

REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II IN THE LATE 1990S:

A CASE OF PROSTHETIC MEMORY

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Remembering World War II in the Late 1990s: A Case of Prosthetic Memory

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This dissertation analyzes the late 1990s US remembrance of World War II utilizing Alison Landsberg's (2004) concept of prosthetic memory. Building upon previous scholarship regarding World War II and memory (Beidler, 1998; Wood, 2006; Bodnar, 2010; Ramsay, 2015), this dissertation analyzes key works including *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *The Greatest Generation* (1998), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), *Medal of Honor* (1999), *Band of Brothers* (2001), *Call of Duty* (2003), and *The Pacific* (2010) in order to better understand the version of World War II promulgated by Stephen E. Ambrose, Tom Brokaw, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks. Arguing that this time period and its World War II representations are more than merely a continuation of wartime propaganda, this research investigates these works as an attempt to transfer "privately felt public memories" as originally championed by President Ronald Reagan during the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day.

This dissertation provides a context for this late 1990s engagement with memory by reviewing collective memory theory, drawing upon historian Jay Winter's observation of "memory booms," and the role remembrance of previous wars, including World War I, played in how we came to remember World War II. Conservative administrations in the United Kingdom and United States during the 1980s returned a focus to ideas of tradition and heritage moored

within a utopian understanding of the World War II era. Borrowing traumatic emphasis from Holocaust survivor and Vietnam post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) narratives of the 1970s, politicians such as Ronald Reagan and broadcasters such as Tom Brokaw began constructing prosthetic memories around the US combat soldier experience. Brokaw, acting as megaphone for historian Ambrose's hyper-focus on World War II soldier oral histories, allowed the former's honorific "The Greatest Generation" to enter the cultural lexicon. Carrying the Generation's memory inside of you became a guilt-based duty.

The construction of transferential spaces for prosthetic memories during the 1990s was also abated by the rise in computer-based processing, graphics, and sound to immerse an audience or player in a sensory overload simulation. The consequence of this construction of memory is a narrowing of perspective on the lessons of a worldwide war built upon systematic genocide and atomic weapons.

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## ***Chapter 1 – Remembering World War II: A Brief Introduction***

### **I. Introduction**

World War II cost an estimated fifty million human lives (Haywood, 1997; Keegan, 1989; Messenger, 1989), representing roughly three percent of the 1940 world population (Chamie, 1999), over the course of its 2,194 days from Hitler's invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, through Japan's unconditional surrender on September 2, 1945. This cost was delivered in the form of the systematic extermination of the Jewish people, instant mass death at both Hiroshima and Nagasaki via atomic bombs, and more efficient military technology, such as jets, tanks, and U-boats. It weighs heavily within cultural memory as society has attempted to understand what such mass death means and perhaps to prevent it from reoccurring.

There is an additional reason why World War II has remained so firmly in late-twentieth, early twenty-first century US consciousness. The motive from the beginning of official US involvement was, as University of Alabama literature professor Philip Beidler (1998) writes, to make “a production out of the American experience of the conflict as information *and* entertainment” as a “crucial component of war manufacture” (p. 8). Beidler's thought follows a similar line to that of political scientist Timothy W. Luke, who wrote in 1989, “Following the Day of Infamy, the culture industry fully mobilized its workshops and plants to manufacture images of democratic peoples decisively defeating authoritarian regimes” (pp. 171-72). The US government enlisted producers of the media of the day—including books, plays, films, newspapers, magazines, photographs, newsreels, posters, cartoons, illustrations, advertisements, radio broadcasts,



and phonograph records—to help in the war effort. This infrastructure provided a foundation for a set of post-war popular culture productions that continuously remembered the victory. These texts “came to serve for the generation of the war and their immediate inheritors as a collection of core texts, a canon, perhaps even a curriculum” and “through their complex reifying and commodifying of wartime myth into popular-culture images of history and memory, would become enshrined themselves as forms of history and memory” (Beidler, 1998, pgs. 3-4). So the combination of an event of mass brutality mixed with a deep backlog of film, text, and imagery from the first modern propagandized war effort creates a milieu rich for remembering.

Writing in the late 1990s, Beidler examined this phenomenon by exploring cultural production about the war from its end to 1995. My work extends that exploration, examining the period from 1995 to 2013, when production of World War II-themed media included approximately 224 video games, seventy-one US produced or co-produced films, 9,300 books, and 132 museums or naval sites in the US solely or significantly dedicated to the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> My work also expands on Beidler’s in how it considers ways in which texts about World War II “enshrined themselves as forms of history and memory” (p. 4).

The impetus for this enshrinement, I argue, is not just the commodifying of myth but a transference and transformation of first-hand experience with propaganda

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<sup>1</sup> List of World War II Video Games. (n.d.). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List\\_of\\_World\\_War\\_II\\_video\\_games&oldid=575468356](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_World_War_II_video_games&oldid=575468356); List of World War II Films. (n.d.). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List\\_of\\_World\\_War\\_II\\_films&oldid=568917056](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=List_of_World_War_II_films&oldid=568917056); World War 2 Number of books originated from a customized Google search; Museums, Memorials, Naval Exhibits – US Retrieved from [http://www.everythingworldwar2.com/world\\_war\\_2\\_museum\\_memorial/world\\_war\\_2\\_museum\\_memorial.html](http://www.everythingworldwar2.com/world_war_2_museum_memorial/world_war_2_museum_memorial.html). Accessed on 2013, September 30. Some of these listed museums pre-date 1995.

perpetuated by societal institutional authority (such as government, business, or education) to second-hand collective memory perpetuated by a familial emotional authority that is buttressed by tradition. The authority of these familial/emotional memories derives from what sociologist Max Weber (1919) defined as “the authority of the eternal yesterday” (p. 34).

I argue that the prominent children of what has been referred to as “The Greatest Generation” (Brokaw, 1998)—popular historian Stephen E. Ambrose, longtime NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw, popular film director Steven Spielberg, and to a lesser extent Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks, approaching mid-life – and in Ambrose’s case, late mid-life – decided to commemorate their fathers’ war-time accomplishments via media productions during the late 1990s. A mass media-based commemoration was a natural fit for these sons, who as members of the Baby Boom generation were raised on television. These productions were built on top of an *early* 1990s foundation composed of TV-based 50th anniversary retrospectives of World War II<sup>2</sup> and the first widespread embrace of Holocaust narratives that had begun in the 1970s as witness testimonials. This acceptance of Holocaust narratives can be seen in the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which opened in Washington D.C., on April 22, 1993 and the popularity of the film *Schindler’s List*, which was released December 15, 1993 and earned \$321.2 million and the Academy Award for Best Picture.

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<sup>2</sup> The groundwork for these fiftieth-anniversary television commemorations began ten years prior when Ronald Reagan became the first US president to participate in a prominent public commemoration of D-Day in 1984, giving one of his most famous speeches, “The Boys of Pointe du Hoc,” in Normandy (Brinkley, 2005).

Because mass media allow individuals within and across generations to share memories, these sons' productions transferred the narratives of these mediated memories onto a new generation. The sons' media texts fall into what Yale University historian Jay Winter (2006), a specialist in World War I, refers to as "theatres of memory," for "those who were not there see the past not in terms of their own personal memories, but rather in terms of public representations of the memories of those who came before" (p. 2). It should be noted that this dissertation focuses solely on the US experience of World War II. Some literature reviewed on the remembrance of other wars in Chapter 2 does briefly touch upon other nationalities' remembrances of war and are included only when the point made is a humanistic, rather than regional one. In addition, Chapter 4's coverage of UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's relationship to US leader Ronald Reagan is included to provide context for why Reagan made certain choices that he did, plus the historical relationship between both countries around the time of World War II makes her inclusion significant. Otherwise, this dissertation focuses solely on US media products regarding the war.

Collective memory scholars, however, take a different approach. For example, Alison Landsberg (2004) of George Mason University theorizes that Holocaust media (graphic novels, films, museums) act as transferential spaces through which audiences affix "prosthetic" memories to themselves—even though they lack the actual original experience that would create such a memory. One of many examples Landsberg (2004) cites is the film *Schindler's List* (1993), in which the real-life survivor and the actor appear together on screen at the end, representing the "transference of memory from the

body of a survivor to a person who has no ‘authentic’ link to this particular historical past” (p. 111).

This idea of transferential spaces established by media presentations differs from Columbia University professor of English and Comparative Literature Marianne Hirsch’s (2008) concept of postmemory. Postmemory, is she says, having “to grow up with overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one’s birth or one’s consciousness” (2015, para. 2). Hirsch deals with what she refers to as the “generation after” and its relationship to cultural, collective, and personal trauma of a previous generation. The “generation after” remembers via the stories, behaviors, and images from their childhoods, but “these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right” (2015, para. 2).

There are similarities between the two scholars’ concepts but also important nuances that differentiate them. Landsberg’s prosthetic memory puts the emphasis on the audience members, affixing to them a prosthetic memory offered via transferential spaces. Hirsch’s postmemory originates in a generation socialized, usually via the home, to know and feel a previous generation’s memories so strongly as to be their own. Postmemory may exist internally within particular creators covered in this dissertation and provide an impetus for the works each ultimately creates. However, the focus of my dissertation is on the works themselves (e.g. *D-Day*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Greatest Generation*, *Medal of Honor*, *Band of Brothers*) as texts that constitute the transferential spaces envisioned by Landsberg’s prosthetic memory, rather than on the individual psychology of specific authors, directors or broadcasters who possibly could be categorized as individuals carrying Hirsch’s postmemory.

## II. Remembrance of Other Wars

Remembrance and commemoration of US wars did not begin with World War II or even World War I. Fifty years after the US Revolutionary War, celebrations and commemorations were held in multiple cities. The elderly war hero General Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier de Lafayette toured the States in 1824-1825, and a rising middle class purchased numerous souvenirs and commemorative keepsakes (Purcell, 2010). Fifty years after the Battle of Gettysburg, fifty-three thousand US Civil War veterans registered to attend the anniversary event (Kreyling, 2014, p. 28). A sprawling tent-city encampment was constructed on the battlefield grounds to accommodate the approximately fifty-four thousand veterans who ultimately showed up to attend the anniversary; including the Great Tent, which could hold fifteen thousand, to hear US President Woodrow Wilson's July 4 speech (Rada, 2013).

The US's involvement and memory of involvement in World War I (1914-1918) is a significant contributor to our understanding of memory and war in the US and to our attempts to assign meaning to our involvement in World War II. The experience of World War I on those Americans born between the 1860s and 1880s and who "came into academic, literary, professional, or public prominence in the period 1890 to 1920 through their writings on or about memory" (J. M. Winter, 2006, p. 20) are considered by Winter to comprise the first generation of memory (2006, p. 18). The literary contributions by this cohort formed the core of what he labels the first memory boom, or a period of intense focus on remembering. Though Winter specifically points out that World War I did not begin the memory boom, it nonetheless had a significant impact on the cohort who lived through the war.

This first generation of memory was fascinated by the subject of memory before World War I, and that interest escalated as the need to acknowledge the mass death and find appropriate commemorative forms became apparent. The first memory boom was interested in memory before World War I and continued to think through the lens of commemoration after it. Of them, Winter (2006) writes: “there is no reason to believe that these people self-consciously wrote as part of a generation, but it is striking that their outlook and sensibilities all intersected with the subject of memory and that they did so at a very unusual time in European history” (J. M. Winter, 2006, p. 21).

The resilient narrative about World War I is that the US attempted to immediately forget it as represented by the prose of the Lost Generation of writers, yet University of South Alabama English scholar Steven Trout (2010) counters this popular belief. World War I was not merely revived only to support both pacifist and isolationist sentiments, he writes, but rather the US’s fascination with it endured throughout both Prohibition and the Great Depression (1929-1939). Winter connects with this idea, commenting that World War I helped put into action those forces that produced World War II and “the forms in which contemporaries understood its meaning” (J. M. Winter, 2006, p. 2).

World War I also introduced a new form of efficient mass death. For example, previous wars cost thousands of lives, whereas it is estimated World War I cost approximately eight and half million lives (Keegan, 2012). Both individual survivors and the nations involved attempted to assign some sort of meaning to such a gross loss of life in an attempt to avoid repeating it. World War II’s decimation of Japanese cities and the existence of Hitler’s systematic program of extermination seemed to show there was no great progress, no lesson learned (Winter, 2006). As for World War I, which is discussed

in greater detail in this dissertation's chapter four, is unique in that the US only participated in the latter stages of it (1917-1918). The majority of history and history of remembrance written about World War I is from a non-US perspective. That said, remembrance of World War I at first needed to be made either sacred or trivialized (Mosse, 1990) in order for the scale of mass death to be dealt with. The war was initially remembered by those who participated in it, but slowly gave way to others, and has disproportionately been assigned to the memory of the "Lost Generation" (e.g. Hemingway, Dos Passos, Cummings) writers whose interpretation may not necessarily reflect the majority (Trout, 2014). The experience of World War I was used as support for isolationists' desire to stay out of World War II, though also repurposed<sup>3</sup> as propaganda to intervene. World War I saw a renewed interest in the 1960s with the fiftieth year anniversaries and the opening of public archives to historians. By the 1980s, in the United States, renewed interest in World War II once again trumped the remembrance of World War I.

The first post-World War II US war, the Korean War (1950-1953), is often considered a forgotten war, a name that historian Melinda Pash (2012) says it was first given, by *US News & World Report*, in 1951. Pash argues, however, in her book *In the Shadow of the Greatest Generation: The Americans Who Fought the Korean War* (2012), that it is more accurate to say the war was not necessarily forgotten as much as never thought about much from the beginning.<sup>4</sup> In that conflict, North Korean forces pushed south across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel into South Korea in the early hours of June 25, 1950. In

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<sup>3</sup> *Sergeant York* (1941)

<sup>4</sup> York St. John University historian Robert Barnes writes in his 2014 book, *The US, The UN and the Korean War*, that "to describe the Korean War as 'forgotten' or 'unknown' is now an unwarranted cliché" (p. 1).

response, the United Nations Security Council passed resolutions 82 and 83 on June 25 and June 27, calling on North Korea to stop its hostilities and on UN members to help repel North Korea (Barnes, 2014; Brune, 1996). On June 27, President Harry S. Truman announced US naval and air support, with ground forces committed on June 30 (Brune, 1996, p. 87). Not wanting to say he had begun a new war, Truman instead framed the conflict solely as an UN-led police action. When asked by a journalist at his June 29, 1950, press conference, “Mr. President, would it be correct, against your explanation, to call this a police action under the United Nations?” Truman replied, “Yes. That is exactly what it amounts to” (“President Truman news conference,” 1950).

Congress never officially declared war, as it is empowered to do by the US Constitution. This lack of official recognition, combined with the war occurring right after the global conflict that was World War II but before the controversial conflict that would become the Vietnam War, has meant that the Korean War has received less attention in memory than other US wars. There were fiftieth anniversary commemorations for the beginning (2000) and the end of the war (2003), and the 2000 commemorations parroted the style of remembrance established by the late 1990s remembrance of World War II. However, by July 27, 2003, when veterans marked the anniversary of the armistice, the US was part of a “post-9/11” world and had just led an invasion of Iraq. While commemorated, the Korean War nonetheless received relatively less attention. President George W. Bush did appear at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., on July 25, 2003, (“George W. Bush: Remarks at the Korean War Memorial,” 2003), and various collectibles, including commemorative coins, were produced. There were a few anniversary journalism pieces produced by both major



news outlets (St. Petersburg Times, 2003) at the time of the event and regional PBS stations (“Korean War,” 2004) a year after. However, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) magazine summed up the state of commemoration in the title of an article by Mark D. Van Ells (2003): *Korean War Vets Missing from Popular Culture ... Even During the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Years*.

In contrast, commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary, in 2015, of the start of the US ground war in Vietnam provided a strong example of the culture of remembrance we live in today. Planning for the fiftieth anniversary, in 2015, of the start of the US ground war in Vietnam was initiated by the secretary of defense in 2007. Prior to these plans for a fiftieth anniversary commemoration, remembrance of the Vietnam War came largely from the collection of television news broadcasts about it, *M\*A\*S\*H*’s Korean War-analog commentary on it, a late 1970s cinematic engagement with post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) from it<sup>5</sup>, a 1980s, Reagan-influenced desire to go back and win the war<sup>6</sup>, a late 80s-early 90s re-engagement with the horrors of having fought it., and attempts to forget it with successful military interventions in Grenada, Panama, and Gulf War I.<sup>7</sup>

The media playing a role in the memory of war is not unique to Vietnam, though it being the first war broadcast on our televisions is unique. World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War I and Gulf War II can be placed in the same category of a media war, though World War I is more associated with its still images than its newsreels. Furthermore, World War II is not unique as a war commemorated twenty-five

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<sup>5</sup> *Heroes* (1977), *Coming Home* (1978), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), *First Blood* (1982)

<sup>6</sup> *Missing in Action* (1984), *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985)

<sup>7</sup> *Platoon* (1986), *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), *Casualties of War* (1989), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989)

or fifty years after, since both the US Revolutionary and Civil Wars were marked as such. While the dropping of atomic weapons and systematic genocide took millions of lives, it was World War I that first required us to grapple with mass death. This understanding of past wars and remembrance provides a context for my engagement with World War II. This dissertation deals directly with World War II as a mediated war and the effect that archive of imagery has on the collective memory of it, in particular as a repository for the children of the Greatest Generation to interpret and draw inspiration from during the 1990s.

### **III. 1980s and Early 1990s Moments**

Momentum toward a different way of publicly remembering World War II began with 1984's fortieth anniversary of D-Day. That year, President Ronald Reagan became the first US president to create a photo opportunity out of the anniversary of D-Day, traveling to France to mark the occasion. He met with heads of state and gave a speech, "The Boys of Pointe du Hoc," discussed in Chapter 2 that has been seen as foundational to later commemorations of World War II (Brinkley, 2005). Tom Brokaw, two years into manning the *NBC Nightly News* desk, covered the fortieth anniversary and mentions his 1984 coverage as the time his interest in his parents' generation was re-awakened in his best-selling book *The Greatest Generation* (1998).

A renewed nationalistic military pride in the US, faintly echoing our achievements during World War II, was welcomed in some quarters weary from the previous decades' hangover from the Vietnam War (Zinn, 1998, p. 139) and the salience of post-traumatic stress disorder still being experienced by some former soldiers. In 1994, President Bill Clinton helped publicly commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the

successful D-Day landings in Normandy (“William J. Clinton: Remarks on the 50th anniversary of D-Day at the United States cemetery in Colleville-sur-Mer, France,” 1994). This commemoration helped to remind an unsure populace of previous greatness during a time of dramatic economic upheaval marked by a combination of increasingly bloated CEO pay, layoffs among both blue-collar and white-collar US workers, and President Clinton’s signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 (Sloan, 1996; Uchitelle, 2006). At this time, US citizens also got their first glimpses of a new digital economy on the horizon that many lacked the skills to participate in. The end of the USSR in 1991 created a geopolitical conceptual vacuum for some (Fukuyama, 1992) who were unsure of how to understand and interpret a post-Cold War world.

For many Baby Boomers, the 1990s were a time of middle-age reflection, prompting questions about their youthful politics (Brokaw, 1998), the politics of the world around them (no more USSR, a new Gulf War, genocide in Rwanda), a changing economy, and their relationships with both their parents and children as a part of a sandwich generation (D. A. Miller, 1981). As James Campbell notes regarding the attractiveness of World War II as a subject matter for video games – because it was the last seemingly ludic war – we can understand the confusion and uncomfortableness US citizens of a certain age living during the 1990s must have felt with seemingly a new war occurring every week.

The reasons for this uptick in war are multiple and include: changing geo-political structures during the post-Cold War era, increased non-nation based armed violence across and within previously recognized borders, an increase in the global arms industry, and an expanded television news cycle looking for dramatic footage to display and

potentially skew for the audience the perception of the amount of violence actually occurring. Nonetheless, a partial list of war occurring during the 1990s that might spur some audience members to return to the surety of cause of World War II includes: Gulf War I (1990-1991), the Rwandan Civil War (1990-1993), Croatian War of Independence (1991-1995), Algerian Civil War (199-2002), Somali Civil War (1991-present), Civil War in Afghanistan (1992-1996), Bosnian War (1992-1995), Kosovo War (1998-1999), and the First and Second Chechen Wars (most of 1990s). The loss of the easily identifiable enemy in the form of the USSR in a post-Cold War 1990s also made World War II attractive with its ready made villains and brutalities to fight against.

The surety and victory of World War II acted as a comfortable mnemonic space for many. (Adams, 1994; Beidler, 1998; Hasian Jr., 2001). Indiana University historian John E. Bodnar encapsulates this period of remembrance in his book *The 'Good War' in American Memory* (2010):

As generations far removed from the actual experience of World War II took control of its remembrance, romantic myths cast a longer shadow over the landscape of memory than they had ever done before. A half-century after the fighting stopped, millions of Americans talked about the war as a character-building experience that transformed citizens into heroes and moral paragons. By then, however, the remaining members of the generation that experienced the war were more than willing to accept the accolades of their children and not ponder the conflicting crosscurrents that marked their past. Moreover, the passing of millions of witnesses meant that the vast emotional baggage of cynicism, confusion, sorrow, sober reflection, and even internationalism that coursed through the era of World War II simply commanded less space. At the beginning of a new century, many Americans were more than ready to go to war again. (pp. 233-234)

This increase in interest in World War II is labeled by Winter (2006) as another memory boom: either the long tail of what he sees as a second memory boom, begun during the 1970s or 1980s, or the beginnings of the next boom, not named specifically but described

by Winter as fractured and built more upon a multiplicity of identities rather than national affiliation. This interest in memory is built upon a population with greater education and a disposable income to pursue memory as a recreational activity.

