews, St. Paul’s, 13.
\end{footnotes}
wartime archives asserts, “monuments, such as this [St. Paul’s], erected with an imagination and sense of responsibility that looks ahead and along the years to posterity, are the emotional centers of the nation.” As a monument promoting unity and resilience, while representing the rich history of the nation, the cathedral collectively characterizes essential principles that any nation would require to emerge victorious from an unrelenting global conflict. Lying at both the emotional and physical center of the nation within the heart of London, the visibility of St. Paul’s seamlessly asserts the building’s significance while providing Britain with a building worthy of extraordinary protection throughout the Second World War, due to the cathedral's ability to resonate and engage with the nation’s home front.

St. Paul’s Cathedral During the “Blitz”:

With multiple historical factors contributing to St. Paul’s Cathedral significance, the cathedral emerged as a prominent symbol within not only London, but throughout the British empire and the entire European continent. As the devastation of World War I loomed within global memory, and the possibility of a second total war emerged by the 1930s, protection of St. Paul’s arose as an early focus of British leadership within the home front. Rapid interwar developments in aerial technology presented a new theater of war, as emerging strategies for air campaigns placed previously unaffected civilian communities and urban landscapes at a heightened threat for direct war damage. Acutely aware of this unprecedented threat to London, personnel supporting St. Paul’s recognized the cathedral’s doubly increased risk, given the church’s position as both a significant symbol to the community and a prominent target from the city’s aerial skyline. This early cognizance of the cathedral’s staff proved critical to the building’s survival, as measures executed prior to the outbreak of World War II enabled the

---

77 Allen, A.11 W.G. Allen, Correspondence and Lecture Notes, 11.
integration of defense mechanisms that saved St. Paul’s.\textsuperscript{78} Heavily bombed during the 1940-1941 Nazi “Blitz” on London, St. Paul’s Cathedral’s symbolic significance encouraged volunteers to aid in defending the building, actions that proved indispensable to maintaining the church’s improbable survival throughout the war.

In April 1939, members of the St. Paul’s leadership first met to strategize execution of a plan for defending the cathedral during the war. Although war between Britain and Germany would not be officially declared until September, avoidance of a second global conflict appeared unlikely, as “the menace of war which had been hanging over the nation for so many months was now assuming a terrible reality.”\textsuperscript{79} Thus, on April 29, 1939, the Chapter of St. Paul’s, the cathedral’s governing body, met to discuss wartime preparations concerning the church.\textsuperscript{80} Their foremost apprehension was establishing “defence of the cathedral against danger from the air, a danger which no one at that time was able accurately to estimate.”\textsuperscript{81} This lack of concrete information created complications for the Chapter, but fortunately their anticipation of these unfamiliar dangers allotted suitable time to build up necessary preparations.

Given this advantage, W.R. Matthews asserted the Chapter was “not overwhelmed by the crisis” regardless of “the responsibility which weighed upon the members and the complex task which they confronted.”\textsuperscript{82} Instead cathedral leaders recognized their duty to remain focused and vigilant, prioritizing the safety and security of the cathedral, despite the threat of imminent Nazi attacks that they could neither anticipate nor control. With this perspective guiding their decisions, Chapter recognized a viable defense mechanism that would support their goal of

\textsuperscript{78} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul’s}, 23.
\textsuperscript{80} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul’s}, 9.
\textsuperscript{81} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul’s}, 9.
\textsuperscript{82} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul’s}, 19.
protecting St. Paul’s: “we knew that the Cathedral held a place in the affections of Londoners not less than that of Old. St. Paul’s in former days and that we could rely on the voluntary help of many private citizens... to defend their great church.” As a result, on August 28, 1939 the St. Paul’s Watch was established, a volunteer organization that would keep nightly guard of the cathedral, reflecting a similar system assembled during the First World War. The initial preparations of both the Chapter and the Watch, prior to the outbreak of war, underscore the collective recognition of St. Paul’s importance to the nation, and thus the critical responsibility of cathedral personnel to preserve the iconic structure.

As St. Paul’s Watch prepared for an impending attack from the Germans, the Luftwaffe was simultaneously formulating their strategy for executing an aerial campaign against Britain, with a specific focus on London. Germany’s “rationale for the aerial bombardment of London was quite straightforward,” as the Nazis organized an offensive against the “British capital to disrupt its infrastructure, to reduce iconic buildings to rubble, and undermine civilian morale.” As a symbolic monument within London, St. Paul’s Cathedral possessed the unique ability to help the Nazis simultaneously achieve all three goals. Given the cathedral’s aforementioned rise to global recognition, it is probable that Germany possessed the information necessary to acknowledge the cathedral’s national significance. Thus, limited evidence suggests the Luftwaffe selected St. Paul’s Cathedral as a specific target for their aerial raids during the Blitz as means to achieving their goals.

---

83 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 19.
84 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 19 and 21.
The proposition that Germany explicitly targeted St. Paul’s appears predominantly within accounts from the British perspective, as surviving Luftwaffe documentation provides minimal verification concerning specifics of their aerial strategies. This deficit of information could allude to the Nazi’s desire to conceal their strategy, given that intentionally targeting a civilian structure was unsanctioned by the accepted rules of war. In October 1907, the Hague Convention had ratified a treaty on “respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex” that asserted “the attack or bombardment, by whatever means, of towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are undefended is prohibited.”\footnote{86 International Committee of the Red Cross, "Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. The Hague, 18 October 1907.," International Committee of the Red Cross, accessed February 23, 2020.} This article of the treaty intended to protect the lives and homes of citizens, whose disassociation from military conflict was traditionally respected during periods of wartime.

