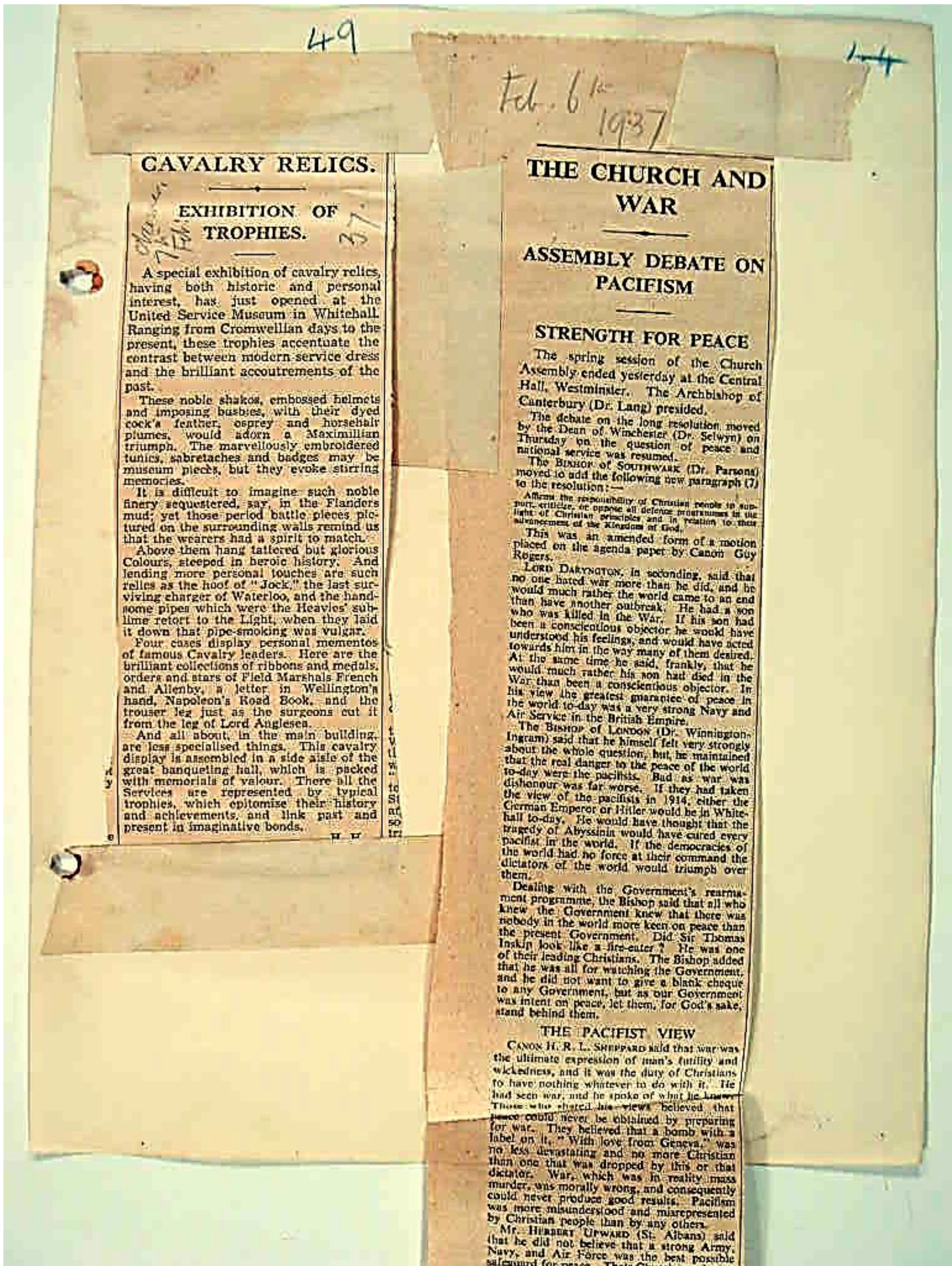


PACIFISM: WOOLF

A Different Peace

Throughout *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf explores feminism and pacifism’s interconnection. She argues that women, by virtue of being different from men, are uniquely capable of preventing war. Such differences stem from the different education women have traditionally received from their "four great teachers... poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties” (96), such as national and school pride (97). We see in Woolf’s scrapbooks how these loyalties can detract from the cause of peace. On the page visible here, a British man says that “he would much rather his son had died in the War than been a conscientious objector” (Monks House Papers/B.16f. Vol 2 (Sussex), 49):



A record of ‘unreal loyalties’: Much of the content of Woolf’s scrapbooks suggests direct connections to ideas in *Three Guineas*, and this page is no exception. Image courtesy of Southern Connecticut State University.

The remainder of the article makes clear that this preference is due to that fact that he views dying for one’s country as a glorious act of patriotic devotion, whereas promoting peace through objection would not bring glory to his nation. Woolf’s argument thus follows that women’s freedom from these national loyalties allows them to renounce interest in war completely, instead adopting an attitude of “indifference” (129). To remain indifferent to a system, one cannot participate in it, and Woolf’s “Outsiders’ Society” (126), echoes this idea that “[women] can best help [men] to prevent war not by joining [their] society but by remaining outside” (170). Thus *Three Guineas* declares that women’s ability to be effective pacifists originates in their inherently different experience from that of men. While men can work towards peace within existing structures and institutions, for the daughters of educated men in particular solutions to war must be found outside of and beyond these.

Works Cited

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