This dissertation proposes that the watershed moment for ameliorating this combination of anxieties about the future by looking back, came in 1998 with the release of Steven Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan* and Tom Brokaw's book *The Greatest Generation*. These children of the Greatest Generation used their parents' accomplishments against the advancements of fascism during World War II as a benchmark by which to measure and potentially recover what they felt made America great (Adams, 1994). The repertoire of narratives, themes, and images drawn upon by the adult children in the late 1990s originates from a combination of representations of collective memories. They include films such as *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) and *The Longest Day* (1962); purposeful propagandized documentation by government, such as war posters and the *Why We Fight* film series (1942-1945); and subsequent generations' interpretations of these first two, such as *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), *A Bridge Too Far* (1977), and *The Big Red One* (1980). Though, I must acknowledge that I am not performing reception studies and so can only suggest how the audience *might* have responded to the texts created by the children of the Greatest Generation.

During the war, the United States government public relations departments and news media outlets began narratives that were subsequently mythologized. This created a vast archive of images and narratives (*e.g.* Joe Rosenthal's Iwo Jima flag-raising photograph<sup>8</sup> and Alfred Eisenstaedt's image of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square

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<sup>8</sup> The photograph was made on Iwo Jima, an eight-square-mile volcanic island seven-hundred and sixty miles southeast of Tokyo. The US invaded the island beginning on February 19, 1945, for the purpose of

on VJ Day<sup>9</sup>) we can mimic, replicate, or draw inspiration from when constructing new media representations of the war and its various stories. This mythology includes the ideas of a Good War, citizen soldiers, and heroic individualism (Adams, 1994; Terkel, 1984; Wood Jr., 2006). Historian Michael C.C. Adams writes “It is generally agreed that World War II was a necessary war. ... Over time, in the United States, this necessary war has been transformed into a good war, the Good War, the best war this country ever had” (1994, p. xiii). Author and broadcaster Studs Terkel highlighted and questioned this transformation by including quotation marks in the title of his 1984 book “*The Good War*”: *An Oral History of World War II*. World War II is often presented as a media spectacle with discernable visual and thematic conventions, with a symbolic focus on combat glory, valorization of paternalism, justness of cause, heroism, solitary victory, a masculine rite of passage, and reduction of the conflict to a simplistic struggle of a democratic good against a totalitarian evil.

#### **IV. Unique Contribution to Memory During the late 1990s (1998)**

War, remembrance, commemoration, and the commercialization of that remembrance have been in place within the United States for almost two hundred years.

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securing its airfields. During the fierce fighting, Japanese forces lost ninety percent of their soldiers who were present at the beginning of the battle. One of the first US Marine objectives was to take Mount Suribachi. Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal captured the moment of the second raising of a US flag by five US Marines to denote accomplishing this objective on February 23, 1945, and won the Pulitzer Prize for Photography for the image.

<sup>9</sup> The image was made by US *Life* magazine photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt on “Victory over Japan” or VJ Day, August 14, 1945, when Japan surrendered, effectively ending World War II. Eisenstaedt took to the streets of Manhattan to photograph the various celebrations. In Times Square he photographed a US sailor in uniform dipping and kissing a female nurse, also in uniform. The photograph was published a week later in *Life* in a full-page display as part of a special twelve-page spread titled Victory Celebrations. The image came to be a popular symbol for the day Japan surrendered and the US won World War II.

So, what then is unique specifically about the *late* 1990s which revived interest in the representation of memory of World War II? Beidler's (1998) thesis is that the post-war canon was simply a continuation of the production infrastructure established during World War II for a perpetual victory lap of representations that oscillated between portraying the worldwide conflict as "The Good War" and "The Great SNAFU." World War II combat film scholar Jeanine Basinger (1998) notes, while discussing why *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) was so widely embraced, that "it's probably a good idea to remember that World War II did not exactly disappear from American lives. It has remained with us in movie revivals, television shows, books, magazines, documentaries, and the History Channel" (para. 25). Basinger is correct that World War II never disappeared especially if one focuses on the time period of the 1980s into the mid-1990s. That Basinger's own key work, her book *The World War II Combat Film: Anatomy of a Genre*, was released in 1985, speaks to the continued presence of World War II. However, taking a longer post-war, twentieth-century perspective (1946-1999), there were peaks and valleys to American engagement with the war.

By the traditional box-office calculations of mainstream Hollywood, which attempts to reach a youthful demographic, a film such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998)—about a war that ended over fifty years before—shouldn't have been profitable in a pop culture landscape of television shows such as *Friends* (1994-2004), pop music artists such as the Spice Girls (1994-2000), and popular feature film *There's Something About Mary* (1998). Yet, the film ultimately grossed \$216 million domestically (Box Office Mojo), being beaten in *worldwide* sales that year only by Jerry Bruckheimer's disaster film *Armageddon* (1998). Having embraced dialogue and healing in regard to the horrors

of the Holocaust in the early 1990s, the children of the Greatest Generation were now free to re-embrace the Good War mythology.

Why not focus this study only on the *early* 1990s 50th anniversary commemorations? Or on the post-9/11 visual parallels between the War on Terror and World War II? With these questions in mind, there are four fundamental elements to this project summarized here and discussed in greater detail in the research questions section in Chapter 3. I maintain that the late 1990s media representations of World War II are unique and make a contribution to the existing literature on war and memory for the following reasons.

First, the children of the Greatest Generation are members of the Baby Boom generation who were raised on television and chose in the 1990s to commemorate the war of their father's generation via the interplay of mass media. We could use the gender-specific term "sons of the Greatest Generation" here in relation to the four prominent members (Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hanks) and the heavily male-skewed productions produced as their commemoration of World War II. However, daughters have also played a large role as well, even if not as famous a role as their male counterparts. Though Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation* (1998) and the television series *America: The Story of Us* (2010) contains perspectives from women. Brokaw's book featured a section titled Women in Uniform and Out featuring Colonel Mary Hallaren and General Jeanne Holm along with five other women who served in various capacities. Brokaw also included a female perspective in his section on racism titled Shame, and couples in his section Love, Marriage, and Commitment. *America: The Story of Us* featured popular actress Meryl Streep. Of course, Stephen E. Ambrose, who died in



2002 was born in 1936, ten years prior to the Baby Boomer cohort. However, similar to Reagan, who also did not match chronologically with the Greatest Generation, both held an awe and fascination for their accomplishments that showed through their work and shaped our commemoration.

The work produced during the late 1990s and early twenty-first century that has received the most attention predominantly is told by and takes the perspective of an individual male, usually a soldier. It should also be noted that all the members of an entire generation did not *en masse* choose one day in 1998 to suddenly remember their fathers or World War II. These children were a subset of individuals whose reputations and relative celebrity via their media constructions allowed them to be heard – though, as with any successful production of messages, there must be an audience receptive to it, if not unequivocally embracing of it in order to be heard.

The Baby Boomer lifespan (starting between 1946 and 1964 and continuing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century) parallels the growth in media from television through video games to the Internet. This cohort's relationship to media and memory is different than that of Winter's (2006) first generation of memory. Winter's cohort was interested in memory prior to World War I, and the war's devastation required them to find a way to cope with the conflict and remember it. The large number of images produced during World War II allowed for a vast archive to be mined, mimicked, and eventually replayed, especially on television. Although all individuals possess the agency to interpret content in their own ways, which may not be the same as those of strangers roughly their age, for many of the children's generation, World War II and motion images were intertwined. This relationship between war and media prepped the members of the generation who were

interested to receive and embrace the books, films, and television specials offered by Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hanks.

Second, some of the children of the greatest generation may, in fact, have internalized the postmemories described by Hirsch (2008), especially those whose families were ravaged by the Holocaust. It is likely that some of these children internally carry postmemories while being externally absorbed by the imagery and narratives from the post-war set of productions that Beidler (1998) has defined as confirming victory and acting as a canon for remembering the war. In the late 1990s, these children, having reached the peak of their professional competencies, attempted to pass on these memories to the next generation via their own creations. This period of the late 1990s is also situated at the tail end of Winter's (2006) second generation of memory—begun during the 1970s and 1980s—but before the more recent period marked by Winter as having to do with identity politics and testimonies (2006, p. 34). In a sense, this period acts as an echo or last gasp for the twentieth century post-war generation's political (cold war), commemorative (pro-war), and media (mass-media TV networks) formations.

This formation is distinctively male, due in part to the patriarchy of US institutions. Initial war remembrance often comes from its battlefield participants, who, during World War II, would have been male. The remembrance of war at the box office, on television, and at the bookstore also came predominantly from male creators. Historically, a bifurcation occurs between the official “important” events of a war (battlefields and strategy), involving male soldiers and commanders, and the ancillary people and events (the home front, noncombatant victims) that are often coded in language seen as female. So, while these worlds began to intertwine in mainstream media

by the late 1990s, for example in the 1993 film *Schindler's List*, the war experience and the representations commemorating those experiences were still predominantly male, focusing for the most part on battlefield experience. A slight counter argument could be made in regard to Brokaw's book *The Greatest Generation* (1998), due to its focus on both battlefield experiences and the home front, but this strategy has more to do with a nostalgic justification for and veneration of immediate post-war US prosperity than any authentic desire to give voice to persons and experiences previously marginalized.

Third, each of the prominent members of the children's cohort carries with him a certain caché bestowed by scholarly, broadcasting, or "Hollywood" circles for a combination of talent, works produced, and celebrity. Their positions by the late 1990s brought with them an authority or solid reputation that allowed their messages to be heard and promoted. In contrast to Winter's first generation of memory, which he argues did not self-consciously write as part of a group of people born about the same time, Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hanks were creating self-consciously as part of a generation. At the same time, interpersonal relationships among the men developed that buttressed their interconnectedness via their mediated memory creations. This included friendships between Ambrose and Brokaw, Spielberg and Hanks, and working relationships epitomized by each doing his part to turn the National World War II museum from concept to realization.

The density of media saturation by the 1990s began a competitive echo chamber constructed from the then-new 24-hour cable channels, talk radio, and competitive copy-cat magazines, increasingly owned by larger media companies performing more commemorative journalism (Kitch, 1999). The media landscape of the 1990s allowed

commemoration to go beyond Beidler's admittedly imperfect formula of "big war, big book, big film" (1998, p. 86). Additionally, the advancement of three-dimensional computer graphics allowed for the popularity and profitability of first-person shooter (FPS) video games. The first successful FPS was *Wolfenstein 3D*—featuring Nazis, undead mutants, mad scientists, and an Adolf Hitler in robot suit—released on May 5, 1992, for the DOS operating system. The popularity of such games expanded immensely with the release of *Doom* (science fiction/horror with a space marine protagonist and demonic foes) in 1993, *Duke Nukem 3D* and *Quake* in 1996, *Goldeneye 007* in 1997, *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six* and *Half-Life* in 1998, and Spielberg's *Medal of Honor*, which began the trend of a "realistic" World War II setting for FPSs, in 1999. These games, with their simulated environments, brought commemoration and re-enactment from the historic battlefield into the living room and reached younger generations who would not necessarily tune into, say, cable channel A&E's 1995 World War II retrospective.

## V. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation, then, attempts to answer the following research question: How did the children's media creations from the late 1990s attempt to attach what Landsberg (2004) has described as prosthetic memories to their respective audiences, with particular emphasis on the most prominent productions of the cohort: Spielberg's film and video game, Brokaw's book, and Ambrose's books and active involvement in the creation of the National WWII Museum in New Orleans? To answer this question, I performed an interpretative textual analysis with a focus on the construction of prosthetic memories in

a film (*Saving Private Ryan*, 1998), two video games (*Medal of Honor*, 1999; *Call of Duty*, 2003), a book (*The Greatest Generation*, 1998), three museum exhibitions (National World War II Museum, Imperial War Museum North, The New York Historical Society), television episode from *America: The Story of Us*, and the tele-films *Band of Brothers* (2001) and *The Pacific* (2010). The goal is to analyze the construction of prosthetic memories, following Landsberg's (2004) approach to the Holocaust texts *Maus* (1991), *Schindler's List* (1993), *The Pianist* (2002), and the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (1993). Methodologically, Landsberg describes little of her process in her book, spending more time on defining theory and providing examples for it from the media. I strive to ground my present work in discourse analysis, a method explained in chapter three. This dissertation focuses solely on the media creations (speeches, television shows, feature film, books, video games, and museum exhibits) as texts to be analyzed and interpreted and is not performing audience studies. The reason for this is due to the size of this project. I felt it was important to first establish the origins for this interpretation of World War II, the interconnections between prominent creators, and how well the construction and transference of prosthetic memories occur within these texts. Future iterations of this work would attempt to support this conceptual work by eliciting audience feedback and interpretation of these messages.

Furthermore, this dissertation is a memory or narrative of how we remembered World War II during the late 1990s, as invigorated by Reagan in 1984, and how that remembrance has changed in a post 9/11 world. While many other scholars and journalists has introduced similar observations and theories regarding a seemingly disproportionate influence from prominent creators of stories and memoirs about the war,

my current dissertation adds its own unique contribution. This dissertation contributes primarily in three ways: 1) it draws together a copious amount of literature review including collective memory and war, political history, and media representations of World War II, and my own interpretation of key late 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century texts to reveal the common thread and narrative of this dominant, popular, but ultimately narrow remembrance of World War II; 2) it attempts to incorporate a contemporary media-based theory of memory – prosthetic – in order to theoretically ground my narrative and analysis and does so in a new usage of prosthetic memory, not as a positive unifier as Landsberg (2004) envisioned, but as an explanatory tool for the success of Reagan’s excessive emotionality grafted onto the soldier experience; and 3) I attempt to capture the media environment representing World War II narratives by including a variety of media and spaces – including video games and museums – that act as transferential spaces for these memories.

Here are brief rationales for why these works are considered significant to understanding this period of commemoration:

- ☐ Steven Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan* (1998): Probably the most visually significant addition to representation of World War II since *The Longest Day* (1962), it was nominated for eleven Oscars, winning five, including Best Director. Visually introducing a realistic brutality to the war while retaining a sense of the morality and justness of cause, this film’s style has been invoked in many subsequent World War II offerings. It is also significant from a political economic perspective due to Spielberg’s creation of the video game *Medal of Honor* (1999). A game which began a very lucrative, albeit short-term first-person shooter World

War II genre. This film is contrasted against Terrence Malick's 1998 war film *The Thin Red Line*; a film that attempted to situate the war within larger questions of nature, man, and existence.

- Tom Brokaw's book *The Greatest Generation* (1998): Within twenty days of its release, it was No. 1 on *The New York Times* best-seller list, the fastest-selling non-fiction book in Random House's then seventy-three year history. It went through thirty-six printings, and had sold, by March 2000, 3.5 million copies (Evans, 2000). Brokaw, who introduced the term "The Greatest Generation," also wrote *The Greatest Generation Speaks* (1999), *An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from the Greatest Generation* (2001) and hosted NBC D-Day anniversary commemorations, which drew popularity from his high profile as anchor of *The NBC Nightly News* from 1982-2004.
- *Medal of Honor* (1999) and *Call of Duty* (2003): Domestically, the *Medal of Honor* releases set during World War II have sold 12.58 million units, while their *Call of Duty* counterparts have sold 24.1 million (D'Angelo, 2012). Sales figures are much higher when both worldwide grosses and releases with other wars acting as the game's backdrop are factored in. The *Medal of Honor* franchise up to 2007 had sold 39 million units (Electronic Arts, 2007), and the more successful *Call of Duty* franchise surpassed the \$10 billion sales mark in only eleven years (Poeter, 2014). The sheer scale of financial success these near-annual war releases have achieved makes them comparable to, and at times surpasses the feature film industry in terms of individual release income. The demographic of young male players makes the games an important gateway for how certain younger

generations are engaging with and understand World War II. The games provide a medium for camaraderie, brotherhood, and intersection of play, simulation, and re-enactment.

- *Band of Brothers* (2001) and *The Pacific* (2010): Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg renewed their *Saving Private Ryan* collaboration in this telefilm, based on Stephen Ambrose's novel. The series originally aired on HBO from September 9 to November 4, 2001. HBO spent \$125 million to make the series and averaged 6.9 million viewers throughout its run—worse than *The Sopranos*' average but better than *Sex and the City*'s (Beatty, 2001). The highest rating achieved was for the premiere episode, which attracted ten million viewers (Lyman, 2001). When the series was released on DVD, it sold 1.4 million units by March 2003 (Sullivan, 2003), and by 2010 insiders suggested HBO had earned \$250 million in total from *Band of Brothers* DVD sales (Flint, 2010). Focused strongly on the theme of brotherhood, the series retains some of the hellish lessons of Vietnam yet ultimately sanitizes war via the clarity of purpose that comes from fighting with and for your "brothers." The popularity of Ambrose's novels and subsequent adaptations found interest from a post-9/11 audience looking to understand human relationships within the war experience. This success led to a 2010 sequel, *The Pacific*, whose analysis provides a counter to *Band of Brothers*' depictions, including the nine-year gap between productions, the more brutal and Vietnam-inspired depictions of battle, and the involvement of Ambrose's son Hugh who died in 2015 as a continuation of sons and memory.



□ National World War II Museum in New Orleans (opened in 2000), Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, United Kingdom, and The New York Historical Society's WWII & NYC exhibit: The Imperial War Museum North was chosen over the Imperial War Museum London due to the latter's temporary closure for upkeep during the researcher's time in the UK. While museums are not necessarily created by the children of the Greatest Generation, they nonetheless act as institutional authorities of remembrance. Stephen E. Ambrose was heavily involved with beginning the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, which develops themes found within his various published histories of World War II, adaptations, and other writings. The Imperial War Museum North provides an international and potential counter-perspective to the New Orleans museum. The New York Historical Society exhibit (2012-2013) provides another example of US commemoration with an emphasis on the home front.

The inclusion of two museums and an exhibit among the texts examined in this dissertation serves multiple purposes. First, museums inhabit a precarious place in early 21<sup>st</sup> century US society, existing as both institutions of what was previously thought of as high culture and as institutions with a financial obligation to appeal to a broad, popular audience. Museums that are privately funded, especially, "need their customers to approve of the exhibition rather than feel challenged beyond their comfort zone," according to Silke Arnold-de Simine, a senior lecturer in memory, museum and cultural studies at the Birbeck University of London (Simine, 2013, p. 2). Historically, the biggest barrier to increased patronage is a psychological barrier on the part of some patrons who feel disenfranchised and alienated from the discourse presented by the museum (McLean,

1997) and those potential patrons who were more interested in the personal and local (Merriman, 1991). As a result, curators may be influenced by or feel obligation to adopt certain themes from popular texts to satisfy audiences. Meanwhile, some members of the audience may look to the museum as a higher authority or more rigorous institution for authenticity. If a museum is replicating certain popular representations of World War II, audiences may adopt them more readily because they view the museum as a trusted source.

Additionally, and positively, museums are part of a vast digital information ecosystem. Their use of technology, combined with a focus on storytelling to an audience steeped in multimedia, has led to an increase in use of techniques from the worlds of cinema and theater within the museum exhibition space (Griffiths, 2008; Hanak-Lettner, 2011; Stock & Zancanaro, 2007; Witcomb, 2004). Museums also preserve a diversity of voices that were previously marginalized but now can be heard, often presenting a focus on “everyday life, personal stories, and individual biographies” (Simine, 2013, p. 1).

One entry point into understanding the museum today is at the intersection between museum studies and memory studies. Arnold-de Simine analyzes the shift from traditional history museums into spaces of memory (p. 1) in her book *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia* (2013). This shift, she writes, is based on the belief that mere knowledge is not enough to prevent similar future traumas. Rather, today “visitors are asked to identify with other people’s pain, adopt their memories, empathize with their suffering, reenact and work through their traumas” (p. 1). Similarly, NYU professor of performance studies Diana Taylor makes a strong case for this shift in

museums to experiential, performance-based spaces of memory in her book *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003). Her conception of a false binary between the archive (“texts, documents, buildings, bones”) and the repertoire (“spoken language, dance, sports, ritual”) (p. 19) shows that the “writing = memory/knowledge equation is central to Western epistemology” (p. 24). This leads Taylor to assert language and writing’s dominance within the museum or archive has come to “stand for *meaning* itself” (p. 25) but suggests that a shift from written narrative to a performance-based scenario should occur.

In addition to examining World War II-related media in the context of prosthetic memory, this dissertation attempts to explain how each of these texts deals with, “lives next to,” or minimizes the Holocaust. This is accomplished through a narrative and thematic analysis of how these texts:

- ☐ Present or fail to present the Holocaust generally, making it salient, interpreting it, or muting it.
- ☐ Place mentions of the Holocaust in dialogue with Beidler’s (1998) conceptual division between remembering World War II as either “The Good War” (minimizing the Holocaust or only mentioning it as another example of our heroism) versus remembering World War II as “The Great SNAFU” (with the Holocaust more salient and complicating the narrative)
- ☐ Place their themes in context with the early 1990s mainstream engagement with the Holocaust (*e.g.* the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and *Schindler’s List*)

- ☐ Connect to the gendering of the war experience (if Holocaust is minimized, increased gendering, if given equal weight, more inclusive).

## **VI. The Road Map**

The goal of this first chapter was to lay the conceptual groundwork for understanding the remembrance of World War II in the United States. It was also written to establish the parameters of the discussion for this project, explaining that this dissertation will examine texts created to remember the war, with particular emphasis on key texts by the children of The Greatest Generation.