Despite the objectives instated by the Hague Convention, the regulations failed to account for the expansion of aerial technology during the interwar years and Germany’s intentions to utilize their extensive air force in conjunction with their evolving military strategy. By the onset of the Blitz, the Nazis’ actions demonstrated a distinct “switch from military and industrial targets to now include commercial and civilian targets,” a decision emphasized through their commitment to sustained attacks against London.\footnote{87 Chris Goss, The Luftwaffe's Blitz: The Inside Story November 1940 - May 1941 (Manchester, England: Crecy Publishing Limited, 2010), 21.} In order to defend their hostile engagements directed at civilians, Nazi leadership claimed difficulties with distinguishing a concrete difference between military and civilian targets. These sentiments are confirmed in German strategic reports as “surviving Luftwaffe documents do state that the aim was to disrupt industrial production as well as hinder reconstruction and resumption of manufacturing in a city
critical to military automotive production, by hitting the house of its workers.” During this period of “total war,” Nazis employed the justification that there was “less and sometimes no differentiation between military and civilians, as both were actively involved directly and indirectly in the war effort.” Alongside this perspective, “official organs of the Nazi party” also attested that “London is fortified city, and that bombing is therefore justified in international law.”

Despite the Nazis’ limited transparency about their aerial strategies, evidence reveals their aerial tactics used for bombing London. The amalgamation of various reports from Luftwaffe pilots who served during the Blitz divulge that aerial attacks during the Blitz commenced from altitude ranges from approximately ten thousand to fifteen thousand feet. This variance in altitude accounted for accommodations to fluctuating weather conditions and visibility levels and related to the Nazis’ aerial campaign strategy, as “every wing was assigned its own altitude level, ranging between 10,000 and 16,000 feet, in order to lessen the danger of a midair collision.” Additionally, these elevated attacks also minimized the risk of a successful Royal Air Force defence, as “above 12,000 feet anti-aircraft fire was not much of a problem.”

Although German “aircraft came in across the English coast at about 15,000 feet,” the Luftwaffe exploited an essential advantage that enabled their ability to locate London from extreme heights. As the Luftwaffe pilots flew across England, “St. Paul’s Cathedral provided a beacon that pointed out the City even from 15,000 feet up - the shape of its great Latin cross was

---

88 Goss, The Luftwaffe's, 52.
89 Goss, The Luftwaffe's, 52.
91 Goss, The Luftwaffe's, 53, 61, and 63.; Three separate accounts from Luftwaffe pilots report aircraft invading from 13,000 feet, 15,000 feet, and 10,000 feet, respectively.
92 Johnson, The London Blitz, 55.
93 Johnson, The London Blitz, 55.
94 Goss, The Luftwaffe's, 21.
practically impossible to overlook.”

Although the visibility of St. Paul’s was an essential objective for Wren and British leaders during the 17th century reconstruction of the cathedral to promote civil unity, David Johnson’s retrospective account The London Blitz reveals the unintentional contribution of Wren's architectural masterpiece in aiding German aerial campaigns during the War. Although Nazi primary sources refuse to corroborate their use of St. Paul’s as a specific target, secondary literature on the Blitz leaves little doubt that the cathedral was a visible and strategic target for the Nazis during their nightly raids.

While secondary literature seeks to provide historically accurate and objective perspectives regarding the details of the Blitz, British accounts from within London during 1940 and 1941 unveil a British consensus that St. Paul’s was a predominant target of the Luftwaffe. In his account on St. Paul’s Matthews declares, “it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that St. Paul’s was one of the objectives, because at this time it was standing conspicuous and isolated among the ruins.” As members of the Watch witnessed attacks against St. Paul’s on the ground level, many gleaned “the impression that the Cathedral was one of the selected targets” of the Luftwaffe. Indeed when reflecting on the nine months of the Blitz, Godfrey Allen asserted, “it will suffice to say Cathedral has its full share in the Battle of London and that in the course of it the Cathedral was hit by over 60 incendiary bombs and two 500 lb. high explosive bombs.” These sentiments surviving from personal accounts of St. Paul’s personnel reveal that British witnesses to the Nazi raids perceived the attacks against the cathedral as an intentional component of the German strategy.

---

95 Johnson, The London Blitz, 40.
96 Johnson, The London Blitz, 40.
97 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 48.
98 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 38.
Based on the joint information from British and German accounts during the war, it appears likely that St. Paul’s Cathedral manifested as a specific target for Nazis during their air raids. This realization is crucial, as it emphasizes the German’s awareness of St. Paul’s significance as an important monument to the British community and a visible iconic within the city’s landscape. Guided by their desire to diminish civilian morale, the Nazis recognized St. Paul’s contribution to strengthening the community and thus selected the building as a strategic target for their raids. That the Nazis bombed the cathedral on five main occasions contributes to the miraculous nature of St. Paul’s survival during the war.100

On countless instances, the potency of the nightly bombings and resulting intensity of smoke and fires overwhelming the city contributed to fear among citizens that the cathedral had been destroyed.101 In fact on the most severe night of damage, December 29th, 1941, a telegraph was “cabled to America that St. Paul’s was in flames.”102 Its author notes, the “cathedral survived, as by a miracle, while all around it buildings were consumed by fire.”103 With a series of miracles seemingly supporting St. Paul’s survival, an irony arises that through targeting the cathedral, but failing to destroy it, the Germans’ efforts actually served to strengthen St. Paul’s symbolism as an emblem of resilience. As analysis of primary accounts surviving from the war years reveal, St. Paul’s Cathedral’s wartime resilience captivated the London community and proved indispensable in maintaining their commitment to the war effort.

