



2014

Editorial Statement

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Recommended Citation

(2014) "Editorial Statement," *The Bridge*: Vol. 37 : No. 1 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/thebridge/vol37/iss1/3>

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Editorial Statement

2014 marks the anniversary of turning points in several different wars—the beginning of the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1814, Denmark’s defeat in the Second Schleswig War of 1864, General Sherman’s capture of Atlanta during the third year of the American Civil War in 1864, and the outbreak of World War One in 1914. Each of these wars affected Danes and Danish Americans in profound and yet quite different ways, which prompted us to make this issue of *The Bridge* a commemorative war-themed special issue.

The Napoleonic Wars resulted in Denmark’s state bankruptcy in 1813 and loss of Norway in 1814, heralding the transformation of the once-mighty Danish Empire into a smaller, more homogenous nation state over the next half-century. Many 19th century Danes sought a peaceful and prosperous life in the newly-established United States of America, only to find themselves called upon to take up arms in the American Civil War. As Anders B. Rasmussen documents in the first essay in this volume, Danish American men’s decision to fight for their new country was a decision fraught with symbolic significance, moral meaning, and great personal costs. While these wars changed the world in highly visible ways by toppling national governments and redrawing national borders, they also resulted in many changes in the lives of ordinary citizens, as Sofie Krøgh Nielsen discusses in the second article. In the third article in this volume, Julie K. Allen explores the history and consequences of the 1864 war for both Denmark and Germany, while the fourth article consists of several essays by the celebrated Danish writer and human rights advocate Georg Brandes defending Denmark’s neutrality during World War I.

This issue also includes review of several books with thematic connections to the theme of war: Inge Wiehl’s *Heartstrings*, Nathaniel Hong’s *Occupied*, Marianne Stølen’s *Den Røde*, and Mads Daubjerg’s *Borders of Belonging*. We hope you’ll find each of these accounts of Denmark and Danes in times of war as fascinating as we do.