This dissertation is focused on commemoration of and engagement with World War II during the late 1990s through the early twenty-first century. It views the media representations of World War II from this period as unique and as making a contribution to the existing literature on war and memory. This is due to the lifespan of Baby Boomer creators being intertwined with mass media, primarily television, and the way in which Boomers' commemorations reaffirm this relationship; the potential for the development of Hirsch's (2008) postmemory and Landsberg's (2004) prosthetic memory via exposure to Beidler's (1998) post-war media infrastructure; and the existence of a unique media ecosystem during the late 1990s/early 2000s, including computer simulation (*i.e.* video games). This work on collective memory and war is organized around significant time periods that include: World War I, World War II, Holocaust survivors during the 1970s, the remembrance of World War II by US President Reagan during the 1980s, the early 1990s (1990-1995), the late "1990s" (1996-2001), and the post-9/11 world US

This dissertation is broken into three sections. Section I contains, in addition to this introduction (Chapter 1), a literature review (Chapter 2) and a discussion of the research questions and method (Chapter 3). The literature review includes the topics of collective memory; the relationship between memory and narrative; the interconnections between the themes of memory, war, and myth; the transference of memory across generations, remembrance of World War I and II and its use of propaganda, and The Holocaust. The dissertation's research questions and methodology consists of discourse analysis for written narrative and visuals.

Section II contains three chapters: 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 4 covers the late 1970s and through the early to mid-1980s to explain how remembrance of World War II shifted greatly with the rise to power of conservative leaders such as Reagan and Thatcher, and the chapter then covers the early 1990s commemoration of World War II including 1994 television and news magazine commemoration. Chapter 4 also analyzes and compares the US government commemoration D-Day documents from 1984 and 1994. Chapter 5 covers the analysis of late 1990s World War II media representations including *Saving Private Ryan*, *The Greatest Generation*, *The Thin Red Line*, and *Medal of Honor*. Chapter 6 covers the early twenty-first century texts including The National World War II Museum, *Band of Brothers*, *Call of Duty*, WWII & NYC, *America: The Story of Us*, The Imperial War Museum North, and *The Pacific*, and discusses how 9/11 brought new salience to the creations that began in the late 1990s. Chapter 7 serves as a conclusion for the dissertation's arguments. It also looks ahead to the future work regarding our understanding of history and memory.



## **Chapter 2 – Literature review**

“A politics of the archive is our permanent orientation here ... there is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory.”

– Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever* (1996, p. 4)

### **I. Introduction to Collective Memory and Prosthetic Memory**

This chapter reviews the literature on the theory of collective memory and how particular wars are remembered. Beginning with how we understand collective memory, memory as narrative, and the transference of memory across the generations, and myths of war, this literature review then covers how World War I was remembered, how World War II was remembered and the role of propaganda, and the role Holocaust narratives played.

One concern regarding the relatively recent popularity of the study of social memory by academics is what University of Virginia sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick and Touro College sociologist Joyce Robbins call “a concept of collective consciousness curiously disconnected from the actual thought processes of any particular person” (1998, p. 111). Another concern is that if social memory is “defined too broadly, as the pattern-maintenance function of society or as a social reproduction per se, what is not social memory?” (Olick & Robbins, 1998, p. 112). In order to more discretely define social memory for the purposes of this dissertation, and to avoid the broad pitfalls defined by Olick and Robbins (1998), I will stick closely to the collective memory foundational texts of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992) and German Egyptologist and honorary professor of cultural studies at the University of Constance, Jan Assmann (1997) with particular utility gleaned from the latter’s distinction between communicative and cultural memory.

We live our lives embedded in social structures that we may not be aware of, but that nonetheless shape our daily activities. Community is one of those social structures; each of us is a member of some type of community. French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992) connected these social structures to the idea of memory by focusing on the concept of not an individual remembrance but rather a *social* memory. Simply put, individuals as *social groups* or community members are who remember. It is an individual's membership in a social group that provides meaning to their memories. In Halbwachs's original formulation, this membership and memory were constrained by the individual human lifespan. Winter (2006) summarizes such a perspective while also considering nation-states when he writes "Memories are both personal and social, and sites of memory are created not just by nations but primarily by small groups of men and women who do the work of remembrance" (p. 136). The human experience is not an isolated one, so Halbwachs's insight that our experiences most dear to us would also be burned into the memories of the groups closest to us, rings true.

Halbwachs's work also showed that individuals ascribe meaning to their own and others' behavior and act accordingly from it; the origin of such meanings is the communities' conventions (Erll, Nünning, & Young, 2010). One demonstration of such meaning-filled culture would be its commemorative practices (Agulhon, 1981; Ariès, 1974), which can also be interpreted as "mechanisms of political power" (Olick & Robbins, 1998, p. 108). These practices are politically powerful because such commemoration culturally acts as a meaning framework that can be used for both legitimization and explanation of entrenched power systems. Memory can be viewed as a subjective experience involving power dynamics or "who wants whom to remember



what, and why” (Confino, 1997, p. 1393). This work draws upon the type of social memory studies that are interested in the “structures of knowledge or consciousness that shape the thinking of laypersons” (Swidler & Ardit, 1994). The increased focus and significance of such memory studies is rooted in the idea such structures or meaning frameworks, especially those oriented toward the past, operate as salient modes of legitimation (Olick & Robbins, 1998). One institution that can rely on such past-oriented frameworks is the state.

Cautioning against conflating collective memory and national memory, Winter writes “states do not remember; individuals do, in association with other people” (2006, p.4). This warning comes as reaction to some scholars placing intentionality on a state rather than an individual or collection of individuals. This plays on the concept of “imagined communities” articulated by Cornell Professor Emeritus of International Studies Benedict Anderson (1983/1991). He maintained that individuals conceptualize or “think” not only the state itself but what it requires for its maintenance via commemoration. Anderson (1983/1991) analyzed the role of novels and newspapers as technologies that helped to present and imagine the nation. Other scholars (Le Goff, 1992; Leroi-Gourhan, 1993 [1964-1965]) have noted the creation of archives, libraries, and museums by young nations paralleling the rise in commemorative practices and the establishment of national anthems to build national self-consciousness (Mosse, 1990). Wars also supported this shift to mass-produced memory as coins and stamps were imprinted with symbols of the nobility rooted in a myth and history, usually connected to matters of war including “bills of exchange, stamps, and coins all took on the imprint of national nobility expressed through historical or mythical notation, much of it martial in

character” (Winter, 2006). Governments’ establishment of calendars (Cressy, 2004; E. Zerubavel, 1981) worked to both enable and constrain memory.

We remember as members of mnemonic communities as elaborated by Rutgers University sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel (1999), whose traditions include not only what is remembered, but also what can be forgotten, but how it is commemorated (p. 87). These mnemonic traditions regarding what and how we remember are established through our particular thought communities. These particular thought communities contain highly mediated components shaping individual memories (e.g. the Apollo 11 landing, the Cuban Missile Crisis) but also “mnemonic others” who help to block access to certain events from an individual’s past (E. Zerubavel, 1999). This exercise of power can help to define what is or is not retained as memory, an idea tied to Halbwachs’s foundational contribution to the field of collective memory: that we remember as members of social groups.

Assmann, built upon Halbwachs’s intellectual foundation and expanded it, defining social memory as “the connective structure of societies” (1992, p. 293) and distinguishing between communicative and cultural memory. The former pertains to the recent past, while the latter deals with a mythical history or absolute past mediated in texts and performances of various kinds. This cultural memory “is a kind of institution. It is exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms ... they may be transferred from one situation to another and transmitted from one generation to another” (J. Assmann, 2009, pp. 110–11).

Communicative memory, in Assmann’s view, denotes dynamic images of the past handed down within groups between generations, whereas cultural memory refers to the

accumulated residues of the distant past from which a group derives its unity. These dual definitions of memory help to account for the original first-person experience communicated within groups of memory and passed down within them (e.g. those who have served together in wars or their families) as well as the media industrial complex whose releases and representations act as exteriorized, objectified, symbolic forms.

Winter (2006), in discussing the British experience of World War II, writes: “as a result of stories, poems, and especially images, successive generations have inherited a set of icons or metaphors about the war” (p. 60). This point connects with German professor of cultural studies, Aleida Assmann’s (2010) notion regarding the process of canonization within cultural memory. It is built on a small number of normative and formative texts, places, persons, artifacts, and myths, which are meant to be actively circulated and communicated in ever-new presentations and performances. The working memory stores and reproduces the cultural capital of a society that is continuously recycled and reaffirmed. Whatever has made it into the active cultural memory has passed rigorous processes of selection, which secures for certain artifacts a lasting place in the cultural working memory of a society (p. 100).<sup>10</sup>

Landsberg (2004) situates these notions of a culture’s collective memory within both modernity and media. She states that the cinema and other mass cultural technologies have the capacity to create shared social frameworks for people who inhabit,

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<sup>10</sup> Graphing memory onto types of society, Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm and post-colonial historian of Zimbabwe Terence Ranger (1983/1992) distinguish sharply between custom and tradition. Custom is the unproblematic sense of continuity that under girds the gradual, living changes of “traditional” societies. Tradition, in contrast, aims at invariance and is the product of explicit ideologies (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983/1992). Commemorative forms within modernity working in concert with propaganda, would fall under Hobsbawm and Ranger’s concept of tradition.

literally and figuratively, different social spaces, practices, and beliefs. Through these technologies, individuals within and across generations can share memories. Landsberg's (2004) focus is on the affixing of prosthetic memories to viewers who were not a part of the original experience. It is transference of memory from participant, in Landsberg's case studies, *survivor*, to a viewer who possesses no direct connection to the original social group or the members' experience.

Differing from traditional notions of collective memory, prosthetic memory does not emerge from direct lived experience or live social context. Rather, these memories "are taken on and worn by that person through mass cultural technologies of memory" (Landsberg, 2004, p. 19). These memories originate from a mass-mediated experience of some past traumatic event. Columbia University Professor of Journalism Michael Schudson (1992) had engaged with the institutionalization of memory or broadly for him "collective memory" in his book *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past*. Landsberg is deliberate to differentiate her mass cultural technologies of memory from Schudson's, which originate in social structures such as laws, records, statues, and souvenirs.<sup>11</sup>

Landsberg situates prosthetic memories inside the tension between the individual and the collective experience. A person brings her own archive of experience to an "encounter with a mass cultural representation of the past" (2004, p. 19) and from this interaction develop "privately felt public memories" (2004, p. 19). Landsberg's focus in

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<sup>11</sup> Schudson's book *Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past* (1992) focuses on societies' social practices and cultural forms used to institutionalize memory. Popular entertainment media and newspaper and television news comprise a large chunk of collective memory for Schudson. In one way, Schudson somewhat artificially detaches these mass cultural technologies from private memory. Yet, he also is much broader than Landsberg, including "career, myth, reform, celebrity, anniversary, reputation, language, metaphor, expectations, and pedagogical lessons" (1992, p. 5).

regards to prosthetic memory is in the experiential quality and its ramifications for both individual subjectivity and political consciousness. There are four reasons given by Landsberg for why she identifies this type of memory as prosthetic. First, these memories are not a natural product of lived experience. Second, like an artificial limb, these memories are worn; they are sensuous memories produced by the experience of mass-mediated representations. Third, this label signals their interchangeability and exchangeability and underscores their commodified form. Fourth, it labels their usefulness for Landsberg's optimistic desire for these memories to feel real and may be helpful to produce empathy and social responsibility on future generations.

In her fourth chapter of *Prosthetic Memory* (2004), Landsberg uses Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* (1987), the films *Schindler's List* (1998), and *The Pianist* (2002), and the US Holocaust Museum (opened 1993) as case studies for the use of prosthetic memory to transmit Holocaust memories. The Holocaust as an event complicates memory due to the paucity of survivors, as memory is typically anchored to the body as lived experience. Landsberg sees *Maus* (1987) as a prosthetic text, through the character of Artie and his father, how a second generation "can come to own the experiences of their parents, experiences through which they themselves did not live" (2004, p. 116). Landsberg studies the strategies these texts employ to transmit these memories or "burn-in" these memories in order to circumvent these obstacles of few survivors left, Holocaust revisionism, and the lack of specific rituals.

So, Landsberg looks to mass cultural technologies that can transmit and produce memories into individuals who did not experience the event first hand. These technologies construct transference spaces where audiences "enter into experiential

relationships to events” (p. 113) they did not live through themselves. These spaces provide “sensually immersed knowledge” or affect (p. 113). In the case of *Maus* (1987) Artie and his father in certain sequences are neither in Poland or New York, but in a space in between – a transferential space. The space created by the mass media construction is artificial (panel drawn in a comic book, scene in a film, exhibit at a museum), but the experience for the audience member can be quite real and powerful. Landsberg uses the end of the film *Schindler’s List* (1993) when the survivor physically touches the actor portraying the survivor, to show memory could transfer across the “temporal and geographic chasms” (2004, p.111). Landsberg argues the symbolic epitome of the Holocaust – Auschwitz – cannot be conveyed through narrative only, but affectively and viscerally (2004, p. 121).

The Holocaust needs the use of prosthetic memory, according to Landsberg, due to the lack of survivors as well as a lack of “specific memory practices, traditions, and rituals that might work to ground the event” (2004, p. 112). This differs from the traditional, nationalistic US remembrance of World War II that focuses on those who served in the military. There have been plenty of memory practices, traditions, and rituals for the veteran. As other memory scholars of World War II (Basinger, 1986; Beidler, 1998; Wood Jr., 2006; Bodnar, 2010; Ramsay, 2015) have shown, there are also a large archive of visual productions that exist to remember World War II, along with these rituals including anniversaries and holidays. So, in a way, the type of conservative, nationalistic, emotionally-based remembrance focused primarily on the US World War II soldiers begun by Reagan in 1984 is, in a sense, redundant or another example of the excesses associated with the 1980s. As per Landsberg, a prosthetic memory is needed for

the Holocaust due to its lack of survivors; whereas my interpretation of Reagan, Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hank's remembrance as another form of prosthetic memory is an extra, unnecessary memory work performed and affixed to the younger generation.

Columbia University professor of English and Comparative Literature Marianne Hirsch, studies a phenomenon similar to prosthetic memory she calls postmemory. Hirsch's postmemory focuses on the children or generation after a traumatic event who "remember" via the stories, images, and behaviors from those they grew up with. These children take on the traumatic memories of their parents as their own. Hirsch is interested in case studies within social groups, specifically families that the field of collective memory traditionally studies. Landsberg, in contrast, is engaging with the mediated ecosystem that surrounds individuals and through which unrelated individuals can come to affix prosthetic memories to themselves that were not their own.

## **II. Memory as Narrative**

Individuals "understand" history through their interpretative capacity to create meaning, often through a narrative framework. Rutgers University collective memory scholar Yael Zerubavel holds that memories are structured by a narrative frame that provides coherence and ultimately meaning to our recollections (1995). If narrative is understood as a mediation, and "experience" is understood to be embedded within narrative frames, then there is no primal, unmediated experience we can uncover (Olick

& Robbins, 1998). Even participants' accounts themselves can be understood as constructed narratives.<sup>12</sup>

Yael Zerubavel's (1995) concept of master commemorative narratives is a strategy nationalist movements use to highlight "their members' common past and legitimizes their aspiration for a shared destiny" (p. 214). Zerubavel's focus in discussing master commemorative narratives is to reveal contemporary attempts to connect nations to "origins" by those in power in order to legitimize their choices and inspire a populace. Commemoration, she maintains, is a ritual that contributes in the construction of a master commemorative narrative that structures our collective memory. This basic storyline reduces complex historical events to plot structures and establishes a baseline of circulated images that help to prop up a particular ideology. Furthermore, it is the selection of turning points within these plots that highlight certain ideological principles. These principles act as structures for these master commemorative narratives as they highlight a transition between distinct periods (Y. Zerubavel, 1995).

Public forms of remembering, of which master commemorative narratives are one form, are combinations of rhetoric and performance, according to Syracuse Professor of Communication and Rhetoric Kendall Phillips (2004). Phillips (2004) sees these public forms as mixtures of what actually occurred and a mythical view about what was. Indiana University historian, John Bodnar (2010), interpreting Phillips's (2004) work, concludes then that this real and mythical hybrid was formed from a desire to both remember and

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<sup>12</sup> Winter (2006) complicates this idea when he discusses the representations of World War I German soldier letters. These letters were framed by a narrative privileging what was thought of as a "direct, unvarnished experience" (p. 110). So, in this instance the narrative was direct, primal soldier experience. Yet, this too is actually a construction.



forget. Narratives can accomplish both these desires through accurate recording as well as outright omission. Focusing on narratives as a mechanism for remembering, Bodnar differentiates between three types: traditional, critical, and humanitarian. The narrative based on tradition cast World War II not as a grand tragedy but rather a unique opportunity for the US to achieve dominance and “reaffirm their innate ... moral courage and bravery” (Bodnar, 2010, p. 4). This narrative’s consistent ambassador was *Time* magazine publisher Henry Luce.<sup>13</sup> During the 1990s, this traditional narrative about American decency and heroic individualism dominated US commemoration in the public sphere (Bodnar, 2010, p. 200). These traditional narratives focused on:

extraordinary patriots who protected their nation out of an inherent sense of love and duty. The land of the free increasingly became known as the home of the brave; acts of killing and dying were transformed into heroic deeds and cherished memories. (Bodnar, 2010, p. 8)

There are other types of narratives, however. The critical narrative is an attempt to undercut the myths and make salient the legacy of wicked deeds, complaints, and counter-narratives. The humanistic narrative works in a similar fashion to the critical narrative in that they both deflate the traditional attempts to valorize the national effort and “enhance its sense of privilege” (Bodnar, 2010, p. 7). The humanistic narrative observes a tendency to create a division between ourselves and other human beings, even though ultimately we share the world with one another. Bodnar (2010), in explaining our sometimes problematic embrace of the humanistic narrative, notes it took more than forty years for the US to ratify the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

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<sup>13</sup> Bodnar cites Luce’s 1941 essay “The American Century,” post-war private writings, and 1965 notes for a never published book to support his statement that Luce was an ambassador for “the belief that World War II was a heroic episode in American history” (2010, p. 5).

Narrative is an important medium through which memory is conveyed. As discussed in this section, various types of narrative are utilized to construct connections between the present and the past; some seamless and others deliberately disruptive. Narratives are one form of cultural artifacts that can be used to connect generations and transfer memory beyond the individual lifespan.

### **III. Transference of Memory between Generations**

Halbwachs defined social memory as one produced within an average lifespan or shorter period and viewed its development as demarcated by “irregular and uncertain boundaries,” thus setting up the potential for unique generational recollection. However, an overlap across generations that are not entirely discrete can be produced by the canonization of certain cultural artifacts (A. Assmann, 2010), forms of media acting as major sites of social memory (E. Zerubavel, 1999), our own families acting as primary socializing “thought communities” (E. Zerubavel, 1999), and the possibility for “postmemory” (Hirsch, 2008) for those of a second generation who internalize the traumatic memory of their forbears’ trauma as their own.

At the same time, if a sociobiographical memory exists for particular groups (E. Zerubavel, 1999), then it helps to explain why contemporary individuals feel various emotions regarding past events occurring to a group long before we ever joined their ranks. Sociobiographical memory is the “existential fusion of one’s own biography with the history of the groups or communities to which one belongs” (E. Zerubavel, 1999, p. 91). Finally, certain material forms of memory and identity – such as statuary, architecture, neighborhood landmarks – change gradually relative to generations (Halbwachs, 1938) and, too, can overlap across generations. These physical markers of a

previous group's environment can imprint upon daily flows, and the circulation of bodies, and can act as cathedrals of authority for new residents with no previous ties to the past.

Winter (2006) provides an alternative explanatory framework to Landsberg (2004) regarding the effect that 1990s World War II cinema has on audiences. Where Landsberg (2004) focuses on the transference of prosthetic memory, Winter (2006) views the films as a way to place family stories and collective memory regarding war participation into a larger and more significant world context. The films' attractiveness during the late 1990s and early 2000s derives from the stories' ability to link together grandparents' accomplishments and grandchildren's curiosity "at times over the heads of the troublesome generation of parents in the middle" (Winter, 2006, p. 40). Of course, as the grandparents' generation passes on, this specific utility of these films as triggering family discussions would diminish, if not disappear altogether.

Each new generation possesses the agency to interpret or re-interpret canonical cultural artifacts, salient media representations, and material forms of memory in their own or possibly alternative manner. Winter writes that the film *Saving Private Ryan* evokes different memories from World War II veterans, Vietnam War veterans, and younger people who all may be in the audience watching. From this perspective, Winter (2006) concludes: "then it is impossible to conclude that the film evokes memories in their grandchildren in any way comparable to those the grandparents have" (p. 184). Though, regarding those younger viewers, Winter remarks they will nonetheless "respond to the film through the stories they have heard from their elders and from many other sources, including other films (2006, p. 184).

This dissertation qualifies this statement slightly due to the presence of favored or canonical narrative representations that cut across generations, even though these same texts may be interpreted differently by generations due to unique contexts, reference points, and individual agency. It does seem unlikely, however, that a grandchild who has heard a grandparent's stories of the Greatest Generation and viewed canonical films in this genre, would generate a unique or contradictory perspective if a positive relationship exists between grandparent and grandchild. Here an attempt to construct prosthetic memories that the grandchildren's generation can affix to themselves, especially after the passing of their grandparents, helps to explain this paralleling of memory. Also, there were other members of the sons' generation (Boomers) who were never disillusioned. It is this faction who in the 1990s took it upon themselves to reaffirm their fathers' accomplishments at a mythic scale.

#### **IV. Myths of War**

Multiple scholars have conceptualized the interconnection between collective memory, narrative and myth. For Jan Assmann (1997) the collective level of narrative in the organization of memory (the stories a group or culture lives by) is called myth. Collective memory has the ability to "transform historical events into political myths that function as a lens through which group members perceive the present and prepare for the future" (Y. Zerubavel, 1995, p. 9). A myth about the experience of war according to the late University of Wisconsin historian, George Mosse (1990), sees it as a meaningful and even sacred event built upon a desire for meaning, longing for camaraderie, exceptionality, and personal and national regeneration. Intertwined with nation-building,

these myths provide a deep pseudo-religious feeling for their citizenry, offering up ready-made saints and martyrs, places to worship, and a heritage to emulate.