St. Paul’s Survival and London’s Response:

101 Matthews, St. Paul's, 35.
102 Matthews, St. Paul's, 46.
103 Matthews, St. Paul's, 44.
Although the physical survival of St. Paul’s was significant, the true value of the church’s resilience during the war lies in understanding the resulting influence on the London community. Because St. Paul’s Cathedral was an invaluable British symbol targeted by Nazi raids during the Blitz, its survival during World War II was as imperative as it was improbable. This dichotomy, subconsciously understood by the home front, elevated the Cathedral’s presence within media publications circulated during the war. Within the City of London, opportunities for publication were prolific as “newspaper production and its subsidiaries (ink making) were then dominant in the Fleet Street area,” the street upon which the cathedral is situated. These newspapers were written by and for members of the London community, and therefore offer insight into the personal convictions and attitudes of the civilian population at the time of publication. In 1940 and 1941, newspaper publications reveal that the continued survival of St. Paul’s resonated with the home front where the significance of the cathedral did not go underappreciated. These publications provide an essential source of primary evidence for understanding the cathedral’s influence on London during the war.

Most notably, two publications prioritized continued updates on St. Paul’s during the war, *The Times* and *City Press*, which were based in the City of London, St. Paul’s neighborhood. Focused on reporting about nightly air raid damage during the Blitz, the papers’ locational proximity to the cathedral contributed to abundance of articles dedicated to St. Paul’s throughout World War II. As a result, these newspaper accounts are helpful in shedding light on the feelings and perspective of the community immediately following the events of air raids. While the frequency of articles on St. Paul’s may seem to suggest drastic damage to the cathedral, the numerous reports actually underscore the desire of the community to remain

---

informed about updates on the cathedral. From these reports, a narrative emerges about the church’s support of civilian morale throughout the war years.

From the first time St. Paul’s was bombed, during the early morning of September 12th, 1940, volunteers’ dedication to protecting the cathedral inspired citizens throughout Britain.\(^{105}\) During this initial raid, a heavy bomb buried itself near the cathedral’s foundation and remained unexploded, a situation that would require a highly risky excavation effort in order to remove the bomb.\(^{106}\) For days, volunteers worked tirelessly and admirably, as “no circumstance was missing that could test the quality of the bravest of brave men,” a testimony from “Heroes of St. Paul’s” published in *The Times* on September 17, 1940.\(^{107}\) These efforts of the members of St. Paul’s Watch were recognized as the most “outstanding deed of heroism so far recorded in the capital [which] stands to the credit of first-line troops.”\(^{108}\) The of the Watch actions proved inspirational to local civilians, as the Watch’s heroism “called upon them [every inhabitant of London] all to display the virtues of soldiers; and men and women of all the civil defence services are performing every day and night deeds of valour no less worthy of honour and remembrance than anything done on the beaches of Dunkirk.”\(^{109}\) Through decisively engaging in actions reflecting the tasks of military forces, the Watch provided their civilian peers with a visible example of how to contribute to strengthening the war effort.

The timely responsiveness of the Watch commencing from the inaugural bomb damage at St. Paul’s established a visible precedent for the actions and efforts of London’s citizens throughout the Blitz. As civilians themselves, members of the St. Paul’s Watch who aided in

\(^{105}\) Linge, "Session No 2334," speech.

\(^{106}\) Linge, "Session No 2334," speech.

\(^{107}\) “Heroes of St. Paul's,” *The Times* (London, England), September 17, 1940, Gale Primary Sources.


\(^{109}\) “Heroes of St. Paul's," *The Times*. 
removing the bomb from St. Paul’s Churchyard were the first to be honored with the George Cross.\textsuperscript{110} This award represented “a new mark of honour for men and women in all walks of civilian life, announced by the King in his broadcast to the nation on September 23 [1940].”\textsuperscript{111}

Through creating a medal of recognition to honor efforts on the home front, the British government demonstrated an acute awareness of the necessity of appreciating the valiant actions of its citizens, in order to motivate sustained support of the war and encourage further bravery. By presenting the first George Cross awards to volunteers protecting St. Paul’s Cathedral, the King recognized the importance of St. Paul’s survival in promoting the home front’s confidence in the British position in the war.