Mosse (1990) argues that World War I veterans actively witnessed the transformation and perceived re-possession of their experience in the war turned into myth. They felt, as symbolized by veteran R.H. Mottram returning to Flanders in the late 1920s, that “our war, the war that seemed the special possession of those of us who are growing middle-aged, is being turned by time and change into something fabulous, misunderstood, and made romantic by distance” (Mosse, 1990, p. 155). These veterans watched as meaningful firsthand personal experience as a member of a particular group was co-opted and transformed by others via mythology and commemoration: “the cult of the fallen soldier became a centerpiece of the religion of nationalism after the war [World War I]” (Mosse, 1990, p. 7).

The use of propaganda and censorship during World War II is the beginning of active mythmaking at the beginning of a conflict, rather than only after the fact, making salient only those positive aspects of the war according to Northern Kentucky University Emeritus Professor of History Michael C.C. Adams (1994). During the 1940s and 1950s, the focus of collective war narratives was on stories of World War II heroes who resisted Nazis and their allies, that even when based in fact, frequently were scaled up to mythic proportions (Winter 2006). Oberlin professor of History Clayton R. Koppes, and University of Missouri – Kansas City emeritus professor of Communication Gregory D. Black, in their book *Hollywood Goes to War* (1987) write World War II-era films fused two existing US myths. The first was viewing the world as a binary between free and enslaved. This set up the world as inhabited by extreme evil and the righteous. The

expectation was that the righteous would continue the fight globally, as we later saw in the Cold War geo-political structure. The second myth was that of regeneration via war. Begun from the American Indian wars of the nineteenth century, the belief was “the different races and classes that divided American society might restore their harmony through a sanctified and regenerative act of violence” (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. 325). The Hollywood vision was that the war produced unity regardless of significant details such as the internment of Japanese Americans.

This heroic idealization was also politically useful, making salient Resistance efforts in countries that were occupied or that had collaborated (Winter, 2006, p. 27). The children of the Greatest Generation were growing up during a time that included these stories, which had the potential to greatly influence their already mythical interpretation of their fathers’ accomplishments. Even during World War I, Mosse (1990) mentions the overuse of the term “manliness” to denote the seriousness of battle. This theme of constructing masculinity is featured throughout World War II narratives primarily through the father/son dynamic, war as proper rite of passage from boyhood to manhood, and issues of brotherhood and camaraderie on the battlefield. Though this father-son dynamic is an important one for understanding the mythologizing of World War II, it alone doesn’t explain how over time, as Adams (1994) writes, this “necessary war was transformed into The Good War, the best war the country ever had” (p. xiii).

As domestic and international problems mounted over the ensuing decades, World War II for the US increasingly was seen as a set of golden years, “an idyllic period when everything was simpler and a can-do generation of Americans solved the world’s problems” (Adams, 1994, p. xiii). This period represents not only tangible

accomplishments but also abstract descriptors the American people prefer to wrap themselves within: national strength, collective courage, and idealism (Adams, 1994, p. 1). This mythology reduced a complex, problematic event “full of nuance and debatable meaning” (Adams, 1994, p. 2) to a relatively simple remembrance of a “Good War.”

Adams (1994) succinctly summarizes the popular US understanding of The Good War

Myth:

The original villains were the Nazis and the Fascists, many of whom obligingly dressed in black. They bullied the weak-willed democratic politicians who tried to buy them off, which gave us the word appeasement as a catchall term of contempt for anyone who suggests a diplomatic solution to potential international aggression. The bad guys then took the first rounds, driving opponent after opponent out of the fighting. The Americans gave material aid to their cousins, the British, who finally fought pluckily with their backs to the wall, until the United States was brought into the fighting by the treacherous Japanese, who crippled the Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor. For a while, it looked grim all over, but then the Allies fought back, their victories culminating in the unconditional surrender of all enemy nations, who were then made over in our image. America emerged from the war strong, united, prosperous, and the unrivaled and admired leader of the free world. (p. 2)

Adams notes that in 1942 Americans actually saw the Pacific, colored by revenge and racism, rather than Hitler, as the greater threat, according to polls from that time and that those from the World War II generation often situate the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the beginning of the Atomic Age rather than the final act of The Good War (Adams, 1994, p. 6).

The volunteer soldiers, who during World War I helped spread the Myth of the War Experience (Mosse, 1990) were silenced during the second as “artistic and literary expression were tightly controlled” (Mosse, 1990, p. 207) by both democratic and fascist nations. This myth hinged on an ideal of national and personal regeneration and perpetuated through individual soldier expressions. By World War II, the imagery and

mythology was propagated by institutions rather than individuals, such as the soldiers whose choice was literary remembrance at the end of World War I.

This chapter up to this point has provided an introduction to, and overview of, the relevant literature pertaining to collective memory, prosthetic memory and how it contrasts to postmemory, and the concepts of narrative, the transference of memory between generations, and myth. Now this literature review, having introduced fundamental collective memory concepts necessary to investigating the 1990s remembrance of World War II, now shifts its focus to literature relevant to the remembrance of other wars and the role of propaganda.

## V. US Memory of World War I

“Yet man keeps remembering, bearing witness to the experience of war; critical studies have reminded us that it is, at the same time a necessity, an obsession, and a responsibility.” (Lamberti & Fortunati, 2009, p. 115)

War literature scholar Steven Trout, in his book *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance* (2010) states the impetus for the book was the recognition that while the study of collective memories of other wars (the Civil War, World War II, and Vietnam) has become “a cottage industry” (p. 1), there has been a dearth of material covering World War I. However, in terms of history, Jay Winter and Antoine Prost’s survey of *The Great War in History* counts “more than 50,000 titles ... in the library of the Bibliotheque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine in Paris” (2005, p. 1) devoted to the subject. Furthermore, between 1983 and 1998 over one-thousand new books on the war in French were produced, one-hundred of which were published in 1998 alone (Winter and Prost, 2005, p. 1). Cultural historian George



Mosse's *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (1990) is one of those few works that engages in the memory of World War I. While the focus of this dissertation is World War II, it is important to cover relevant literature pertaining to World War I because the images and practices of World War I greatly influenced future remembrance of subsequent wars (Winter, 2006).

According to Mosse (1990), World War I's new scale of death required more labor to "mask and transcend" the horrors than any war before (p. 4). As Mosse (1990) writes, World War I introduced "organized mass death" (p. 3) and resulted in double the amount of deaths than in all previous wars between 1790 and 1914 combined. Costing the lives of approximately sixteen million human beings, World War I saw multiple nations engage in the first modernized warfare utilizing armored vehicles, rudimentary tanks, airplanes, submarines, mustard gas, barbed wire, howitzers, and machine guns. Mosse posits that in order to psychologically deal with the trauma from such mass death, society both obscured it through a trivialization via consumables as well as transcended it through the use of abstract imagery and belief systems to provide some sort of meaning. Translating the awesome destructive experience of World War I into somewhat disposable commemorative material objects allowed individuals an avenue for control over their memories by dealing with the war experience at a more manageable scale.

It was a majority of male authorship and dialogue among combatants that privileged the direct experience that shaped World War I collective memory; it was a conversation between and among combatants. This was supplemented by recollections and histories originating from positions of power from both political and military figures (Winter & Prost, 2005, p. 174). National World War I Museum librarian Lisa Budreau

(2009) shows both women's groups such as the Gold Star Mothers and veterans associations such as the American Legion became active in the immediate post-war era to commemorate and bury those who had been lost. So, elements of civil society in the form of the American Legion and Gold Star Mothers were active agents of memory. A point supported by Winter and Prost (2005), who assign responsibility for forming "the language of commemorative practices" on "political leaders, anciens combattants ... and in the US the conservative American Legion" (p. 173).

Canadian historian Modris Eksteins (1994) speaks of immediate post-World War I remembering as "The Great War or Great Nothing?" (p. 201). Eksteins (1994) lists individuals who had lived through World War I and felt it served as a line of demarcation between their lives before and after the conflict. The difference is as stark as day and night, he argues. The pre-war life is described as one filled with confidence and security, while the post-war delivered "cynicism, irony, disrespect, and political, economic, and moral turmoil" (Eksteins, 1994, p. 201). Author T.S. Eliot called the war insignificant; others described it as a huge exercise in futility; and the coming of World War II with its new level of devastation made World War I's horrors seem "primitive and unsophisticated" (Eksteins, 1994, p. 203).

Others, however, believed the post-war world was different but for the better (Mosse, 1990). The war was seen as "a product of systemic corruption ... and as an opportunity for renewal" (Eksteins, 1994, p. 202). Still others, from both ends of the political spectrum, looked upon the experience as an intensely spiritual one. The US sought "a fresh vocabulary for mediating grief" (Budreau, 2009, p. 2), one that was

contemporary rather than rooted in the old European practices embodied in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

At the same time, World War I occurred during an age of technology that allowed for better diffusion of images via forms of mass media than had previously been possible. Prior to World War I the medium of film was not yet developed enough to play a significant role in the US government's film program. By the end of the war, the situation had changed. According to French scholar Pierre Sorlin, once *Birth of a Nation* (1915) had focused on conflict, "the close relationship between war and cinema was embedded in the memory of individuals" (1999, p. 6). During World War I, The Signal Corps Photographic Section employed almost six hundred men, and its cameramen produced nearly one million feet of film in Europe and the US. The Committee on Public Information (CPI), the US government's official World War I propaganda division, the agency produced over sixty government motion pictures (Ward, 1985, p. 1), including a film to promote enthusiasm among African Americans to participate as soldiers in the US Army (Rollins & O'Connor, 1997, p. 6). Other US propaganda releases included *The Beast of Berlin* (1918) and *My Four Years in Germany* (1918) (Koppes & Black, 2000, p. 49). The British government hired successful US film director D.W. Griffith to make the propaganda film *Hearts of the World* (1918) also about World War I.

In their overview of Hollywood's version of World War I, Rollins and O'Connor (1997) concur that "two contradictory ways of remembering" exist – the promotion of "the heroic ... unselfish service of our fighting men" and the argument that "the war needlessly sacrificed the youth of a generation" (p. 2).<sup>14</sup> Films such as *The Big Parade*

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<sup>14</sup> The heroic version was observed by Rollins and O'Connor (1997) on August 30, 1993, as they attended the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I to observe and interview the nearly one

(1925), the first financially successful post-war film, *Wings* (1927), and *What Price Glory?* (1927) helped to build the heroic perspective or remembrance of World War I in spite of the fact that the director of *The Big Parade* (1925), King Vidor, described it as an anti-war film (Rollins & O'Connor, 1997, p. 3). On the other side of remembrance, which looked upon the war as a Great Nothing and a needless loss of life, there was the British documentary / propaganda film *The Battle of the Somme* released in summer of 1917. This film was immensely popular in Britain; it is noted for enticing middle-class audiences to attend the cinema, but it nonetheless showed the brutalities of war. The exhibition of such images led literary scholar and cultural critic Paul Fussell (1975) to write that by this time the war had become “a hideous embarrassment to the prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for a century. It reversed the Idea of Progress” (p. 8). Melior is the Latin word for “better.” The myth was prevalent in Europe during the early twentieth century that human beings had an inherent tendency toward progress.

The new medium of films according to French scholar Pierre Sorlin (1999) “showed people what they must know; they contributed in moulding their vision and instructing them in how to behave in war” (p. 6). World War I was the first to be filmed for large national audiences. Sorlin believes newsreels constructed the “accepted version” (p. 13) of the war.

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hundred veterans. The event was held near Chicago at a World War I museum built on the estate of World War I veteran and millionaire *Chicago Tribune* publisher Robert McCormick a member of Gen. John Jay Pershing's staff and the First Army Division (Rollins & O'Connor, 1997, pp. 1, 9). The theme for the party was “A Grateful Nation DOES Remember” (Rollins & O'Connor, 1997, p. 2).

The image of trench warfare helped determine the perception of World War I for witnesses but also a medium through which future generations understood it, according to Mosse. The trench experience or representation of that experience helps to build out the commonality required of a mnemonic community's collective memory. Eviatar Zerubavel (1999) has established that a mnemonic community's collective memory differs from simply the aggregate of the members' personal recollections, because there must be some commonality among remembrances. So, media representations of these events fill in the gaps for these recollections and provided at least a limited form of commonality in establishing a collective memory.

The cult of the fallen soldier acted as a reminder of the both the glories and challenges of World War I, even afterwards during peacetime. Mosse's (1990) idea of the "Myth of the War Experience," states that the World War I was looked back upon as both a meaningful and sacred event, a myth that, especially in defeated nations, was desperately needed to both mask the war and legitimate the war experience, including the ideal "of personal and national regeneration which, so it was said, only war could provide" (p. 16).

Rollins and O'Connor describe the erection of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington on November 11, 1921, as evidence of the heroic remembrance, especially in the words of then-Secretary of War Newton D. Baker. Baker gives meaning to the brutality of World War I by declaring: "In the long run of history, the names of individuals fade, but the great movements which have been inspired and defended by the mass of virtue, which we call the national spirit, remain as solid achievements and mark the advance which civilization attains (Veterans of World War I)" (Rollins & O'Connor,

1997, p. 4). Two years later, the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) was established by the US government to administer, operate, and maintain US cemeteries, memorials, and monuments both inside and outside the US. Gen. John Jay Pershing was the first chairman of the ABMC, and the agency cares for World War I's Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial in France, Brookwood American Cemetery and Memorial in the UK, and World War II's Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in France, among twenty-two other total sites.

Prominent pieces of literature engaging with the memory of and repercussions of World War I included Dos Passos's *One Man Initiation* (1920) and *Three Soldiers* (1922), Cummings' *The Enormous Room* (1922), and Hemingway's short stories collected in *In Our Time* between 1923 and 1924 and *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). World War I Poet and essayist T.S. Eliot was described in *The New York Times* obituary dated January 5, 1965, as having "caught and expressed in his verse the sense of a doomed world, of fragmentation, of a wasteland of the spirit that moved the generation after the war ... a generation that felt tricked by the politicians, felt that the enormous bloodletting of World War I had been a fraud and saw in the disintegrating Europe of their time the symbol of their own lives." Ernest Hemingway contributed *A Farewell to Arms* (1929); a novel about a love story with the backdrop of World War I featuring cynical soldiers and drawing upon Hemingway's two months of service as an ambulance driver in Italy. The 1929 novel by German author Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, discussed the brutality and mental anguish experienced by German soldiers and subsequent difficult reintegration to civilian life after. Remarque's novel was adapted into

the feature film version of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930). F. Scott Fitzgerald contributed *Tender is the Night* (1934).

During the 1920s there was an intensity of memorializing of the World War I dead, literature that revisited the wartime experience, and open debates over what was the true memory of the war since this memory from the start was “fractured and unsettled” (Trout, 2010, p. 2). Trout (2010), however, asserts that we often mistake the small but substantial literary creations of the supposed Lost Generation as the entire puzzle to remembering World War I when in fact it was only one piece. The term *Lost Generation* originated from American author Gertrude Stein, who overheard a French mechanic using the phrase. She reiterated the phrase to her friend and protégé Ernest Hemingway, telling him that was what he and his cohort were: a lost generation. Hemingway later used the phrase in his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*. Hemingway, along with other artists working at the time, having lived through the World War I began to collectively be known by this descriptor.

Trout notes that reactions to John Dos Passos’s 1921 novel *Three Soldiers*, Willa Cather’s 1922 novel *One of Ours*, and Laurence Stallings’s 1933 book of mockingly captioned photographs, *The First World War*, included both pro and anti-public sentiment regarding their fidelity to the memory of the war (2010, pgs. 3-4). Noting literary critic Keith Gandall’s work, he writes that authors such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald may more aptly be described not as members of a Lost Generation but rather as a generation that lost out. Only Hemingway experienced wartime violence directly – though as a noncombatant. Gandall asserts these writers then

were not traumatized so much by wartime violence as by certain war envy due to their inability to achieve war records worthy of “real men” as dictated by the times.

Trout writes that once we push aside this Lost Generation myth, we see a variety of perspectives on the war during the 1920s and 1930s. In the British remembrance of World War I in the late 1920s, he writes, there began *The Myth of the War*, whose salient themes were waste and futility. Trout (2010) argues that this same time period in the US was marked by a continued ambivalence toward the World War I experience followed by a drift toward isolationism.

A young Dwight D. Eisenhower is seen by Trout (2010) as a member of Winter’s (2006) first generation of memory. The then Major Eisenhower worked between 1927 and 1929 on *A Guide to the American Battlefields in Europe* (1927) and its successor, *American Armies and Battlefields in Europe* (1938). Trout uses this isolated example to make the case that commemoration for World War I was actually quite frenetic during the 1920s and 1930s and not forgotten as many assume and also to underscore that a major military figure of World War II understood intimately the “urgencies that drive military commemoration” (p. xvi) due to his experiences cataloging US actions during World War I.

While the amount of content devoted to remembrance of World War I, especially during the twenty years between world wars, pales in comparison to that devoted to World War II, it is nonetheless important because it shaped how we remembered subsequent wars, beginning with World War II. Mass media, though limited in platform, allowed for a greater diffusion of images about World War I, while the scale of mass death required participants to deal with it via both sacredness and trivialization. These



participants comprised the first generation of memory, yet memory of World War I was fractured and unsettled from the beginning. The remembrance of a Lost Generation dominates the perspective on this total war that was World War I, and ultimately states benefited from citizens' efforts to actively construct a national narrative around the event.

## **VI. US Propaganda during World War I and World War II**

### **World War I**

The words of Thomas Paine, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Jefferson attempted to inflame the passions for revolution while both sides of the US Civil War sold their perspectives with, at times, a loose connection to facts. However, World War I<sup>15</sup> was the first time propaganda became a government sanctioned, essential element of fighting a war, according to historian Stewart Halsey Ross (1996).

Harold Lasswell (1971/1927), in his study *Propaganda Technique in World War I* defines propaganda as “the control of opinion by significant symbols ... by stories, rumours, reports, pictures and other forms of social communication” (1971/1927, p. 9). Propaganda, along with economic and military pressures, is listed by Lasswell as the chief implements against a belligerent enemy. The “why” for the increased use of propaganda during World War I is explained as the difference between military and civilian mindsets.

The unity of civilians is “achieved by the repetition of ideas rather than [military] movements” and “the civilian mind is standardized by news and not by drills” (Lasswell,

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<sup>15</sup> This dissertation refers to the conflict from July 28, 1914, to November 11, 1918, as World War I, though it is just as often referred to as The Great War.

1971/1927, p. 11). Lasswell (1971/1927) notes, peace is “the normal state of society ... not war” (p. 12) some believing war itself is something to be condemned. In order to combat this mindset, the author states “propaganda is the war of ideas on ideas” (Lasswell, 1971/1927, p. 12).

On September 9, 1914, *The New York Times* published an editorial regarding the new connection between government, propaganda, and war that was both very accurate and completely missed the target. *The New York Times* wrote that the war in Europe should be referred to as “the first press agents’ war” yet felt that “no harm should come from this, as the good sense of the American people will compel the preservation of strict neutrality to the end” (Ross, 1996, p. 2). Both Britain and Germany employed propaganda to either woo – in the case of Britain – the US to enter the fray or to stay neutral – as Germany wished – prior to the US’s entry into the conflict.

The US secretaries of war, state and the Navy sent President Woodrow Wilson a letter on April 13, 1917, requesting the establishment of a Committee on Public Information (CPI), according to Larry Wayne Ward, in his book *The Motion Picture Goes to War: The U.S. Government Film Effort During World War I* (1985). The president initiated the proposal via Executive Order 2594, and journalist George Creel was appointed the committee’s civilian chairman. Creel conceptualized the committee not just as a censorship board but one that could help build unity and morale and communicate policy. The infrastructure of the CPI was so vast by the end of World War I that it could deliver a message “through virtually every existing communications channel” (Ward, 1985, p. 46).

The primary objective of CPI was to unify the US via justification of its involvement in the European theater of war. During this flurry of activity via managed news, booklets, posters, advertisements, and films, the government's strategy toward "hyphenated" German-Americans, pacifists, and war protesters" (Ross, 1996, p. 3) was to distrust, despise, jail, and export them. However, it was in the area of publicity that its chairman, Creel, showed his talents. According to Ward (1985), CPI was divided into two sections: Foreign and Domestic propaganda, and due to the speed at which CPI was created and organized, the birth was at times messy, as divisions were begun, divided, and stopped – with the Divisions of Films and Pictures not begun until September 25, 1917 (p. 48). It took these divisions almost a full year after the US entered World War I to listen to various pitches from potential stakeholders and contributors before they found the best way for the government to utilize film in the war effort. Eventually, silent pictures about the war resembled what US citizens would later see during World War II. As historian George Roeder Jr. notes "a typical CPI silent-film caption read, "Along the roads the heroes wounded in the fight move back – their only sorrow that they can fight no longer" (1993, p. 8). The editing and choice of text censoring the horror of the war experience. During this era Americans saw for the first time J.M. Flagg's famous Uncle Sam poster in movie theater lobbies, urging them to enlist.

Major players in the US film industry, under the leadership of National Association of the Motion Picture Industry (NAMPI) president William Brady, formed the War Cooperation Committee of the Motion Picture Industry in late May, early June 1917, acting as the crucial link between the US government and the film industry. The more salient of the committee's contributions included vast support for war bond drives

and the use of major film stars such as Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford to both sell bonds and also appear in promotional films. Almost all of the government-created CPI films were newsreels or newsreel compilations whose purpose was America's glorification and documentation of its mobilization of military forces.

Propaganda images also came from the US Army Signal Corps, established in 1860 with a primary responsibility for military communications. On July 21, 1917, the secretary of war tasked the Corps with creating a Pictorial History of the War of 1917 through still photographs and motion pictures (Ward, 1985, p. 76). While the Corps had used still photography during the US Civil War, it was inexperienced with motion picture photography. Their filming during World War I was originally conceptualized as support for reconnaissance and artillery spotting. Ward (1985) found no justification for a switch to propaganda in the Corps own records but shows *The New York Times* mentioning the Corps' desire for a filmed history of the war as "following in the example of France and Great Britain" (p. 76). Additionally, such footage would have been useful for training purposes. Most of the Signal Corps films were shot during World War I's closing days. The Corps processed an average of just under fifty thousand feet of film per month in 1918 (Ward, 1985, p. 84).