A second article from October 1940 states that “the whole nation and much of the world was filled with thankfulness when, at great risk to themselves, Royal Engineers removed a one-ton delayed action bomb which menaced the cathedral for three days before it was removed.”\textsuperscript{112} This thankfulness stems from Britain’s universal allies’ recognition of the incomparable significance of St. Paul’s. The October 11th article “Bomb Damage To St. Paul’s” follows the second night of substantial damage to the cathedral during the Blitz, and incorporates into report a passage highlighting a symbolic anecdote of St. Paul’s. The author states:

> It is recalled that when Wren was planning his site and wanted to mark in the ground the point of the centre of his dome he asked a workman to bring him a piece of stone. The workman picked up at random a fragment of an ancient tombstone which bore the word \textit{Resurgam} (I shall rise again). This Wren adopted for a motto, and on the pediment of the south porch is sculptured a phoenix which bears the inscription.\textsuperscript{113}

The passage is significant because it emphasizes the importance of the dome and the theme of resilience that mutually contribute to the symbolism of St. Paul’s. Furthermore, the motto “I shall

\textsuperscript{110} “Air Raid Heroes Honoured,” The Times (London, England), October 2, 1940, Gale Primary Sources.
\textsuperscript{111} “Air Raid Heroes,” The Times.
\textsuperscript{112} “Bomb Damage To St. Paul’s,” The Times (London, England), October 11, 1940, Gale Primary Sources.
\textsuperscript{113} “Bomb Damage To St. Paul’s,” The Times.
rise again” is a timely proverb intended to inspire the newspaper’s reader amidst the destruction that London was concurrently experiencing at the hands of the Luftwaffe. This message serves as a reminder to Londoners that during previous experiences with destruction and fires St. Paul’s rose again, and therefore presumably would rise again regardless of damage inflicted by the Luftwaffe in the ensuing months.

On the evening of December 29, 1940, St. Paul’s experienced its most severe night of damage sustained during the course of the war. On a Sunday evening during the holiday season, many civilians were at home spending time with family and unsuspecting of the incoming Nazi attack. The Nazis used this element of surprise to their advantage and proceeded to unleash a night of continued bombing that ignited uncontrollable fire. St. Paul’s Cathedral appeared to be the specific target of the Luftwaffe’s bombs, as by the early morning flames surrounded the church and seemingly signaled the building’s demise. However, as the smoke cleared and volunteers arrived en masse to help clear the debris, St. Paul’s remained miraculously intact, its dome still visible throughout the city. The significance of these events, both the heavy damage and the improbable survival, was not lost on the local community, as newspapers immediately used the attack to highlight the symbolism of St. Paul’s.

On December 31, 1940, The Times published “The City’s Ordeal by Fire,” an article that outlined the heroic actions of the volunteers from the night of the air raid. Captivating readers with anecdotes of the unparalleled bravery of civilian volunteers who saved the City of London, the article incorporates a passage about St. Paul’s in order to inspire resilience and uplift the community's morale:

114 “Bomb Damage To St. Paul’s,” The Times.
115 Matthews, St. Paul’s, 44.
116 Johnson, The London Blitz, 40.
117 “The City’s Ordeal by Fire,” The Times (London, England), December 31, 1940, Gale Primary Sources.
From two or three miles away St. Paul’s Cathedral stood out clearly against a glowing sky - a challenge and an inspiration. At one time fires were raging all round the great church, but it escaped almost without harm. Yesterday morning its doors were open, and in the Chapel of St. Dunstan a clergyman led a small congregation in prayer while outside the narrow streets were filled with pungent smoke.\(^{118}\)

This excerpt offers a direct perspective to understanding how St. Paul’s influenced the actions and feelings of the London community in the wake of severe war damage. A symbol of inspiration for the city, the church survived, encouraging the community to remain faithful and hopeful amidst devastation, as demonstrated by the presence of church goers on the same morning as the Luftwaffe’s attacks. By continuing daily services despite damage to the structure, St. Paul’s defied the Nazis’ attacks and demonstrated that German efforts were ineffective in dismantling the city’s daily activities. Furthermore, the presence of citizens attending church services conveys the continuation of daily life, underscoring the sustained morale of the community and their unrelenting support of the home front.

While these newspaper commentaries on St. Paul’s survival assuredly promoted civilian optimism within London, “the metamorphosis of St. Paul’s into a symbol of togetherness, survival, and suffering was best articulated in photographs, not words.”\(^{119}\) This objective was achieved the same evening of December 29th, as Herbert Mason captured the most memorable photograph ever taken of St. Paul’s.\(^{120}\) Mason’s elevated view of the Cathedral was taken from the rooftop of Northcliffe House, the location for the office of the Daily Mail, another prominent newspaper in London during the war.\(^{121}\) The image “shows the dome transfigured against white clouds, lit by invisible fires behind a screen of smoke.”\(^{122}\) Most literally, the photo represents the

\(^{118}\) “The City’s Ordeal by Fire,” The Times.
\(^{119}\) Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
\(^{120}\) See Figure 3.; Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
\(^{121}\) Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
\(^{122}\) Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
reality that on December 29th, the Germans destroyed nearly all of the City of London, while the
cathedral nearly avoided damage. Symbolically the photo represents hope amidst destruction.

Countless newspapers from London and beyond published Mason’s photograph
throughout the war years. The impact of the photo cannot be understated, as “so great was the
hunger for it that it became instantly famous, within two months it had been taken up even by a
Berlin illustrated newspaper and still sells well in postcard form.” Indeed, countless British
museums, monuments, and St. Paul’s Cathedral itself continue to sell variations of the image
during modern times. Throughout the war, captions accompanying the photo became an
important part of interpreting the image’s message. Immediately following reports on bomb
damage and the celebration of the new year, local London newspapers and other media
publications issued large reproductions of Mason’s photo with captions emphasizing the
church’s miraculous survival and providing uplifting messages to the articles’ audience. On
January 4th, 1941 The Illustrated London News published the image under the title “The Heart of
the City’s Inferno - Yet St. Paul’s Still Stands.” This uplifting heading is an essential
component of the publication, as without it, the reality of St. Paul’s survival could be questioned,
given the presence of smoke and fire within the image’s foreground. The caption addresses this
dichotomy, stating “itself ringed by blazing fires and enveloped in a flame-reddened waves of
smoke, St. Paul’s withstood the night of terror and remains a symbol of the indestructible faith of
the whole civilized world.” This imagery also inspired the British community specifically, as
the report claims “that the people of London, like their cathedral, remain steadfast and strong.”

123 Keene, Burns, and Saint, St. Paul’s, 461.
January 4, 1941.
The proliferation of the image continued throughout the war, inspiring the British to “keep calm and carry on.”¹²⁷ On November 16, 1941, nearly a year following the 1940 December bombing, the *Sunday Graphic* published the image with the caption “One of the most dramatic pictures of London’s worst raid. It was taken in the height of the fire, when explosive and incendiary bombs were still falling. Silhouetted against the glare, St. Paul’s stands, landmark of the City.”¹²⁸ This continued publication of the photograph throughout the war reveals the image’s role in supporting British propaganda efforts. Even though nightly air raids against London ceased by the fall of 1941, Britain remained heavily involved in World War II. The nation’s continued success required the sustained support of the home front, despite civilians withdrawal from direct involvement with military offenses. Thus, Mason’s powerful image was disseminated during the war years in an effort to remind citizens that London emerged strong despite the damage German’s inflicted on the capital. This message that “London can take it” lay at the core of British propaganda efforts and helped retain home front involvement as the war continued.¹²⁹

Throughout the war, messages emanating from literature and images in media publications played an important role in influencing the opinions of local readers and creating certain interpretations of the war within the community. In order to maintain optimism, the media consistently cited St. Paul’s in the headlines, as the building’s perceived symbolism of hope merged with accounts emphasizing the church’s survival to promote a narrative within the community of unwavering optimism despite destruction. For modern researchers, the newspaper

¹²⁹ Clapson, "Chapter 3: Air Raids," 49.
articles provide a retrospective lens into understanding the sentiments of citizens and their reliance on St. Paul’s symbolism during the Blitz. This conception from the amalgamated publications confirms the indispensable nature of the Cathedral within the community.

**St. Paul’s Cathedral and Civilian Morale:**

As British leadership explored methods to encourage their war efforts during World War II, they established the Ministry of Information (MOI) at the outbreak of war, a department responsible for issuing “national propaganda” at home and abroad. Complementary to the efforts of the MOI were novel sociological studies promoting research on the impact of morale during wars that disseminated throughout the nation during the 1940s. Throughout the tumultuous history of war, the impact of military morale had attained significant recognition for its influence on enabling forces to achieve victory. Yet, consensus about the significance of civilian morale during periods of conflict was less established, and therefore traditionally garnered less emphasis during assessments of war strategy. However, as new studies revealed previously unobserved connections between military and civilian morale, national leaders exhibited increasing concern regarding the maintenance of optimism within the home front. Understanding the impact of civilian morale on military efforts is essential for highlighting the role St. Paul’s Cathedral played in supporting Britain’s victory in World War II, given the cathedral’s indispensable influence on maintaining civilian confidence and support.

Traditional scholarship on war supports that a central factor appears within all nations who emerge victorious from conflict: the maintenance of morale amidst horrors of combat. A long history of global discord between nations reveals that “morale wins wars, solves crises,

---

[and] is an indispensable condition of a vigorous national life."\(^{131}\) Research on the nature of war dating to antiquity underwrites the victories of nations as reliant on the strength of morale. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon each “owed much of their success to their understanding and utilization of morale factors.”\(^{132}\) Furthermore, Hannibal, the greatest general of antiquity, was “a master of morale tactics, accurately gauged the morale of the enemy forces, and knew all the ways of maintaining that of his own.”\(^{133}\) Sociological research from 1941 demonstrates an astute awareness of morale’s impact early in the Second World War, as successful campaigns in 1939 and 1940 “dramatically demonstrated the importance of morale in actual combat.”\(^{134}\) The ability of Nazi forces to walk over France in 1940 is attributed to the French “morale defeat.” Subsequently, the unlikely British recovery at Dunkirk presented “a morale triumph of such dimensions that their enemies could not conceive it.”\(^{135}\) While these examples highlighting the efforts of military leaders and military forces refer to the impact of troop morale, the study revealed that wartime victory transpires not only due to battlefield morale, but also the maintenance of optimism and support on the home front.

Exploring the relationship of military and civilian morale offers an enlightening perspective into the complexities of wartime. In the context of war, morale is described as “a state of mind that either encourages or impedes action” that impacts “the mental, moral, and physical condition of troops.”\(^{136}\) Although morale functions as a psychological condition incapable of quantifiable measurement, maintaining perceptibly high levels of both military and


\(^{132}\) Pope, "The Importance," 195.

\(^{133}\) Pope, "The Importance," 195.

\(^{134}\) Pope, "The Importance," 195.