Distribution of war films from CPI was not a smooth operation, however. While it had wrestled control away from the Allied Film producers and the American Red Cross, when CPI attempted to offer the footage to private newsreel companies for exhibition, feeling it had cornered the war footage supply market, the plan fell apart because Universal refused to cooperate (Ward, 1985, p. 106). Feature-length CPI films also were a hard sell. Distributors were more comfortable with short newsreels that did not interrupt

their own full-length features. CPI's head of its division of films, Charles Hart, established a two-pronged strategy: "pre-release" screenings packed with publicity, star-power, and local critic involvement and getting CPI films into the hands of commercial distributors, complete with contests and incentives to get theaters exhibiting CPI full-length films. Ward (1985) cites Creel as having estimated the result of this stratagem was that CPI films played in forty percent of the twelve thousand US motion picture theaters (p. 109). While the US involvement in World War I was not recorded to the extent the nation's involvement with World War II was, there was nonetheless attempts at mediated remembrance of World War I during the later twentieth century.

For example, a committee was established to remember the Battle of Verdun (1916) in 1951, but it was the 1960s that became an even more salient time for the remembrance of World War I with the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the war (1964) being marked. In Britain, an influential long-form program entitled *The Great War* (1964) was broadcast. In addition, this decade also saw the opening of archives and the publication of memoirs from a variety of World War I survivors (Winter and Prost, 2005, p. 179). Eventually in 1967, a Memorial of Verdun museum was opened, the accomplishment of the committee originally formed sixteen years prior.

A milestone for World War I memory in the post-World War II years came in 1975, when World War II veteran, literary scholar and historian, Paul Fussell published *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Jay Winter, himself a historian of renown on World War I and remembrance, wrote that Fussell broke down "the barrier between the literary study of war writing and the cultural history of war" (Winter, 2013, p. ix). For Winter, Fussell's great contribution was to show how language frames modern memory. Turning

away from the epic and realistic depictions of authors, Fussell instead looked to the writing of World War I veterans' and their perception of the ironies inherent in war.

### World War II Propaganda

Mosse (1990) differentiates the two world wars by stating World War II was one “where defeat and victory were destined to be unconditional” (p. 201). The United States' involvement in World War II came with a strategy for media as well as for battlefield tactics for which President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Casey, 2001; Steele, 1985) nonetheless used mass media channels to convince a US public still enveloped in the shadow of World War I's destruction, and thus skeptical toward intervention. Roosevelt is referred to by Oberlin professor of History Clayton R. Koppes, and University of Missouri – Kansas City emeritus professor of Communication Gregory D. Black, in their book *Hollywood Goes to War: Patriotism, Movies and the Second World War from Ninotchka to Mrs. Miniver* (2000) as “the consummate media politician of his day” (p. 50). Roosevelt remembered the backlash against President Wilson and George Creel for their propaganda efforts during World War I and wanted to avoid anything that looked like preparation for intervention prior to his 1940 election. The combination of radio broadcasts, newsreels, propaganda films, still photographs, and posters equated to a sophisticated pro-war marketing effort. This marketing effort helped to establish much of the mythology subsequently supported by US films released in the ensuing years.

The twentieth-century marketing efforts regarding US involvement in World War II are not insignificant, as the US government, with assistance from professional film personnel, set out to win the war through visuals as much as through the taking of

physical territory (Casey, 2001; T. Doherty, 1993; Fyne, 1997; Short, 1983; Steele, 1985; Zeman, 1978). This work, often understood using the shorthand of *propaganda*, along with immediate postwar depictions celebrating victory together, provides the visual and narrative foundation for the post-war representations.

The beginnings of FDR's World War II propaganda efforts began in 1939 with the establishment of the Office of Government Reports (OGR). The agency distributed mostly accurate information but withheld negative information from the public. In August 1940, Roosevelt established the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), to guard against Nazi encroachment into the American hemisphere through Latin America. In July 1941 the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) was created via FDR's executive order and laid the foundation for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which eventually gave way to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Later, presidential friend Robert Sherwood set up the Foreign Information Service within the COI, which eventually became the Voice of America (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. 55). One defining characteristic of this time was that there were multiple US agencies begun to handle information and propaganda but little coordination nor honesty with the press about their true purposes.

Congress's unwillingness to approve a \$41.7 million budget for FDR's five overlapping propaganda agencies forced him to put all operations under the Office of War Information (OWI) except for Nelson Rockefeller's Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) and intelligence officer and diplomat, William J. Donovan's eventual OSS (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. 58). Koppes and Black (1987) state the OWI was not a resurrection of World War I's propaganda arm, the Creel

Committee. Rather, FDR learned it was better to separate out the offices for propaganda and censorship. The OWI also felt that hate propaganda was unproductive and it needed to go beyond “flag-waving emotional pitches” (p. 59) to emphasize the audience’s understanding of the issues of the war. This, however, was a slippery slope for concepts such as accuracy and truth.

After Pearl Harbor, on December 17, 1941, FDR appointed journalist Lowell Mellett the coordinator of government films, and he acted as a liaison with Hollywood, ensuring it kept its promise to help with the war effort. Mellett understood that if movies seemed too propagandistic it would hurt the attractiveness of the picture and ultimately the box office, and this was exactly why the US government wanted Hollywood’s help. Filmmakers, for their part, wanted to help but not so much as to destroy their profits. Unlike World War I when cinema was relatively new, US participation in World War II occurred within Hollywood’s “Golden Age” (late 1920s through the early 1960s). Roosevelt viewed such a prolific movie industry<sup>16</sup> as potentially of great use to the war effort.

During the summer of 1942, FDR’s Office of War Information (OWI) created the Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry, a manual which was constantly updated, “instructing the studios in how to assist the war effort” (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. vii). Staffers would sit in on studio story conferences, review every major studios’ screenplays except for Paramount (who wouldn’t cooperate with government efforts), pressure studios to make alterations or deletions if they felt the film contained objectionable material, and even wrote dialogue for certain key scenes. Cultural historian

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<sup>16</sup> The American Film Institute’s catalog of films lists 4,316 films released in the US between January 1, 1941 and December 31, 1950. (AFI, 1999, p. xi).



Thomas Doherty (1993) argues “Another four-year sampling might match the artistry of Hollywood’s wartime output, but at no other time was the motion picture industry more deliberately engaged in documenting, and making, American history” (p. 4). The goal was to slip in the unity and volunteerism for war into the mundane everyday tasks of characters and background players. Such ubiquity in the depiction of ordinary everyday lives would show the country as united in the war effort.

Koppes and Black (1987) interpret the two salient ideologies present during the war about what the US should try to accomplish via the war. On one side was magazine publisher Henry Luce, who believed the US should impose its power for “stability, order, and economic freedom” (p. 66). On the other side was Vice President Henry A. Wallace (1941-1945), who in his 1942 speech *Century of the Common Man*, described the war as a continuation in a long history of battling for individual rights. The OWI and its manual skewed heavily toward Wallace’s vision rather than Luce’s. Five themes derived from Wallace were expressed throughout the manual as related by Koppes and Black (1987):

- Why we fight – This theme was linked directly to democracy.
- The Enemy – This theme was defined as “many people infected with a poisonous doctrine of hate, of might making right” (p. 68).
- The United Nations – This theme homogenized thirty nations into democracies who shared an anti-fascist goal.
- The Home Front – This theme described the US as though not perfect (there were poor people, but they were doing better) the buzzword ultimately was unity.
- The Fighting Forces – There were multiple goals laid out for this theme: use them for something more than melodrama, stress all components of armed forces, show

training, and prepare public for casualties. Showing multi-ethnic platoons and occasional black officers would be good for unity

The Office of Censorship was also significant, not only for its action now seen as less than heroic but because the office also controlled the issuance of export licenses for films and exhibition of such films in free foreign territories. Even during World War II, Hollywood relied upon the foreign box office to ensure a profit; without it, a picture could lose money. The OWI could and would put pressure on the Office of Censorship. Producers, needing this foreign permission to exhibit only the Office of Censorship could provide, often bent to OWI's feedback (Koppes and Black, 1987, pp. vii-viii).

An interesting point in this history of World War II as a propaganda war was the investigation began on September 9, 1941 by a Senate sub-committee of the Committee on Interstate Commerce. Its members were looking at two items: one, whether the movie studios were disseminating war propaganda to push the US into World War II, and two, whether their business structure had a monopoly hold on the movie industry (Koppes & Black, 1987, p. 17). These proceedings were begun by isolationists led by North Dakota Senator Gerald P. Nye. As the investigation went on, many missteps by Sen. Nye occurred resulting in "the North Dakota senator look[ing] ignorant, anti-Semitic, and rather too cavalier about Hitler" (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. 45). Ultimately, the hearings adjourned on September 26. Any chance for a continued effort by Sen. Nye became moot with the advent of Pearl Harbor, and as such, efforts at continuation were abandoned the day after, on December 8, 1941.

However, the kernel of this investigation, the idea that Hollywood movie studios were nudging the US toward war participation via their content prior to December 7, 1941 (Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) is an interesting one. Koppes and Black point out the movie moguls who shepherded films from early experiments to big business were mostly Jewish, though they typically tried not to make their personal politics salient for fear of reprisal via low box-office receipts. A wonderful turn of phrase is used by Thomas Doherty in his *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (1993) to understand the religious underpinnings of the Golden Age of Hollywood: “classical Hollywood cinema might be flippantly defined as Jewish-owned business selling Roman Catholic theology to Protestant America” (p. 5). Drawing upon their backgrounds as clothing salesmen and manufacturers, collectively they had a good instinct for knowing consumer desires. Universal’s Carl Laemmle famously said “the public is never wrong” (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. 5). However, as news both official and gained through informal channels (family, community, gossip, etc.) informed them of Hitler’s policies, it became increasingly difficult to stay silent on the subject.

The Warner Brothers’ May 6, 1939 film *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was the first strictly anti-Nazi film produced by a major Hollywood studio. While not a box-office hit, the film did receive some favorable reviews. Koppes and Black (1987) cite Otis Ferguson in *The New Republic* as writing “This is no *Beast of Berlin*, but a statement of sober, inevitable facts, so brilliantly realized that no one can hide from it” (p. 30), while *The Hollywood Reporter* saw the film as a “straightforward attack on Nazism” (p. 30). Independent creator and film superstar Charlie Chaplin released *The Great Dictator* the following year, lambasting Hitler and Mussolini. The first film to directly address “the

Jewish question in Germany” (Koppes and Black, 1987, p. 34) was Metro’s *The Mortal Storm* also released in 1940. Throughout 1941, Hollywood began to depict distinctions between the German people and Nazis, begun and embodied by films such as *Four Sons* (1940).

In July 1940, the Hays office began the Motion Picture Committee Co-operating for Defense to produce shorts. Their hope was to maintain goodwill with interventionists yet stay out of the firing line of isolationists. The Warner Brothers in particular wanted to go much further into the realm of intervention since they had already produced *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* in 1939. The next month, FDR asked the president of Loew’s (movie producer and theater chain owner) to produce a film on defense and foreign policy resulting in October 1940’s *Eyes of the Navy*.

The movie industry’s increased interventionist efforts did not go unnoticed. FDR thanked the movie industry via a message to the annual Academy Awards banquet in February 1941 for their “splendid cooperation with all those who are directing the expansion of our defense forces” (Koppes & Black, 1987, p. 36). In fact, FDR found Hollywood much more helpful than either radio or the news press.

The legacy of Hollywood’s production during World War II is, for many, one of propaganda. Brandeis University cultural historian Thomas Doherty (1993) phrased it as: “for all its persistence and pervasiveness, however, Hollywood’s vision of the Second World War has had limited currency as worthwhile art or reliable history” (p. 2). This is not to say, somewhat obviously, that individuals do not look upon this trove of Hollywood films as some sort of history of “how it was” – for this is a large part of this current dissertation. Rather, this is to mark that by 1993, the negative legacy of Vietnam,

along with day-to-day violence in the news, formed a strong context to engage with and interpret Hollywood's World War II output.

In fact, Doherty (1993) makes this argument too strongly, writing "Against the ruthless honesty of today's R-rated, FX-laden spectacles and the searing vision of the cutting-edge auteur, classical Hollywood cinema sanitizes the horror and flinches before the ghastly realities (p. 2). However, five years later Basinger (1998), responding to the release of *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), made a credible argument that, for the time, many World War II combat films did deal with the horrors and violence to a level equal to that of their contemporary counterparts. Though Doherty (1993) does give the wartime generation agency, describing it as "every bit as cognizant of the limitations of art as the present one" (p. 7), my interpretation is that Doherty does not provide the same level of nuance and agency to the wartime filmmakers.

Attempting to define the line between wartime presentation and post-war representation, Doherty (1993) writes "The cocksure confidence of Hollywood's postwar effort effaced the stern admonitions of the wartime war" (p. 272). Marking the year 1949 as "The pivotal year for the postwar combat film," Doherty (1993, p. 272) believes the high number of releases that year was due to the time being "distant enough to forget the bad, close enough to recall the buzz" (p. 272). While certainly helpful for propaganda purposes, war films prior to 1949 were considered risky box-office ventures. This changed in 1949 when nine films about the war grossed a cumulative \$25 million at the box office (Doherty, 1993, p. 272).

Seton Hall faculty member and author James J. Kimble in his book *Mobilizing the Home Front* (2006), notes President Roosevelt's OWI was slashed in size by the summer

of 1943 due to aggressive budget cuts (p. 5). However, the Treasury's renewed war bond program was accepted by the public much more readily. President Roosevelt could have levied some sort of war tax in order to fund the military effort but then Treasury Secretary Henry F. Morgenthau Jr. suggested inviting citizens to loan the government the money while also using the bond program's publicity to boost morale for the war effort (Kimble, 2006, p. 5). Kimble (2006) notes it was never officially classified as a propaganda campaign, but nevertheless views it as an "immense domestic propaganda campaign" whose success derived in part from conscious efforts on the parts of planners, including Treasury staffers, to restore faith in America and national confidence generally.

What began truly as an experiment ended with over \$185 billion raised for the war effort remembered now as one of the greatest mass sales accomplishments that combined war bonds and feelings of national spirit and unity. Posters were developed for the war bond program but US Treasury officials rejected the "high pressure sales techniques associated with the Liberty Loan drives of World War I" (Bird & Rubenstein, 1998, p. 21).

Another successful medium utilized during World War II that has had a lasting aesthetic impact is the propaganda poster. The National Museum of American History curators William L. Bird and Harry R. Rubenstein discuss the history of the propaganda poster in their book *Design for Victory: World War II Posters on the American Home Front* (1998). World War II posters' goal was to transform the war into every citizen's personal mission. They were an ideal medium due to being relatively "inexpensive, accessible, and ever-present" (Bird & Rubenstein, 1998, p. 1), and effective when their appeal was "direct, immediate, and easily understood" (Zeman, 1982, p. 7). While these

posters were cheap, integrated into the citizen's everyday environment, and seemingly omnipresent due to large print runs, their inherent attributes, ultimately, were both ephemeral and disposable. These attributes set these modern propaganda tools apart from previous eras, where painting, sculpture, and architecture were the dominant materials (Zeman, 1982, p. 7). It wasn't only government but also businesses and private organizations who produced and exhibited these posters. In fact, the number of privately printed posters for World War II was more than produced from all sources during World War I (Bird & Rubenstein, 1998, pp. 1-2). One of the key goals of these posters was to include both the home and factory as essential components of the war front. This was accomplished by uniting "the power of art with the power of advertising" (Bird & Rubenstein, 1998, p. 1).

An interesting note regarding poster production was the self-awareness that the US National Museum, which later became the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, displayed toward this large propaganda effort. Beginning in 1942, the museum's curator in the division of graphic arts, R.P. Tolman, sent out a short letter to various private producers to collect a sample of the posters they were producing (Bird & Rubenstein, 1998, p. 2). This call began what became the core of the museum's collection of nearly one-thousand World War II posters. While we can not assign intention by the museum after the fact, it is nonetheless interesting that the images were both produced for the war effort and almost immediately saved as a permanent visual record. Creation of history indeed.

## VII. US Memory of World War II

“It might come as a surprise to people now living in the United States to learn that the memory and meaning of that war [World War II] was actually a matter of contention among Americans who lived through those times.” (Bodnar, 2010, p. 1)

University of Alabama professor of American literature Philip D. Beidler, in his work *The Good War's Greatest Hits* (1998), understands World War II as a durable experience whose associated attitudes of clarity and purpose were established via postwar popular-culture representations of the war and act as a sort of canon for both the wartime generation and its immediate heirs.

Beidler (1998) moors the conflation of remembrance of World War II in representations of it, including the films *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), *Life's Picture History of World War II* (1950), *Victory at Sea* (1952-53), *From Here to Eternity* (1953), *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), *Battle Cry* (1955), *Mister Roberts* (1955), *South Pacific* (1958), *The Naked and the Dead* (1958), *The Young Lions* (1958), *The Longest Day* (1962), and *Catch-22* (1970). Beidler (1998) summarizes his argument as the following. Since 1945, American remembrance of World War II was helped greatly by the media industrial complex established during the war. This media factory apparatus now provided the foundation for “instant ideological invention” (Beidler, 1998, p. 6) so that we could continually sell back to ourselves our history and memory of victory over and over again.

One of the major structuring elements for the remembrance of World War II for Beidler (1998) is a “strange ambiguity” (p. 30) for this generation that the war represented the best years of their lives but also had *taken* the best years of their lives. The shorthand that Beidler uses here to distinguish this ambiguity is that of the “The



Good War” versus “The Great SNAFU” – concluding that regardless of which perspective one took, none of the generation, quoting James Jones’s 1975 book, *WWII*, “would ever really get over it” (Jones, 1975, p. 256)<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the post-war era saw the creation of a “new production genealogy” (Beidler, 1998, p. 15) that would become somewhat formulaic: big war, big book, and big movie. According to Beidler (1998) a hallmark of this type of World War II classic or canonical work is both its ability to act as symbol for resistance to change and its ability to call up the spirit of a golden age marked by literary bestsellers, Broadway hits, big Hollywood movies, and a broader “nostalgia” for it all.

For Beidler, the post-war, victory-themed media output is possible only due to the build-up of a media industrial complex that helped win the war and, once it had accomplished that, simply continued to win the war through repeated media representations. An early post-war effort is the 1949 film *Sands of Iwo Jima*, which made a conscious effort to incorporate the iconography of the 1945 Suribachi flag raising, amid the publicity about designs for the future (1954) erection of the Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial) in Washington, D.C. The other major iconic moment was D-Day, as it increasingly became the focal point for the major US victory celebrations (Bodnar, 2010, p. 205). This iconography is achieved in part through repetition in productions such as *The Longest Day* (1962).

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<sup>17</sup> Jones was also the author of *From Here to Eternity* (1951), *The Thin Red Line* (1962), and (posthumously) *Whistle* (1978).

Over the seventy-two years since the US entered the war, this canonical archive of representations, continually re-played, has built up its own heritage.<sup>18</sup> A different example of this conflation between the production of history and production history comes from Adams (1994) regarding the films *December 7<sup>th</sup>* (1943) and *Winds of War* (1983). *December 7<sup>th</sup>* (1943) used sets to represent the attack on Pearl Harbor, and *Winds of War* (1983) assumed this footage to be actual documentary footage and so the “substitute reality was studiously copied” (Adams, 1994, p. 14). This blurring between documentary footage and representation illustrates the power of propaganda and potential for myth inherent within our remembering of World War II.

In Bodnar’s *The “Good War” in American Memory* (2010), American remembrance of World War II is situated within the myth of American exceptionalism and its “attendant faith in the promise of individualism” (p. 2). One formation of this exceptionalism is the citizen-soldier (Beidler, 1998; Bodnar, 2010), though as commemoration continued throughout the latter half of the twentieth-century and into the twenty-first, the citizen half of this binary is minimized and the art of killing increasingly valorized. A counterpoint to this comes from Seton Hall professor of communication James Kimble in his 2006 book *Mobilizing the Home Front: War Bonds and Domestic Propaganda*. Kimble notes that the US Treasury Department chose Daniel Chester French’s Minute Man sculpture as the official bond program’s symbol to note the US Revolution’s sudden transformation of citizen into soldiers (2006, p. 26). The original

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<sup>18</sup> “The war according to *Life* had assumed an existence of its own, far outliving the event ... and the age of the vast majority of persons for whom the experience is still an actual memory. This is to say, then, that the history of the war and the history of the magazine finally did become conflated into an identification whereby the war became an event remembered through style of popular representation...For many persons from the era, the war would continue to be what it had always been: the war according to *Life*.” (Beidler, 1998, pp. 75-76)

sculpture denotes a tension between roles, as the right hand holds a musket and the left hand rests on the plow. The US Treasury's interpretation of the statue during World War II made the musket much more prominent and the plow more obscured (Kimble, 2006, p. 26). So, the citizen half of the binary may have always been minimized in practice but equal in self-mythologizing. Several points illuminate the complicated realities that poke holes in this citizen-soldier myth. World War II soldiers, in opposition to World War I and Vietnam soldiers, are seen as "determined, sure of their cause, and united" (Adams, 1994, p. 3), even though many were, in fact, inexperienced, opinionated, scared, and serving in a segregated military.

In her book *American Media and the Memory of World War II* (2015), scholar Debra Ramsay understands World War II as a "transmedia, transgenerational mnemonic structure" (p. 33) whose prominent features include "the citizen soldier; the war as a visual construct; and the idea of the 'good war'" (p. 33). These three features are defined by the author as a "symbolic structure ... ideological concept ... [and a dynamic] visual construction that reveals how the [mnemonic] structure responds to changes in media technologies and industries" (Ramsay, 2015, p. 36). We can address these three features by putting them in conversation with previous scholarship.