\(^{135}\) Pope, "The Importance," 196.

civilian morale is crucial for a nation to triumph during war. Military morale, through strengthening the unity and optimism of troops, reinforces the command and obedience of individual soldiers, by holding them “to the performance of duty despite every opposing force or influence.” Since soldiers stand on the front lines of war and directly influence the outcome of battles, military morale often accrues heightened attention, traditionally overshadowing the relevance of civilian morale in wartime. Yet historical evidence reveals the fundamental reliance of military morale on civilian morale, for without the latter the former would not be reinforced with a resolute motivation to fight.

Henry Stimson, Secretary of State during World War II, best summed up the inseparable nature of military and civilian morale when he said “Morale is one and indivisible.” Stimson claimed that “any effort to sever the dependent relations of military and civilian forces ultimately damages - perhaps fatally - the morale of both.” This interdependence of their relationship highlights the necessity of studying civilian morale, in the context of wartime. The willingness of troops to fight is stimulated by the outward, unified support of civilians on the home front. It is in defense of these citizens that soldiers serve their country, and thus an army is susceptible “to fight as the people think.” Detailed studies during the Second World War disclose “the innumerable ways in which it [civilian morale] sustains or diminishes the national effort,” demonstrating that civilian morale can either support or curtail the military war efforts, dependent on the attitude of citizens. This realization presents civilian morale as a double-edged sword in the context of war, a time when it is most essential but also highly at risk. When

---


138 Pope, "The Importance," 196.

139 Pope, "The Importance," 196.

140 Pope, "The Importance," 196.

141 Pope, "The Importance," 196.

142 Pope, "The Importance," 196.
faced with hardships stimulated by wartime pressure, citizens on the home front are often conquered by fear, panic, and insecurity, and exert added strain on a nation’s morale.\textsuperscript{143}

With the importance of civilian morale supported by sociological studies released in the 1940s, nations became acutely aware of the significance of this factor in contributing to their war effort. It is during this time that primary sources from archived papers and witness testimonies provide explicit claims about St. Paul’s direct influence on civilian morale. These accounts, when combined with the outlined thesis of sociological research on morale, verify the argument that St. Paul’s Cathedral maintained civilian morale, and thus military morale, helping the British to emerge victorious from the Second World War. Furthermore, reflection on St. Paul’s Cathedral following the war presents a double-edged sword narrative in conjunction with civilian morale that further affirms the cathedral’s role in securing British victory in World War II.

During his post-war speech directed to St. Paul’s Watch, Godfrey Allen effectively reflects on the impact of the cathedral on both British citizens and Allied nations - “From this dark period, St. Paul’s Cathedral has emerged greater than ever. Amidst surrounding ruin and devastation reaching to its very walls the beautiful Dome continued to dominate London, a daily inspiration to thousands of its suffering citizens and a symbol of hope throughout the world.”\textsuperscript{144} From his perspective in the spring of 1945, Allen is able to discern the overarching impact that the cathedral played throughout the war, even following the termination of its direct involvement during the Blitz. Emanating from a period of devastation remarkably intact, St. Paul’s influence persisted beyond 1940 and 1941, as Allied nations continued to recognize the cathedral as a beacon of hope. Allen’s contemplation on the war years emphasizes that St. Paul’s Cathedral’s involvement during the Blitz continued to uplift civilian morale throughout the war.

\textsuperscript{143} Pope, "The Importance," 204.
\textsuperscript{144} Matthews, \textit{St. Paul's}, 76.
In 1946, the year after Allen asserted his reflection on the war, Reverend S. A. Alexander offered a synopsis on his contemplations about St. Paul’s role during the war.\footnote{145} Alexander served as the Treasurer of St. Paul’s throughout World War II, and as a member of the Chapter he had contributed significantly to preparations for the war since the Chapter’s initial meeting in April 1939.\footnote{146} Following the war he issued a eight page document “The Survival of St. Paul’s: The Story of a Great Church in Perilous Times” that reflected on the relationship between St. Paul’s and civilian morale during the war,

In the early years of the bombing the City policeman, it is said, used to look round in the dusk of morning and say: “It’s O.K., the Cathedral is still there.” St. Paul’s is still there—let us remember, not merely or chiefly as a monument of the past, but as a centre of living power, in the very surge and uproar of city life. St. Paul’s is still there. It has been tried and has not given in. It has been scarred but it has not fallen. It has become in its flame and smoke a symbol of London and London’s resistance to the powers of evil, and a faithful witness to the freedom of the human spirit. So may it continue to be in the centuries to come!\footnote{147}

With St. Paul’s survival serving as an omnipresent constant during the course of the war, civilian morale in Britain persisted at high levels. Despite the surrounding destruction and assorted hardships that inflicted civilians throughout the war, the cathedral’s dependability upheld its previously established symbolism of strength and resilience. This consistency was not overlooked by civilians, who recognized St. Paul’s as a symbol of hope prior to and during the Second World War, and presumably in the centuries to come.