First, Mosse (1990) explains the Myth of the War Experience as an attempt by the survivors of World War I to redirect memory from the brutal horrors and mass loss of life to the war's "meaningfulness and glory" (p. 50). One significant component of this myth – which Mosse (1990) provides a rich history of prior to World War I, is his cult of the fallen soldier. He notes that prior to the French Revolution, armies were typically composed of "mercenaries, criminals, vagabonds, and destitutes" (Mosse, 1990, p. 17).

However, with the rise of conflicts fought in the interest of people rather than monarchs came the rise in volunteer armies. This helped birth the concept of the *citizen-soldier* for whom an effort to remember was defined by the remembrance of World War I.

Second, the notion that World War II is remembered as the good war can be seen in a host of scholarship, including author and broadcaster Studs Terkel's conscious use of quotation marks in his 1984 book *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War Two*; emeritus history professor and author Michael C.C. Adams 1994 book, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II*; and World War II veteran Edward W. Wood Jr.'s 2006 book, *Worshipping the Myths of World War II: Reflections on America's Dedication to War*, whose first of four myths is "the good war."

Third, the visual construction of World War II has been covered through studies of propaganda posters during wartime (Zeman, 1978); the World War II action film genre (Basinger, 1986); University of Alabama faculty member Philip Beidler's overview of the production genealogies behind the aesthetics in his 1998 book, *The Good War's Greatest Hits: World War II and American Remembering*; and numerous popular press pieces, journalistic articles, and book chapters about the influences on Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), especially photojournalist Robert Capa's photographs from the landing on D-Day used in the film's well-remembered opening sequence.

Mosse (1990), through his focus on the cult of the fallen soldier, notes that World War II deviated from the cult of the war dead rather than replicate post-World War I communities' intense focus on war memorials, post-World War II memorialization occurred in a more pragmatic and functional manner, though some remote European regions chose to continue the fallen soldier motif. Mosse focuses much of his attention to

the German experience after World War I. The cult of the fallen soldier turned the cemeteries into “shrines of national worship” (1990, p. 92) when in the post-war period many would pilgrimage to. For Mosse, the cult of the fallen soldier acts as an almost civic religion, and so when World War II broke from it, these functional and pragmatic manners were slightly more secular in nature. Mosse (1990) notes that tin soldiers sold during World War I were amputated, wounded, and dead – conditions never shown in toys during World War II – a distinction that the author chalks up to a post-World War I society’s “more honest confrontation with war” (p. 144). For World War II such horrors instead would come from survivor narratives, widely embraced only decades later.

### **VIII. Images of Brutality toward the End of World War II**

Most Americans first learned about what we now short-hand as “the Holocaust” from newspapers, radio broadcasts, and movie theater newsreels during the last few weeks of World War II, and a CBS war correspondent broadcasted on the liberation of Buchenwald on April 15, 1945, according to Rutgers scholar of modern Jewish culture and the Holocaust Jeffrey Shandler (1999, pp. 5, 14) in his book *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust*. The earliest visualization of the atrocity came from the US Army Signal Corps film footage documenting the Allied liberation of Nazi concentration camps. The movie theater newsreels, shown shortly before Germany’s surrender in the spring of 1945, focused on atrocities including torture, victims, corpses, and mass graves. It should be noted there were confirmed reports of extermination in the US as early as November 1942, but the US government did not immediately respond<sup>19</sup>. One potential

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<sup>19</sup> For specifics regarding what was known during the war and theories for why no actions were taken see historian David S. Wyman’s *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941–1945* (1984).

line of thought is whether such atrocities at the time were not viewed as distinct (i.e. “The Holocaust”) but rather seen as one of many wartime horrors.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s popularity and military authority gave added focus to the atrocities as he personally visited the camps at Ohrdruf on April 12 and Buchenwald in Germany on April 13, 1945. The general desired that soldiers stationed near there, a congressional delegation, and America’s leading newspaper editors to all come and see the evidence with their own eyes (Shandler, 1999; Marcuse, 2001). Still photographs of the liberation of camps began to appear in US newspapers and magazines also during the spring of 1945.

Newsreels, a standardized, format given to at times the spectacular prior to the war, took on a new significance during World War II, especially as they presented liberation images near the end of the war. These newsreels continued the existing newsreel format, but focused on revealing the truth of Nazi brutality, justifying to those pre-war isolationists that the US war effort was not merely propaganda. While in no way trivializing the camp liberation experience, these newsreels nonetheless presented these shocking images in their recognizable eye-catching format, utilizing title cards that read “HERE IS THE TRUTH!” “AN AROUSED AMERICA HAS AWAITED THESE FILMS” and “Nazi Murder Mills!” (Shandler, 1999, p. 11).

In the newsreels’ attempts at showing the full-scale of Nazi atrocity, the films nonetheless “excluded images of survivors in action ... mut[ing] their ability to perform on their own behalf (Shandler, 1999, p. 17). This assumption of passivity on the part of Jewish victims, combined with representation as almost ghostly visions unable to resume normal routines, has continuously informed later depictions, especially in the immediate

post-war era according to University of Pennsylvania professor of Communication, Barbie Zelizer's remarks in her book *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (1998).

US Signal Corps. liberation camp footage, used in these US commercial newsreels, was then repurposed in immediate post-war US government staff reports and newsreels and also in films such as Frank Capra's *Here Is Germany* (1945), Henri Cartier-Bresson and Richard Bank's *Le Retour* (1945), and Garson Kanin and Carol Reed's *The True Glory* (1945). Two films were produced with the purpose of screening them as evidence during the war crimes trials in Nuremberg in 1945. *The Nazi Plan* (1945) was produced by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox for the US government to document the development of National Socialism, utilizing footage from German propaganda films and also screened during the Nuremberg Trials (Magilow & Silverman, 2015). Other documentaries included *The Nazi Supreme Court Trial of the Anti-Hitler Plot*, Sept. 1944-Jan. 1945 (condensed version of these proceedings), *Nuremberg* (record of both the trial and German brutalities), and Billy Wilder's *Death Mills*, exhibited in Germany to "make Germans confront the crimes committed by the Nazis, as well as to discourage rebellion against the occupying forces" (Magilow & Silverman, 2015, p. 24).

## IX. The Nuremberg Trials

Nuremberg, Germany, by 1945 a nearly one-thousand year old city, was chosen to host the war crime trials of Nazi leadership not for its grand history but its ability to offer accommodation among many other ruined cities (Calvocoressi, 1947). Its Palace of Justice survived the war almost completely intact, and could provide a courtroom and offices for the cadre of lawyers who would take part (Calvocoressi, 1947). The

Nuremberg Trials were held between November 20, 1945, and August 31, 1946, with judgment delivered on September 30 and October 1, 1946. These were a set of trials to prosecute the leadership of Nazi Germany by the Allied forces for various war crimes including the systematic murder of the Jewish people. Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi officer in charge of the “Final Solution,” estimated that six million Jews were exterminated (Calvocoressi, 1947, p. 59).

Twenty-two Nazis were accused at Nuremberg. Of these, twelve were condemned to death, three to life in prison, two to twenty years in prison, and one Nazi to ten years in prison. Three Nazis were acquitted (Calvocoressi, 1947, p. 23). The confounding component to these inhuman crimes, of course, is that the men who perpetrated them were intelligent, educated, and had histories as “good family men” (Goldensohn, 2004, p. xxvii). The kind of attributes political theorist and author Hannah Arendt, writing later about the Eichmann trial, would describe as the “banality of evil.” All but one of the defendants possessed an above-average intelligence, and nine had IQs measured higher than 130 (Goldensohn, 2004, p. xxvii).

Controversy beyond the crimes of the accused swirled around the trials, including the legal legitimacy of the proceedings themselves, the choice of host city, and the downplaying of atrocities committed by our ally the Soviet Union. British journalist Rebecca West who covered the trial for *The New Yorker*, and whose prose was later collected in a book titled *A Train of Powder* (1955), described the tedium of the task as “for all who were there, without exception, this was a place of sacrifice, of boredom, of headache, of homesickness” (1955, p. 17). The prosecutors, wanted as high a fidelity to



the law as possible, yet desired a swift conviction, while the accused preferred to draw out the minutiae of daily legal procedures rather than face the reality of their ending.

The wartime US intelligence branch and precursor to the CIA, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS, 1942-1945), played a role in the Nuremberg Trials. The OSS Field Presentation Branch was tasked with redesigning the courtroom at Nuremberg so that films and organizational charts regarding the Nazi regime could both be easily grasped by both legal participants and media (Salter, 2007, p. 253). The courtroom was also designed to provide sufficient space and resources for the world press and news film agencies to report out. Access to the custom sound recording system used during the trial was given to the media. The chief US prosecutor at the trials, Associate Justice of the US Supreme Court Robert H. Jackson, and OSS head William J. Donovan disagreed regarding to what extent the Nuremberg Trials should be “organised as media events, or ‘show trials’” (Salter, 2007, p. 255). However, the OSS, and its members who specialized in creating news stories, especially those concerning filmed Nazi atrocities, were important contributors to prosecutor Jackson’s pre-trial preparation team. All the major US news outlets, including the Associated Press and United Press, covered the trial, and stories appeared in many popular periodicals, including *Colliers*, *Life*, *Newsweek*, and *Reader’s Digest*.

The trial was conducted in “four languages simultaneously without the necessity for breaks for translation” (Calvocoressi, 1947, p. 10). The Document Office set up at the trial made a high volume of written evidence available for the press in English, French, German, and Russian (Urban, 2008, p. 42). The Allied nations had intended to bring the belligerents to trial after their defeat, believing serious crimes had been committed and

evidence existed to prosecute. What the Allies lacked, however, was a court before which they could file their complaint (Calvocoressi, 1947). As such, on August 8, 1945, the US, the UK, France, and the USSR signed an agreement creating the International Military Tribunal. The innovation was the victors agreeing to a single court rather than multiple courts hosted in the respective victors' territories (Calvocoressi, 1947, pp. 16-17).

After the trials and into the decade of the 1950s, many authors wanted to begin to tell their stories but were rejected by reticent larger-scale publishers, however, a focus on “displaced persons” and oblique references to the Holocaust began to appear on US television during this time period.

## **X. Holocaust Remembrance during the 1950s**

Author and journalist, John Hersey, an early practitioner of New Journalism (inserting fictional storytelling techniques into news reporting) had published *Hiroshima* (1946) in the summer for *The New Yorker* and less than two months later in book form. Four years later, Hersey published *The Wall* (1950), another new journalistic effort about the Warsaw ghetto from November 1939 to May 1943. Contemporary critique of the book called it “adequate as a fictional record of the struggles of Warsaw Jewry essentially accurate in tone and incident ... a book about one phase of the monstrous evil which was enacted only a few years ago” (Daiches, 1950, para. 2, 21).

In the earliest stages of US television, documentaries dealing with what we now understand as “The Holocaust” did air. For example, *Nazi Concentration Camps*, one of the films created to be shown as evidence at the Nuremberg Trials, appeared on US television during the late 1950s in the docudrama *Judgment at Nuremberg* as part of

CBS's *Playhouse 90* (Shandler, 1999, p. 22).<sup>20</sup> An early CBS public affairs program titled *UN Casebook* (1948-49) devoted an episode to the subject titled *Genocide Convention*. The program explains that the term genocide was coined by Yale University law professor Raphael Lemkin and first utilized in 1946 at the Nuremberg Trials (Shandler, 1999, p. 25). The word "Holocaust" was not used within this episode.

In parallel with US audiences coming to grips with and beginning to conceptually define "the Holocaust" was the growth of the notion of the "Holocaust survivor." While this specific term was not used in the immediate post-war period, many other terms were, including "refugees," "Europe's homeless," "Displaced Persons" (DPs), and in Yiddish, "the saving remnant" (*sheyres haplete*) (Shandler, 1999, p. 27). It was only later that survivors were asked to recall these stories and to be looked to as a significant resource into understanding the systematic evil perpetuated by the Nazi regime.

These DPs were featured in a 1945 episode of CBS's *The World We Live* titled *Hunger Takes No Holiday* about feeding a post-war Europe. New York's WPIX broadcast numerous reports on DPs between 1948 and 1952, and they were the focus of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society's docudrama *Placing the Displaced* (1948). During the late 1940s New York radio station WOR featured stories of Jewish families reunited after having been displaced after the war on a program called *Reunion*. And the May 27, 1953, episode of *This is Your Life* featured survivor Hanna Bloch Kohner (Shandler, 1999, pp. 28-30). DPs were major characters on CBS's *Playhouse 90*'s 1957 episode *Homeward Borne* and NBC's *Alcoa/Goodyear Theater*'s 1959 episode *Thirty Pieces of Silver* (Shandler, 1999, p. 28).

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<sup>20</sup> Stanley Kramer's feature film version of *Judgment at Nuremberg* was released by United Artists on December 19, 1961 for United Artists and starred Spencer Tracy and Burt Lancaster.

## XI. Echoes of the Holocaust during the 1960s

The first extended US television coverage of the Holocaust arrived in the spring and summer of 1961 with the broadcast of Adolf Eichmann's war crimes trial. Eichmann, the former Nazi SS lieutenant colonel in charge of mass deportation and extermination of the Jewish people, was captured in 1960 in Argentina by Israel's intelligence service, Mossad, which brought him to Israel for interrogation and trial. Shandler (1999) posits that it is during this televised trial that US audiences first heard the word "Holocaust" used to describe Nazi brutality against the Jewish people during the war.

The trial has been cited as a major influence on new interest in understanding the Jewish experience during World War II. Similar to press accommodations made during the Nuremberg Trials, the Eichmann trial prompted renovations costing one million dollars to Beit Ha'am, the public theater and community center in Jerusalem where the trial was held, including new transmission facilities and journalist work spaces and telecommunications services (Shandler, 1999, p. 90). While radio and newspaper coverage kept the audience up-to-date on the trial, television uniquely presented the trial both as spectacle and an illusion of live intimacy for the viewer. The intentions of the trial creators were questioned by critics as the line between performance and search for justice seemed to blur. It is estimated that eighty percent of the world's population saw images from the trial. Also news documentaries were broadcast during this time on the subject and included *The Last Chapter* (1962), *Trial at Nuremberg* (1964), *Who Killed Anne Frank?* (1964), and episodes from *The Twentieth Century*, and *Change My Name to Life*, both in 1966 (Shandler, 1999, p. 134).

US television in the 1960s was dominated by the episodic format, and throughout the decade, minority characters began to appear within a few of these formulaic episodes. Appearances by Jewish, African American, or Asian characters reflected the struggle for civil rights within the larger society. Later, the escaped Nazi-war-criminal was used as the antagonist in order to add a new option in the otherwise continuous carousel of terrorists and drug-dealers.

Also during the 1960s, the Holocaust-as-subject-matter worked as an analog for a contemporary social concern. The crusading lawyer drama *The Defenders* (CBS, 1961-1965) did this twice in its episodes *The Avenger* (1962) and *The Indelible Silence* (1962). Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* tackled the subject in its 1963 episode *He's Alive*. A different type of program *Star Trek*, dealt with the subject matter in the episode *Patterns of Force* where an alien planet run by Captain Kirk's former mentor, historian John Gill, has been transformed into a replica of 1930s Nazi Germany. Nazis were also made the butt of jokes and diminished via parody in the television program *Hogan's Heroes* (CBS, 1965-1971), set inside a prisoner of war (not concentration) camp during World War II, as well as Mel Brooks's film *The Producers* (1968) in which get-rich-quick producers deliberately sell a flop of a musical, choosing *Springtime for Hitler: A Gay Romp With Eva and Adolf at Berchtesgaden* as the surefire failure of a production.

## **XII. Holocaust Narratives of the 1970s**

Later, as women and minorities in the United States waged a fight for equal rights during a time of war in Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s, remembrance of World War II shifted from participant/soldier to participant/witness/victim with the salience of Holocaust narratives and productions such as Britain's 26-part series *The World at War*

(1974). Remembering World War II and the Holocaust during the 1970s and later in the 1980s comprised a large part of historian Jay Winter's (2006) second memory boom. This second boom originated partially out of a desire for what was perceived as a more stable time during a turbulent "Long Sixties" that historian Arthur Marwick (1998) theorized lasted from 1958 through 1974 rather than the calendar period of 1960-1969. World War II is a key to Winter's second memory boom; however, three decades passed between the war and the second boom, and this is important. This was due, according to Winter (2006) because collective stories during the 1940s and 1950s about the war revolved around heroic narratives of resistance against the Nazis. Even true accounts were mythologized. These stories were utilized to revive national cultures that collaborated or were occupied and suffered subsequent humiliation. Other scholars, such as University of Alabama historian Andrew Huebner, in his book, *The Warrior Image: Soldiers in American Culture from the Second World War to the Vietnam Era* (2011), suggest that there were in fact many non-heroic narratives present in the late 1940s and early 1950s. His examples would include Norman Mailer's *Naked and the Dead* (1948). This perspective would connect to Beidler's notion of The Great SNAFU or negative representation of the war.

The "age of witness" (Winter, 2006, p. 27) is what sparked momentum for the second memory boom. Reluctance to embrace Holocaust narratives in the immediate post-war era can be seen in the title of the memoir by Italian chemist and Auschwitz survivor, Primo Levi. As Levi explains in his afterword for *If This Is a Man*, originally published in 1947, a "number of important publishers" (1996, p. 381) turned it down and he ultimately had to go with a small publisher for a run of only 2,500 copies. It wasn't

until 1958, when Italian publisher Einaudi republished the book, that it caught the public's attention and "from then on the interest of the public has never flagged" (1996, p. 381). Levi believes the late 1940s and 1950s to be painful years of mourning and reconstruction; a public unwilling to return to the Holocaust during this time. Similarly, Holocaust scholar Raul Hilberg's pre-eminent work *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961) was only published years and multiple publisher rejections after he first began in 1948 and then only through the funding of a survivor family (Cole, 1999, p. 2). There was a change in focus of remembrance from heroes and heroines of the resistance, political prisoners, and soldiers, to racial prisoners and survivors. Winter (2006) notes it was not only a change in who was speaking but the advances in technology to record and share these stories on audio and videocassettes.

Other recent scholarship, however, contests this characterization somewhat, including NYU historian Hasia Diner's book, *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (2010), and Michigan State University historian Kirsten Fermaglich's book *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957-1965* (2007). Recording of the Jewish nightmare during World War II began during and immediately following the war. French historian and Holocaust specialist Annette Wieviorka, in her volume *The Era of the Witness* (2006), writes that the Historical Commissions of the Central Committee of Polish Jews "gathered 7,300 testimonies" between 1944 and 1948 (p. ix). An offshoot of this effort was led by former bookseller Moshe Feigenbaum, who had worked with the Central Committee, together with journalist Israel Kaplan, who created a new Central Historical Commission that ran from

1945 to 1948 in Munich, Germany. The Commission produced a journal in Yiddish titled *Fun letstn khurbn* (Out of our most recent catastrophe) in order to systematically gather testimony (Wieviorka, 2006, p. x). Efforts to document the Holocaust and archive it into memory did begin shortly after the war. However, mass embrace in the US by the dominant culture of this collective memory of survivors of what we now understand and label as “the Holocaust” took until the early 1970s.

Productions created during the 1960s<sup>21</sup> helped contribute two key elements to Winter’s second memory boom. These productions included: Marcel Ophuls’s documentary on French life under Nazi occupation, *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1969); the end of World War II General de Gaulle’s administration in France in April 1969; and high-profile trials where former Nazis were extradited and convicted for their various murders and brutality. These trials captivated audiences and included *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963), The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials (1963-1965), and the Sobibor trial (1965-1966).

The results were twofold. First, it permanently married any discussions of World War II with discussions of the Holocaust. Second, it brought to the front “the notion that memory was moral in character ... the chief carriers of the message were the victims themselves” (Winter, 2006, p. 30). These witnesses told the truth. They were survivors, whose stories seemed as if from another planet with their painful senseless brutality. They spoke of and for the dead.

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<sup>21</sup> During the 1960s, Polish American and Holocaust historian, Philip Friedman (1901-1960) published *Guide to Jewish History under Nazi Impact* (1960), *Bibliography of Books in Hebrew on the Jewish Catastrophe and Heroism in Europe* (1960), and *Bibliography of Yiddish Books on the Catastrophe and Heroism* (1962) (Wieviorka, 2006, p. xi).



This age of the witness complicated the act of national commemoration. The project of World War I commemorations, according to Winter, was to stabilize nations after the devastation of this “Great War,” to reassure the populace that such a massive loss of life had meaning, it laid the groundwork for a better world in which such conflicts would not occur. The fact that World War II happened delivered a blow to these hopes. The appearance of Holocaust narratives during the 1970s revealed a systematic brutality that was indeed meaningless, or what Winter (2006) refers to as “a giant black hole in the midst of our universe of reason” (p. 32).

However, the 1970s contained a few national events that made a more traditional remembrance of World War II more attractive. One was the loss of confidence in the US presidency during Richard Nixon’s Watergate scandal, President Gerald R. Ford’s pardoning of Nixon, and President Jimmy Carter’s ineffectiveness and micromanager style. The oil crises of 1973 and 1979 acted as daily reminders for citizens hurt by the supply shortages and higher prices that the United States’ post-war dominance was beginning to shift. Some protesters during the 1960s attempted alternative organizations of community living in the 1970s, what we would call today, “off the grid,” many joining various styles of collectives and communes.

There were bubbles of remembrance, or at least certain nostalgia, during the 1970s, for previous, perceived to be, simpler times. The anarchistic vaudevillian comedy of 1930s film star Groucho Marx was heralded in a *Catch-22* (1970) world of protest as he delivered his 1972 one-man show and was rewarded with his 1974 honorary Oscar. The 1950s returned in film and television with the release of George Lucas’s film

*American Graffiti* (1973) and Garry Marshall's television sitcom hit *Happy Days* (1974-1984).<sup>22</sup>

A mass awareness and embracement from a broader US audience for the narratives from the Holocaust occurred during the 1970s thanks to an increased presence on network television and increased presence of Israeli-related issues within the news media. The television mini-series *Holocaust: The Story of the Family* aired in four parts on NBC on April 16-19, 1978 about a German Jewish family and their hellish experiences during World War II set against the story of a young German lawyer who joins the SS. It is estimated as many as one-hundred twenty million US viewers saw the broadcast and "critics often cite [it] ... as a landmark of Holocaust consciousness in America" according to Rutgers scholar of modern Jewish culture and the Holocaust Jeffrey Shandler (1999, p. 155). Prior to this broadcast, context existed that helped to prompt such a miniseries. Awareness, as well as fund-raising for the State of Israel increased, especially in 1967 around the time of the Six-Day War. An increasing number of American Jews began commemorating the Holocaust up through the mid-1970s (Shandler, 1999). Also, Shandler (1999) notes survivors were entering a mid-life review period during the 1970s, with their children reaching adulthood, and the idea of older persons serving as generational links through the process of life review, in vogue at the time among gerontologists such as Harry Moody, eventual director of academic affairs for the American Association for Retired Persons (p. 156).

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<sup>22</sup> *American Graffiti* was director George Lucas's first major success. While set in 1962 in Modesto, CA, it nonetheless recalled the car and rock 'n roll teenage culture of the late 1950s. *Happy Days* was based from an episode of *Love, American Style* and featured an idealized family situation comedy set during the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s.

A comparison and distinction is made here between Holocaust survivors entering a mid-life review during the 1970s and the children of the “Greatest Generation” entering a mid-life review during the 1990s. The first distinction is, of course, that one is directly relating their own experiences, while the other is commemorating or remembering a previous generation’s actions. The second is that the survivors’ narrative is one of survival and victimization against a systematic killing during an undeclared war on the Jewish people. The children of the Greatest Generation’s stories are ones of heroism and great accomplishment against an enemy who would stop at nothing to achieve its goals of power. The third is that the survivor’s tales were told in the middle of the ongoing Cold War, where stories of survival are played out against a possible future of nuclear fallout, whereas the children’s stories during the 1990s occurred as tales told in the post-Cold War period, cautioning against a future that had now changed.

By the 1970s, the story of the Holocaust began to slowly enter into various elements of society, including the curricula of various educational institutions both Jewish and gentile. A 1977 episode of popular series *Lou Grant*, titled “Nazis” presented a story of Los Angeles Neo-Nazis whose leader is from an Orthodox Jewish family. Erik Barnouw (1990) has characterized the 1970s miniseries *Roots* (ABC, 1977) and *Holocaust* as part of a “spirit of reexamination and rededication” (p. 466) in the United States, which was fostered, in part, by the American bicentennial of 1976. Though shorter in length than *Roots* (12 hours), *Holocaust* (9 ½ hours) followed its showcasing and plotting as an epic, prestige mini-series following a family’s journey through the years as the Holocaust destroys a majority of their lives. The program first aired a week before

Passover, and its last episode aired on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (Shandler, 1999, p. 163).

The miniseries created an outpouring of reactions from the public and media for months afterward. Responses to the program were mixed, with most focusing on the inability of a medium such as television to deal with such a serious and complex issue. Some were dismayed by what they viewed as the “soap opera-ization” of their narratives, especially writer, activist, and survivor Elie Wiesel who called *Holocaust* the miniseries “untrue, offensive, cheap” (1978, p. B1). University of Tennessee professor of history Daniel Magilow and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee professor of history Lisa Silverman describe the miniseries shortcomings this way: “*Holocaust* warped facts, figure, and events by mixing them with fiction, creating a historical soap opera, rather than grappling with the nature of modern evil” (2015, p. 93). Nonetheless this primetime soap opera had a huge impact, supported in part by the network’s promotional push which began an American dialogue regarding the event and its survivors. NBC re-aired the miniseries the following year, in 1979. One positive that came out of the negative criticism of the miniseries was the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University. Survivors living in Connecticut and other areas in the northeast saw the program as trivializing their experiences. Fortunoff program manager, Joanne Rudof, said “Everything had been taken from them. Now television was trying to take away their stories too” (J. Miller, 1990, p. 273). So, beginning in the late 1970s, the Fortunoff Archive began video recording and collecting survivor testimonies that numbered almost 4,000 by 2016.

Of course, during the 1970s, there were still US films and television programs that focused on the individual soldier during World War II, as well as pockets of nostalgia focused on the 1950s. This renewed emphasis and embracing of victim narratives were necessary, seemingly new, and poignant in a Watergate and Vietnam context. However, as the 1970s transitioned into the 1980s, a shift in political power in both the UK and the US with ties to The Greatest Generation coincided with a shift in emphasis away from individual victim narratives and back to individual soldiers, most often situated during one of the US's most triumphant accomplishments during World War II, the Normandy beach invasion.

This dissertation contributes to the existing literature discussed in this chapter in the following ways. First, it engages with the collective memory of World War II during the late 1990s through the theory of prosthetic memory and the methodology of discourse analysis. Second, the current chapter overviews how various time periods and other wars contributed to the remembrance of World War II.

The next chapter, chapter 3, covers the research questions and methodology. It defines discourse analysis and explains how it will be applied to World War II remembrance. It is followed by chapters four through six, in which I outline the rise of Thatcher and Reagan and early 1990s World War II remembrance (chapter 4); analyze the late-1990s remembrance (chapter 5) and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century remembrance (chapter 6). Chapter 7 acts as a conclusion that summarizes my points and that looks ahead to future work

## *Chapter 3 – Research Questions and Method*

### **I. Introduction**

My work engages with French social theorist Michel Foucault's terms "discourse," "discursive formations," and "discursive practices" as methodology for investigating how and why World War II was remembered during the late 1990s to the early twenty-first century. Foucault's method of analysis is a rejection of the Marxist conception of ideology. According to Foucault, ideology always "stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth" (Foucault, 1984, p. 60). In an interview discussion of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' term "ideology," Foucault says "the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which are neither true nor false" (Foucault & Rabinow, 1984, p. 60).

This chapter presents a detailed overview of my research questions and the methodology employed to analyze the origins of the 1990s remembering of World War II and its characteristic attempts to attach prosthetic memories (Landsberg, 2004) onto the then current generation.

Section II of this chapter outlines the research questions and how they will be engaged. Section III defines discourse analysis as a research method and explains how it will be utilized in this research. Section IV attempts to situate when during the twentieth century World War II as a subject has been popular. This is to provide proper context to the re-engagement with the subject during the 1990s. Section V concludes this chapter with an overview of my sites of discursive analysis. These sites are: (1) Ronald Reagan's

commemorations, beginning with his June 6, 1984, The Boys of du Hoc speech; (2) early 1990s news media commemorations, especially the coverage of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day; (3) late 1990s releases, including *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *The Greatest Generation* (1998), and *Medal of Honor* (1999); (4) and early 21<sup>st</sup> century representations, including The National World War II Museum (2000); *Band of Brothers* (2001), *Call of Duty* (2003), and *The Pacific* (2010).

## II. Research Questions

The dissertation answers the following research questions:

**RQ1:** How do Spielberg's film and video game, Brokaw's book, and Ambrose's museum attach prosthetic memories to their respective audiences via specific discourses?

The groundwork for such discourse appears in chapters five and six, which discuss the rise of conservatism in both the US and Britain as well as in early-1990s media. This question is explored in greatest depth in chapter seven as I analyze the late-1990s representations of World War II remembrance.

Using Landsberg's theory as an entry point into understanding the actions of the children of the Greatest Generation, this work uses the theory of prosthetic memory to better understand their reverence and remembrance during the mid-to-late 1990s. A difference between this present work and Landsberg (2004) is my focus on the traditional power structure epitomized by those who wrote history and organized remembrance – typically white, male soldiers. Landsberg's focus skews to the non-combatant victims of war, traditionally scarred and encapsulated by The Holocaust. Landsberg views the potentiality of prosthetic memories for positive outcomes, and says that as such possess utility. In an email correspondence, Landsberg, defined prosthetic memories as

“personally felt public memories that arise from one’s engagement with a mass mediated representation of the past” (personal communication, February 19, 2016). My attempt here is to show the limited or negative outcomes from attempting to construct prosthetic memories. Landsberg also agrees “there is something qualitatively different about experiencing 1940s propaganda first hand vs. experiencing it as second hand” (personal communication, February 19, 2016), though she conceded there may be a fine line between the definition of prosthetic memory and what we traditionally understand as propaganda as I have applied it in my present work.

**RQ2:** How does each of these texts deal with, “live next to,” or minimize the event of the Holocaust in their narrative and visual discourses?

While I find it significant to deconstruct, interrogate, and interpret this prevailing power structure of remembrance, I also do not want to fall into the error of simply repeating the same exclusionary practices that maintain such a structure. The story of World War II remembrance cannot be investigated or understood without understanding when and where non-combatant survivor narratives occurred. So, this research question attempts to provide a proper context for the predominantly white, male, soldier form of remembrance that at times suffers from a blurred vision thanks to nostalgia.

### **III. Research Method**

This work takes a cultural studies approach. Loughborough University researcher in social sciences and medicine, Paula Saukko (2003), defines cultural studies as one that “understands cultural texts not to be mere loci of domination. Rather, it views them as a site of contestation over meaning, where different groups compete to set forth their understandings of the state of affairs in the world” (Saukko, 2003). What separates the



cultural studies approach from others is contextualism (Grossberg, 1997). This interest in the social context of texts is connected to an interest in investigating power, understanding that these texts are always both political and historical. The museums and tele-visual artifacts under observation in this dissertation are treated as texts, with the understanding that both culture and history shape the study of structures. Thus to truly interpret an artifact one must study not only the object but also the systems of knowledge that constructed the object. The museum, for example, acts as a system of knowledge and intersection point for artifacts and collective memory.

When studying collective memory, especially around issues of trauma, there is a tendency, according to Binghamton University historian Wulf Kansteiner (2002), to “commit a tempting yet potentially grave methodological error ... [conceptualizing] collective memory exclusively in terms of the psychological and emotional dynamics of individual remembering” (p. 185). However, as sociologist and collective memory scholar Barry Schwartz, notes “collective memory works by subsuming individual experiences under cultural schemes that make them comprehensible and, therefore, meaningful” (2000 p. xi). This scheme, or systematic arrangement, fits with Foucault’s focus on firmly grounded unities, their derived authority, and discourse.

In his work the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) Foucault sets up his term “discourse” by first explaining the relationship between the document and history. History’s project is not memory that uses the document as a “possibly decipherable trace” but instead “to work on it from within and to develop it: history now organizes the document, divides it up, distributes it, orders it, arranges it in levels, establishes series, distinguishes between what is relevant and what is not, discovers elements, defines

unities, describes relations” (Foucault, 2010, [1972], pp. 6-7). From Foucault’s perspective, history’s task now is to seek out “stable structures” rather than an “irruption of events” (p. 6).

The goal for history inside a piece of documentary material has changed to establishing “unities, totalities, series, [and] relations” (Foucault, 2010, [1972], p. 7). Traditionally history’s project was to memorize “the *monuments* of the past [and] transform them into documents” but now “history is that which transforms *documents* into *monuments*” (p. 7). In discussing the unities prevalent, Foucault chooses two “that emerge in the most immediate way” (p. 22): the book and *oeuvre*. “Oeuvre” for Foucault is a word for a piece of work that itself presupposes the function of the author or his figure. Under closer examination, the assumed immutable unities present in these forms break down. Using the book as an example, Foucault (2010 [1972]) explains: “The book is not simply the object that one holds in one’s hands; and it cannot remain within the little parallelepiped that contains it; its unity is variable and relative. As soon as one questions that unity, it loses its self-evidence; it indicates itself, constructs itself, only on the basis of a complex field of discourse” (p. 23).

The observation and analysis of discourse must understand its “sudden irruption ... punctuality” and its “temporal dispersion” (Foucault, 2010, [1972], p. 25) that allows it to be repeated, hidden, transformed and forgotten. Foucault’s goal is to ask what unities the established unities form, from where they derive their authority, and even whether they are “ultimately the surface effect of more firmly grounded unities” (p. 26).

Analyzing discourse is to observe a population of events within it. The characteristics of

the field of discursive events are “a grouping that is always finite and limited at any moment to the linguistic sequences that have been formulated” (p. 27).

To analyze the discursive field one must perform the following: grasp “the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence, determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes” (Foucault, 2010, [1972], p. 28). If the analyst can describe a system among concepts, themes, and statements and define a regularity [“an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations” (p. 38)], then the researcher is interacting with a discursive formation. UK scholar and author Nicholas Green (1990, p. 3) describes it as finding “a coherent pattern of statements across a range of archives and sites.”

As Foucault’s thoughts changed and evolved, he wrote in 1979 that “where there is power, there is resistance ... a multiplicity of points of resistance” (1977/1979, p. 95). There are many different discourses that compete in their effects, but nonetheless certain discourses are dominant. Foucault’s work was always rooted in *how* power worked. Discourse analysis is focused on the production of a supposedly authoritative account and the “social practices both in which the production is embedded and which it itself produces” (G. Rose, 2012, p. 197).

The current project performs discourse analysis on both text and the visual components in the remembrance of World War II. The intertextuality with the discursive formation between text and image is important since “the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts” (Rose, 2012, p. 191). One particular visual medium,

photography, helps to explain the significance of the visual in the construction of discourse. It has been argued by some historians of photography that the realism perceived within the photograph as opposed to painting was not established by its technology but rather “in a specific regime of truth, so that photographs were seen as evidence of ‘what was really there’” (Rose, 2012, p. 193).

A different and narrower definition of discourse is employed by German Egyptologist and collective memory scholar Jan Assmann in his book *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (1997). Assmann notes his definition is much more specific than Foucault’s, defining discourse as “a concatenation [a series of interconnected things] of texts which are based on each other and treat or negotiate a common subject matter” (p. 15). Describing his conception of discourse as a “textual conversation” (p. 15), Assmann states it may span generations or centuries based upon the level of “institutionalization of permanence” present, such as writing, canonization, or educational institutions.

This definition of discourse is organized by a thematic frame and a set of unwritten rules. These rules—conversation, argumentation, quotation, verification—cover how one engages with the “antecedent texts” and subject matter. Assmann’s version of discourse analysis – “mnemohistorical” - “investigates this concatenation of texts as a vertical line of memory and seeks out the threads of connectivity which are working behind the texts; the intertextuality; evolution of ideas, recourse to forgotten evidence, shifts of focus, and so forth” (1997, p. 16).

These two definitions are incommensurable, really, since as with the case of ideology, Foucault believed there was no getting behind to some sort of truth, though one

could interpret Foucault's statement regarding the analysis of unities and their possibility of being merely "the surface effect of more firmly grounded unities" (2010, [1972], p. 26) as an admittance of a larger or at least more embedded discourse. Foucault's idea, however, may just be a series of conceptual rabbit holes with no hard bottom or simply layers of discourse moving through time.

While remembrance of World War II is most appropriately investigated utilizing Foucault's understanding of discourse, there may be a few texts or artifacts that meet Assmann's strict definition and through which we'll gather a better understanding of how a discourse of remembrance of World War II evolved throughout the twentieth century among a limited number of interconnected texts speaking back and forth to one another.

## **IV. Secondary Method**

### **Providing Context for World War II Popularity**

A secondary method was employed in order to better understand when World War II - themed productions were released across media and whether there were certain pockets of time featuring multiple releases that denote a spike in popularity of remembrance. This work utilized multiple lists available online of World War II-themed media releases to establish the scope of media remembrance post-war through today. The following list and associated notes do not pretend to be exhaustive<sup>23</sup> but nonetheless provide a good introduction to when remembrance was popular.

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<sup>23</sup> An argument can be made that propaganda was, of course, created during the war and certainly remembrance for those lost on December 7, 1941, but for the sake of an analytical ideal type differentiating war time from post-war, this list deals only with post-1945.

Another caveat is the choice of temporal categorization. To categorize by individual year possesses a certain internal logic, yet popularity of a media product can last multiple months – overlapping two years – if not multiple years. At the same time, production logistics often mean that finished products are released years after the initial interest in or popularity of a subject. The following data is given by small clusters of years, but is also noted if the previous or succeeding year contained significant releases. Additionally, it is worth noting that one would be expected to see a rise in nationalistic commemoration during anniversaries such as the bicentennial (1976) and the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor (1991). Drawing upon World War II for insight seems to also occur during periods of new war, including Korea during the early 1950s; Vietnam in the late 1960s; Reagan-era conflicts in Grenada, Central America and the Middle East; Gulf War I in the early 1990s; and Gulf War II in the 2000s.

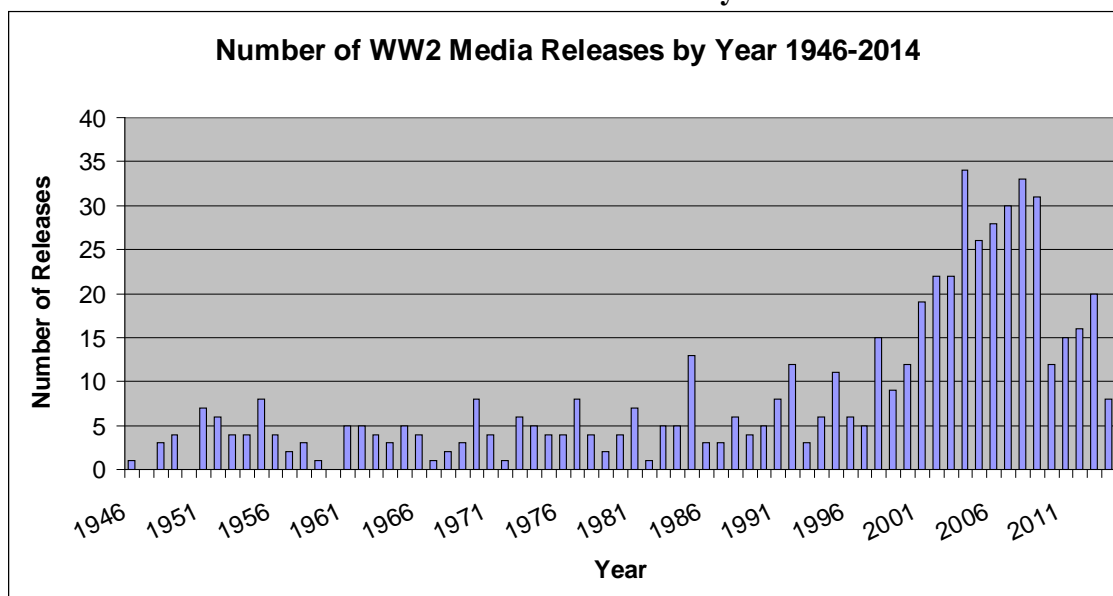
A judgment is also made about how much weight a particular media held for that era's audience. For example, the year 1962 did not meet the categorization criteria but is significant because of one World War II film release, *The Longest Day*. Meanwhile the year 2007 saw the release of twenty-seven World War II-themed video games—a high number of releases—but would not be discussed, due to a multitude of reasons. These include the demographics of those who play video games, and the fact that none of the video games released that year was a major release upon which the company supported its entire financial year, and there were no major World War II film releases.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Video games require a special mention. They did not exist in the immediate post-war era, at best some of these years contained analog war game releases. Post-1999, World War II-themed video games were an incredibly profitable segment of the entertainment market. However, the sheer volume of releases alone does not make them significant. If there were important video game releases or video game releases in combination with important books and films, then they are included in the counts.

My criteria<sup>25</sup> included that at least four releases, across at least four different media types, appear in every year of the multi-year cluster. There were exceptions (1948-1951, 1953, and 1969-1970); however, they are nonetheless included due to the cultural significance of the one or two – not four – releases from that year. The multi-year clusters that had a high number of World War II-themed releases across media types include: 1948-1951; 1953-1955; 1961-1962; 1969-1970; 1976-1977; 1984-1985; 1990-1994; 1998-2000; 2002-2004; and 2008. The media covered in this list includes books, feature films, television, magazines, comic books, war games (including board games), video games, and stage plays. See chart 1 for the number of releases broken down by year.

**Chart 1: Number of World War II Media Releases by Year 1946-2014**



<sup>25</sup> The media types were books, films, television, magazines, analog war games, stage plays, and after 1974, video games. My intention was to capture the era's media ecosystem. By having at least one release in each of at least four media types, this depicted for me a type of saturation or penetration into the popular consciousness. So for example, the 1953-1955 cluster contained three books, seven feature films, two television programs, three magazine issues devoted to the subject, and three new comic book series launched devoted to the subject. Such numbers made 1953-1955 a cluster of significance.

The first cluster of 1948-1951 and 1953-1955 includes World War II action films defined by noted film scholar and historian Jeanine Basinger (1986) as the “creation of filmed reality based on earlier films and history, with conscious use of genre” (p. 140). These clusters also include challenging productions including *The Naked and the Dead* (book), *The Caine Mutiny* (book and film), *From Here to Eternity* (book and film), and *Stalag 17* (film). Of course, both the new Cold War and the Korean War provided context for these representations of remembrance, as did the unveiling of the World War II-era Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima statue) on November 10, 1954.

The overview of this time period also supports two of Beidler’s (1998) points: the production logistic of “big war, big book, big movie” and the back-and-forth tension between representations of “The Good War” versus “The Great SNAFU.” Since Beidler’s research concluded in the mid- to late 1990s, the production logistic has continued with *Miracle at St. Anna* (2002 book, 2008 film) and *The Monuments Men* (2007 book, 2014 film).