In addition to contemplating witness reflections on St. Paul’s triumph in promoting optimism throughout the duration of the war, it is also essential to explore the double-edged nature of civilian morale as highlighted within sociological studies on morale. Just as civilian

morale can positively contribute to promoting military strength, it also possesses the reverse ability to negatively influence the efforts of frontline troops. In his reflection on the war, Allen expresses a counterfactual scenario regarding St. Paul’s that highlights the cathedral’s manifestation as a double-edged sword during the Blitz. Allen states on behalf of the Chapter,

We believe that the destruction of St. Paul’s Cathedral would have shocked the people of Britain, the Empire and even the World more than that of any other building in this country. Central in their concept of London, it was perhaps to St. Paul’s that the thoughts of people throughout the world turned when London was in danger during those grim and desperate days of 1940-41 and we are proud indeed to have shared together the dangers and joys of defending this great building.148

This alternative scenario reveals that if the Nazis had succeeded in their attempts to destroy St. Paul’s Cathedral, this disaster would have instigated devastating effects on morale throughout London and beyond. Thus, St. Paul’s survival was essential not only to serve as a catalyst of hope, but also to ensure that negative sentiments about the war did not infiltrate the home front if the reverse situation occurred.

The juxtaposition of secondary literature with primary accounts from the Blitz reveal that in order to appreciate St. Paul’s role during the Second World War, an understanding of its symbolic significance as recognized by the British nation is necessary. Emerging as an emblem of historical nationalism, reliance, and unity, St. Paul’s Cathedral characterized the essential sentiments civilians required to remain hopeful during a period of total war. With the preparations by cathedral personnel supporting the structure’s survival amidst targeted Nazi attacks, St. Paul’s symbolism was reinforced and recognized throughout London, as highlighted by contemporary testimony in newspaper accounts. As an inspiration to citizens, St. Paul’s fostered civilian morale, a factor increasingly recognized during World War II as imperative to enabling a nation’s triumph in combat. As images and accounts of St. Paul’s survival during the

148 Matthews, St. Paul's, 73.
Blitz sustained circulation throughout the duration of the war, St. Paul’s function as a catalyst for civilian morale consequently impacted military morale, ultimately encouraging the British war effort and helping Britain to emerge victoriously from World War II.
Figure 1\textsuperscript{149}

\textit{Londinium Augusta:} William Stukeley’s map of Roman London dated 7 November 1722, Plate 57 in his \textit{Itinerarium Curiosum}, 1724.

\textsuperscript{149} Clark et al., \textit{Londinium and Beyond}, 7.
Figure 2: 150

Figure 3: 151

Bibliography


Clark, John, Jonathan Cotton, Jenny Hall, Roz Sherris, and Hedley Swain, eds. Londinium and


Bibliographical Essay

My senior essay began as a chance to honor my family’s legacy of military service and sacrifice to our country. Although the events of World War II took place far before my birth, and even prior to the birth of my parents, the impact of the war has been a constant presence in my life. Amidst the PTSD and dementia, fleeting war stories from my grandfather’s service in the Pacific litter my childhood, with the occasional picture providing visual support to unimaginable tales that convey a true survival story. Attempting to honor his father’s legacy, complete with five purple hearts and service in General Douglas MacArthur’s Honor Guard, my father commissioned in the US Navy in 1990. Initially expecting to only complete his four year active duty commitment during the First Gulf War, my father never anticipated that thirty years later he would still be fulfilling a career-long service to his country. As a result of my father and grandfather’s commitments, my brother was also drawn to military service - enrolling in the JROTC program at his high school and serving as the Command Sergeant Major his senior year.

As an Economics major during my first three years at Yale, my work felt somewhat insignificant in light of the contributions my family had made to our country. During a visit with my grandfather during winter break of 2018, he shared with me a previously untold account about a bullet grazing the top of his head mid-combat. This story was accompanied by a lighthearted thankfulness for not being half an inch taller, but lacked specific information about historical details of the war. Intrigued to learn more about the factual history of World War II, I enrolled in Professor Ian Johnson’s seminar Global History of WWII the following spring. I was infatuated by my grandfather’s bravery and overwhelmed by a desire to better understand the battles he served in and the legacy of his military service. The impact of Professor Johnson’s class truly changed my Yale experience. Not only did I decide to apply to double major in
History during September of my senior year, but I was determined to complete a two-semester senior essay focusing on an underrepresented aspect of World War II.

With the overwhelming topic of the Second World War guiding the direction of my senior essay, my decision to focus on St. Paul’s Cathedral was inspired by my mother’s religious dedication and affinity for travel. Since I was little, my mom has prioritized worldly education through family trips, with many of our travels focused on visiting the western world’s greatest cathedrals. From visiting St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City, to Notre Dame in Paris, to Washington National Cathedral in my hometown of Washington, D.C., the history of cathedrals and their impact on surrounding communities developed as a great interest to me. My fascination with cathedrals was further exacerbated by Professor Jung’s Art of Gothic Cathedrals lecture, a class I also took in Spring 2019. Although St. Paul’s is not a gothic cathedral, many of the symbolic themes of the class still apply to the church, a monument whose iconic dome has guided it’s overwhelming influence on the city and secured its position as my favorite cathedral.

With my family influence inspiring my senior essay topic, my research began by creating a timeline of events impacting St. Paul’s during the War. Heavily targeted by Nazi bombers during the Blitz on London from 1940-1941, numerous secondary sources confirm five significant nights when St. Paul’s was directly bombed and sustained varying degrees of damage. These individual sources tend to focus either predominantly on the Blitz, as in The London Blitz by David Johnson, or on the cathedral’s centuries long history, as in St. Paul’s: The Cathedral Church of London 604-2004 by Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint. Works relating to the former provide accounts on the widespread bombings across London during the Luftwaffe’s campaign with scattered references to St. Paul’s, whereas the latter resources cover
larger spans of St. Paul’s intricate history with brief sections focusing on the cathedral’s role in World War II.

As a result, little publicly available primary or secondary sources successfully depict a cohesive overlapping history of St. Paul’s and World War II, with the exception of one main work - the source that guided my initial thesis research. The book *St. Paul’s Cathedral in Wartime 1939-1945*, written in 1946 by W.R. Matthews, provides the most complete firsthand account of St. Paul’s during the war years. With one of the two thousand originally published copies of the work available through Yale’s library system, I was able to use the authentic perspective of Matthews, Dean of St. Paul’s during World War II, to ensure the viability of my proposed research topic. In *St. Paul’s Cathedral in Wartime*, Matthews provides a chronological account outlining actions of cathedral personnel and significant events that occurred in association with St. Paul’s during the war. The one hundred four page descriptive novel confirms the indispensable influence of the cathedral during World War II, while also affirming the feasibility of a senior essay expanding on the topic.

Inspired by Matthews’ work, I was simultaneously aware of the lack of readily available supplemental documentation to support and expand on his perspective. As a result, it became apparent that sources from the St. Paul’s archives - the wartime papers of Matthews and his contemporaries - would be necessary to reveal a broader understanding of the relationship between St. Paul’s Cathedral and World War II. Communication with St. Paul’s archivists confirmed the abundancy of files preserved from the cathedral’s collection during the war years, with many documents relating explicitly to the London Blitz. In addition to resources held within St. Paul’s internal archive, the cathedral’s librarian also informed me that the majority of the cathedral’s mid-20th century files were outsourced in the 1980s to the London Metropolitan...
Archives (LMA), the principal archive for the greater London area. As a result, I began correspondence with LMA archivists, who confirmed my ability to explore the numerous uncatalogued “CF boxes” they received from St. Paul’s.

In the weeks leading up to my visit to London in January 2020, I re-examined my aforementioned sources and turned to other secondary works, including *The Luftwaffe’s Blitz: The Inside Story November 1940 - May 1941* by Christopher Goss, the 1940 film “London Can Take It,” “The London County Council Bomb Damage Maps 1939-1945,” and *London Was Ours: Diaries and Memories of the London Blitz* by Amy Helen Bell. These sources offered intermittent details about St. Paul’s during wartime that further narrowed my topic, as I transitioned from focusing on how St. Paul’s survived the war to the importance of St. Paul’s survival in ensuring British victory in World War II. With this shift in perspective, the actions of St. Paul’s Watch volunteers, who worked nightly shifts to protect the building from bomb damage, became less important to my research, despite Matthews' focus on outlining the Watch’s efforts in *St. Paul’s Cathedral in Wartime*. Instead, understanding St. Paul’s importance as a symbol to the city, and thus its impact on London and civilian morale during the Blitz, developed as my main research focus. By traveling to London, my aim was to locate sources supporting the argument that St. Paul’s Cathedral played a considerable role in helping the British win World War II.

Shifting through documents at the LMA and St. Paul’s archives, I unveiled letters, diaries, and other papers written by personnel associated with the cathedral dating to the war years. While many of the accounts relayed the daily events and activities of the St. Paul’s Watch, several documents focused more holistically on the relationship between the war and the cathedral. Accounts written by cathedral personnel asserting St. Paul’s as a powerful British
symbol prior to the Blitz underscored the fundamental need for the building’s preservation during war. Additionally, testimony within primary documents reveals the cathedral’s impact on the community throughout the war and establishes the building’s unique influence on supporting civilian morale during the time of St. Paul’s seemingly improbable survival.

While papers originating from the St. Paul’s archives convey the importance of the building’s symbolism during the war, firsthand perspectives from the London community provide a secondary lens into the impact of the cathedral during the war. Guildhall Library, a branch of the London Metropolitan Archive, contains a collection of newspaper archives, with many papers dating to the war years. Two newspapers preserved from the timeframe proved particularly influential in my research, *The Times* and *City Press*. Both papers were based in the City of London, the neighborhood in which St. Paul’s Cathedral is located. Focused on reporting about nightly air raid damage during the Blitz, the papers’ locational proximity to the cathedral contributed to abundancy of articles dedicated to St. Paul’s throughout World War II. As a result, these newspaper accounts are helpful in shedding light on the feelings and perspectives of the local community immediately following air raids. While the frequency of articles on St. Paul’s may seem to suggest drastic damage to the building, the numerous reports actually underscore the desire of the community to remain updated about the cathedral, reinstating the profound significance of the St. Paul’s on the community.

Returning from my trip to London with over four thousand images of primary documents, I began the task of juxtaposing various accounts from my research in order to create a narrative for my senior essay. Combining resources from before, during, and after the war resulted in a cohesive thesis outlining St. Paul’s contribution to British victory throughout World War II. My resulting essay merges both primary and secondary sources to understand the factors that
supported St. Paul’s symbolic significance to Britain by the outbreak of the war. With this symbolism recognized, St. Paul’s unlikely survival during war procured a newfound importance, as it became a motivating factor behind sustaining civilian morale, and thus military morale, during the Second World War.

In December 2019, my grandfather passed away prior to the completion of my senior essay and graduation from Yale. Initially inspired by his legacy, I dedicate this essay in honor of his memory, his commitment to service, and his ever present influence on my life.