The 1961-1962 cluster sees the release of Joseph Heller’s satirical novel *Catch-22* (1961) and James Jones’s novel *The Thin Red Line* (1962), which continued the complex character portraits shown in Jones’s novel *From Here to Eternity* (1951). Rounding out this group of works, which revealed the flaws of the war experience, is the film *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961), the first major US film release to directly engage with the Holocaust, being nominated for eleven Academy Awards. On the other side of the representational spectrum was the short-films; the much more successful series *Combat!* (1962-1967); and the light-hearted *McHale’s Navy* (1962-1966). The large-cast prestige



film *The Longest Day* (1962) is the exemplar from this cluster, both drawing upon and contributing to the aesthetic legacy of World War II remembrance.

By the late 1960s, with an incessant flood of images emanating from the television of US soldiers maimed and killed in Vietnam and subsequent outrage, a resurgence of pro-military sentiments arrived in certain media presentations. In 1968, John Wayne starred in the film *The Green Berets*, a war picture produced in the traditional mold but presented as a Vietnam drama. Other older-style films continued with *The Bridge at Remagen* (1969); *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970); the poor-performing (\$29 million box office from a \$25 million budget, IMDB.com) Pearl Harbor epic, executive produced by Darryl Zanuck (*The Longest Day*); the British-produced *Hell Boats* (1970); and the youth-oriented film *Hornets' Nest* (1970), which somewhat incongruously starred veteran film star Rock Hudson. Clint Eastwood also starred in the comedic *Kelly's Heroes* (1970), a traditional war picture with tinges of contemporary counter-culture perspectives played for laughs. The cluster is rounded out by Vonnegut publishing *Slaughterhouse Five* in 1969; the success of the film adaptation of Korean War dark comedy *M\*A\*S\*H\** in January 1970; the biographical portrait of George S. Patton in *Patton* (1970), whose lead George C. Scott won the Best Actor Academy Award for his portrayal; and the film version of *Catch-22* in June 1970.

In 1976 the film *Midway* was released, utilizing a large amount of footage from previous war pictures, including *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970), *Battle of Britain* (1969), *Away All Boats* (1956), and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944) for its action sequences, such as dogfights or Japanese air raids. *The Longest Day* (1959) author Cornelius Ryan had a subsequent book, *A Bridge Too Far* (1974) adapted into a film in 1977. Presented

as a classic war film, it nonetheless highlighted mistakes and missteps on the part of the US military during World War II. During this period, Gregory Peck starred in the biographic film *MacArthur* (1977), while television producer Stephen J. Cannell delivered the action television series *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (1976-1978). The following year saw a comedic take on World War II in the television series *Operation Petticoat* (1977-1979), based upon the film of the same name from 1959.

The Reagan presidency (1981-1989) ushered in a determined strategy to boost nationalistic morale, symbolized by slogans such as 1984's "Morning Again in America." Part of this strategy drew upon a heavy nostalgia for a time prior to the civil rights and anti-war conflicts of the 1960s. Though approximately nine years older than Brokaw's defined Greatest Generation, Reagan nonetheless drew upon his participation during wartime<sup>26</sup> to embody and espouse their ideals. It also helped that both 1981 and 1984 were fortieth anniversaries for key World War II events (the attack of Pearl Harbor and the D-Day landings). Both Time Magazine's: *D-Day: Forty Years after the Great Crusade* (cover date: 05/28/84) and NBC commemorated the anniversary. Meanwhile, the 1982 film adaptation of William Styron's 1979 novel *Sophie's Choice* kept the horrors of the Jewish Holocaust salient for American audiences; while Neil Simon was nostalgic for the period on stage in his play *Biloxi Blues* (1984) about basic training during the war, itself adapted into a feature film starring Matthew Broderick in 1988.

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<sup>26</sup> Ronald Reagan began at-home Army Extension courses in March 1935 and enlisted in the Army Enlisted Reserve in April 1937. Reagan was appointed Second Lieutenant in Officers Reserve Corps in May 1937, Reagan was ultimately ordered to active duty in April 1942. Due to poor eyesight he was classified for limited service only. Remaining state-side, Reagan served in Public Relations, the 1<sup>st</sup> Motion Picture Unit (helping to produce some 400 training films), and the Sixth War Loan Drive in New York City. (for more see the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library)

In 1985, the film *Code Name: Emerald* was released, while on television *Mussolini and I*, *The Dirty Dozen: The Next Mission*, *Jenny's War*, and *Hitler's SS: Portrait of Evil* were each produced. *Time* and *Life* magazines contributed, as well, with issues devoted to the atomic bomb (*Time* 07/29/85), *May 8, 1945: Never a Greater Day* (*Time* 04/29/85), *World War II: 40 Years Later* (*Life* magazine), and Reagan's visit to the former concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in Northern Germany (*Time* 05/13/85).

World War II media of the early 1990s, including commemorations produced for the fifty-year anniversaries of both Pearl Harbor and D-Day, have been observed by scholars such as Beidler (1998) Adams (1994). Remembrances during this period, defined for this project as the years 1990-1994, coincided with the first Gulf War as well as the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum on April 22, 1993. Ambrose's book *D-Day* and noted and popular historian David McCullough's *Truman* were both released in 1992. Also released during this period were the films *Memphis Belle* (1990), *For the Boys* (1991), *A Midnight Clear* (1992), *Shining Through* (1992), *Schindler's List* (1993), and *Swing Kids* (1993). On television viewers saw *Hiroshima: Out of the Ashes* (1990) and multiple network coverage of the *Fiftieth Anniversary of D-Day* (1994). *Time* magazine contributed with its *Pearl Harbor 50th Anniversary Special* (1991), while *Life* also covered Pearl Harbor in its 12/7/91 issue.

Later in 1994, *Time's* cover featured a photo of Eisenhower with the caption: "The Man Who Beat Hitler" (06/06/94). Most significantly for the future industry of World War II first-person shooter video games beginning in 1999, *Wolfenstein 3D* was released in 1992 for PC-DOS and published by Apogee. The protagonist begins the game trapped by the Nazi SS in Castle Wolfenstein and must shoot his way out and, ultimately,

stop the regime. Prior to its release, video games were two-dimensional, with the side-scrolling variety a popular form. *Wolfenstein 3D* required much more computer processing power to render the three-dimensional space represented by right-angle-only rooms, the protagonist from a point-of-view perspective – what we now understand as the first-person shooter viewpoint – walks through this series of spaces shooting Nazis. This three-dimensional space, now with the ability to render rooms of almost any shape rather than just-right angle, came in the form of 1993's *Doom* game.

## V. Sites of Discursive Analysis

This dissertation analyzes the salience of remembrance of World War II during the late 1990s and early 2000s in the United States. For the purposes of this project, remembrance includes the mass media texts and artifacts produced by the group this dissertation refers to broadly as the children of the Greatest Generation. These men did not create every representation, of course, but due to their stature in their respective fields brought greater awareness to and level of quality to their productions. This research works within the lineage of memory studies from Halbwachs's collective memory, Assmann's cultural memory, E. Zerubavel's sociobiographical memory, and Landsberg's prosthetic memory.

This research looks at remembrance in the following sites.

- ☐ Background on the rise of conservative governments in the UK and US.
- Speeches and proclamations from US President Ronald Reagan during the 1980s on the occasion of World War II anniversaries or World War II-connected Cold War events compared with the 1994 versions of these

documents under President Clinton. Also a focus on Reagan's speeches during the 1984 anniversary.

- ☐ Network television news coverage (including coverage featuring longtime *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw) from the fortieth anniversaries in 1984 and the 1994 commemorative TV landscape.
- ☐ Historian Stephen Ambrose's books *Band of Brothers* (1992) and *D-Day* (1994).
- ☐ Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), Brokaw's book *The Greatest Generation* (1998), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), and *Medal of Honor* (1999). – published at the peak of remembrance in the late 1990s.
- ☐ The early 21<sup>st</sup> century including The National World War II Museum, *Band of Brothers* (2001), the effect of 9/11, *Call of Duty* (2001), *The Pacific* (2010), *America: The Story of Us* (2010), WW2 & NYC, and The Imperial War Museum North.

This chapter of the dissertation presented research questions and provided context for why they were asked. In addition, this chapter covered the dissertation's methodology.

Chapter four provides context by introducing leaders who actively embraced heritage, such as Thatcher and Reagan who, during the late 1970s through the 1980s, created an atmosphere for a renewed patriotism moored in pre-Cold War geopolitics, draws upon existing scholarship produced about the early 1990s commemoration and remembrance of World War II resulting from the end of the Cold War, the erection of the

National Holocaust Museum, the release of *Schindler's List* (1993), and the first Gulf War.

Chapter five analyzes the salient texts from the late 1990s to interpret and outline the Boomers' representations of remembrance during their time of middle-age, their worries about a precarious employment economy, the new frontier of the World Wide Web. Chapter six analyzes artifacts related to World War II remembrance at the start of the twenty-first century and how 9/11 brought new relevance for these representations.

Chapter seven concludes this work with both a summary of its key points, and a few new thoughts including the desire to predict and control the future as a new application for my interest in observing attempts at shaping and controlling memory of past events.

## ***Chapter 4: Rise of Conservatism, Reagan in 1984, and 1991-1994 Commemoration***

### **I. Introduction**

This chapter covers two eras that are significant in providing a context for understanding the World War II commemoration of the late 1990s and early 2000s. These two eras are the rise of the heritage-leaning conservative governments of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and US president Ronald Reagan with an atmosphere for a renewed patriotism moored in pre-Cold War geopolitics, and the US media's coverage of the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day.

Ronald Wilson Reagan took the oath of office for the US Presidency on January 20, 1981. His first years turned into a whirlwind of events. During his inaugural address, fifty-two US hostages in Iran were released. Later the following year, he pushed for a controversial amendment on school prayer.<sup>27</sup> He survived an assassination attempt on March 30, he battled a federal air traffic controllers strike during the summer, and he stepped up aggressive tactics toward Libya and its leader, Moammar Gadhafi. This schedule, combined with fears of angering a strong Japan (Byron, 1981) by revisiting history, led to a Reagan-less fortieth anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1981.

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<sup>27</sup> On November 4, 1979 fifty-two US diplomats and citizens were taken hostage by The Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line inside the US Embassy in Tehran. They were held for four-hundred forty-four days and some suspect political motives for the timing of their release after Reagan's inaugural address. On May 17, 1982, Reagan proposed a constitutional amendment permitting organized prayer in public schools. On March 20, 1984, the Senate voted down the proposed amendment.

*NBC Nightly News*, anchored by John Chancellor, ran a special segment on the anniversary, as correspondent Jim Upshaw interviewed Pearl Harbor veterans from both the US and Japan. Intercut with images from the memorial site where servicemen folded a US flag, the segment conveyed a strong anti-war sentiment. The goal, one US veteran says is “that a mistake like the war in the Pacific is never again repeated” (Upshaw, 1981). During the summer of 1981 on July 29<sup>th</sup>, Congressmen Jim Courter (R-NJ) introduced a joint resolution to designate December 7, 1981, as “National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day” on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary. Looking back to the 1940s at the end of 1981 seemed a fitting bookend to how the year began – electing film actor and former California Gov. Ronald Reagan, whose brief Hollywood acting career peaked in 1942.

Confidence is a simplistic descriptor for why Ronald Reagan won the presidency from Jimmy Carter in 1980; Reagan possessed a confidence to know what the answer was, even if it was embedded in a revisionist understanding of history. Reagan wanted to change the US government, writing in his January 20, 1981, inaugural address “in this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problems, government is the problem.” Reagan looked back and drew upon the mythology of the World War II generation as embodying a time of sure purpose, bravery, and the willingness to successfully complete a tough job. He represented a possibility to return to these times, erasing the strife and instability of 1960s and 1970s. However, his own personal form of remembrance neglected the large governmental programs and efforts required to win such a war and provide post-war prosperity in the form of the GI Bill.



This impulse on the part of the Reagan administration and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was to reach backward into a selectively chosen history using it as a shield of utopian never-was to protect themselves from engaging in real complex societal issues. Tradition and heritage became dual handles for this shield. Especially in the United Kingdom, the impulse to reach backwards to a successful period – including resiliency and victory during World War II – increasingly became associated with the term “heritage.”

The term “heritage” began to acquire a special purchase across the UK during the 1970s, Thatcher mentioning it in her first speech as leader of the Conservative party in 1975 according to British cultural historian Robert Hewison (1995, p. 170). Mirroring the policies put forth by Reagan in the US, Thatcher promoted deregulation, privatization, and a renewed nationalism. The 1970s in the UK saw industrial archaeology recognized as a discipline, the flourishing of preservation societies; and “new museums opened at the rate of one a fortnight” (Hewison, 1995, p. 191).

## **II. Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan**

In November 1978, two politicians with direct ties to, and a worldview shaped by, World War II, met for a third time inside the British House of Commons in a soon-to-be-blossoming political relationship. Though Reagan, having just unsuccessfully run against Gerald Ford for the 1976 Republican nomination, initiated this third visit to Thatcher’s office, she nonetheless noted in her 1995 memoir thinking then about what a man like Reagan could do as US President. Margaret Thatcher becoming Prime Minister of the United Kingdom in 1979 and Ronald Reagan assuming the US presidency in 1981

coincided with the release of documentaries such as *In Dark Places: Remembering the Holocaust* (1978) and *Holocaust: The Children* (1981).

This was the first time in US television history that such documentaries distinguished the event by name and defined it as the “Nazi-led persecution of European Jewry” (Shandler, 1999, p. 23). The election of both Thatcher and Reagan, along with their active partnership in world affairs, would help shift the focus of World War II commemoration, beginning in the 1980s, from the witness and victim narratives of the 1970s back to the soldiers of their respective nations. While some viewed Reagan’s embrace of those who would be known as The Greatest Generation simply as a politician shoring up votes for Election Day, historian Douglas Brinkley sees earnestness on the part of Reagan regarding World War II and its generation. Brinkley (2005) notes Reagan’s near-perfect staging, delivery, and heartfelt belief in the speeches he delivered on the fortieth anniversary of D-Day in 1984.

Thatcher and Reagan’s privatization, military build-up, and Cold War mentality moored in the lessons of World War II, relied on the mythos of the last Good War to frame their political relationship, foreign policy, commemorative practices, and benchmark for renewed national strength.

On June 11, 2004, when Margaret Thatcher attended President Reagan’s state funeral, Harold Evans, commentator and former editor of *The Sunday Times* of London, told CNN “Churchill and Roosevelt had a relationship; I think the relationship between Thatcher and President Reagan was closer even than Churchill and Roosevelt” (Aldous, 2012, p. 1). Bard college professor of British history, Richard Aldous notes the two politicians would have enjoyed the assessment because they had actively attempted to

foster such a view during their time of leadership, even though the reality of their relationship was more complex. Back in 1944, Winston Churchill had written of a “special relationship” between the US and Britain that must be maintained so that another war would not occur. Since then, US-British relations have often been couched in such World War II-era language and diplomatic etiquette. Aldous notes “throughout the 1980s, both Thatcher and Reagan would echo the evangelizing Churchillian language of a “special relationship” (p. 9). For Thatcher, the British alliance with the US was “a first principle of foreign policy” (Aldous, 2012, p. 11). For the US Republican Party, Thatcher’s Conservative party during the 1970s was a possible life-raft in a post-Watergate world.

The US 1974 midterm elections saw the Republican Party lose forty-eight House seats and five Senate seats during a time of Watergate and economic recession (Adonis & Hames, 1994, p. 176). The election also altered the congressional GOP demographically: One-fourth of incumbent House Republicans left Capitol Hill, and all but eight of these members were born before 1929 or otherwise known as the World War II generation (Adonis & Hames, 1994, p. 177). Later in 1978, when the GOP once again gained seats in the House, only two of the newly elected GOP members were born before 1929, signaling a generational change. These 1978 freshman Republicans wanted their party elders to fight harder. One of the freshmen, Newt Gingrich, a former professor of contemporary European history, “wondered aloud how Republicans could adapt the Tories’ tactics to the US House floor (Adonis & Hames, 1994, p. 178).

The freshmen brought in Republican pollster Robert Teeter and people who had worked with British Conservatives to explain how to run a national campaign top to

bottom (Adonis & Hames, 1994, p. 178). These younger Republicans looked to Thatcher for both her campaign style and radical economic reform, hoping Reagan would adopt the same in 1980. Nonetheless, six of the major Republican 1980 presidential hopefuls were from the World War II generation (John B. Anderson,<sup>28</sup> Howard Baker, George H.W. Bush, John Connally, Bob Dole, and Ronald Reagan) and a seventh (Philip Crane) missed by just a few years (Adonis & Hames, 1993, p. 179). Key cabinet members, such as Secretary of State Alexander Haig (born 1924) and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger (born 1917), “shared the perspective of men who had served Douglas MacArthur and who viewed the globe through the Munich lens”<sup>29</sup> (Adonis and Hames, 1993, p. 180) that includes an increase in military spending within the Cold War context.

Both politicians shared a set of ideas within a context of national decline, and both were interested in a shared notion of “international order, liberal economics, small government, and a mobile society” (Adonis and Hames, 1994, p. 1). Both looked to free themselves of previous failures of their parties (Watergate in the US; miners’ strike in Britain). The failures of their respective parties combined with a perception of crisis within each nation led them to channel and focus their energies into issues of economics, security and international standing, and executive branch performance. The sum total of these fears provided the parameters for “the political and intellectual space” for Thatcher and Reagan’s version of conservatism (Adonis & Hames, 1994, p. 4). Their relationship was not an easy or simple one, but it was also not a nonexistent one dressed up by public

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<sup>28</sup> US Representative from Illinois, John B. Anderson served in the House as a Republican from 1961 through 1981. However, during the 1980 Presidential campaign, he ran as an independent.

<sup>29</sup> In September 1938, the Munich Agreement was signed by Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy to allow Adolf Hitler to annex portions of Czechoslovakia. This treaty was later viewed by many as the type of appeasement that helped Hitler rise to power. These Republicans and others from the generation sought never to repeat the failures of Munich and instead aggressively increase military budgets to stand up to would-be aggressors.

relations and the press. Reagan, known for his fondness for written correspondence, kept the lines of communication open with Prime Minister Thatcher, with a few notable exceptions.

In terms of 1980s foreign policy, Thatcher and Reagan were made uneasy by the seemingly revolving door of Soviet leaders, and during their earliest meetings, resolved to end the Cold War by taking a hard line against the Soviets. Their age and experiences allowing them to connect World War II to the 1980s Cold War, “they expressed to each other the feeling ... [to try] to resolve the problems left by the division of Europe endorsed by the Yalta Conference of 1945” (Wapshott, 2007, p. 226). This conference at the end of World War II, a war and a time that was significant to Reagan, as he began the transition from acting to presiding, and from Democrat to Republican.

In the 1940s, Ronald Reagan was a registered Democrat who campaigned for Harry Truman in 1948, but, as historian Douglas Brinkley writes, he “began to see himself not as a mere actor but as the California tribune of FDR-style democracy ... keeping the rhetorical anti-Fascist flame of FDR alive” (2005, p. 112). Brinkley situates Reagan’s salience as an anti-Communist, rather than just anti-Fascist, to an anti-Fascist speech Reagan gave at the Hollywood Beverly Christian Church during the late 1940s. After the speech the pastor suggested Reagan also add to his later speeches the threat of the “imploding danger of global communism” (Brinkley, 2005, p. 112). Reagan felt Truman wasn’t doing enough against this global terror and felt using the media of television and radio he had to tell the people about it directly, transforming “himself in to a modern-day Paul Revere sounding the alarm about the threat of global communism” (Brinkley, 2005, p. 113).

Emeritus UNLV professor of Communication Richard J. Jensen (2007), succinctly summarizes Reagan's approach as an orator when he writes "Reagan's ceremonial speeches contained many of the themes that formed the essence of his public messages: He looked to the past with nostalgia for a simpler, easier world while projecting a future full of peace, justice, and happiness" (p. 32). Finnish researcher Jan Hanska, in the book *Reagan's Mythical America: Storytelling as Political Leadership* (2012), notes that Reagan spoke of America not as it is or was but as it could or should be. Reagan's America "did not exist in the time of his presidency." It was "fictional, based on stories told and retold, and its shape and meaning vary from one telling to another to suit Reagan's purposes" (Hanska, 2012, p. 58). Author and journalist Gary Wills (1987) writes in *Reagan's America: Innocents at Home* that Reagan's conceptions of America are rooted in myth, fables, and Mark Twain novels.

Reagan wrote a response to those who felt his success as president and an orator stemmed mostly from his experience as a Hollywood actor: "An actor knows two important things – to be honest in what he is doing and to be in touch with the audience. That's not bad advice for a politician either. My actor's instinct simply told me to speak the truth as I saw it and felt it" (Reagan, 1989, p. 14). Jensen (2007) highlights journalist and biographer Lou Cannon's insight about the last line from Reagan's response – "the truth as I saw it and felt it." Cannon (2000) wrote, "What Reagan saw and felt as an actor frequently did not correspond to the facts ... and in a conflict between feelings and facts, [Reagan] usually gave greater weight to his feelings" (p. 21). For example, in November 1983 as Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir visited the US, Reagan said he and his

film corps unit had shot footage of the concentration camps, when in reality, Reagan never left the US, and his unit only processed footage from Europe.

In June 1982, on his first European trip as president, Reagan delivered a radio address from the Palace of Versailles “in which the time-honored memory of D-Day ... was given a fulsome embrace” (Brinkley, 2005, pp. 3-4). Two years later, on June 6, 1984, Reagan participated in a prominent fortieth anniversary public commemoration of D-Day at Normandy, the first sitting US president to do so (Kuhnhenh, 2014).

Eisenhower, Johnson, and Nixon each had been too busy with his own issues to directly participate. Eisenhower (1954) released a statement on June 6, 1954, stressing the “hope and inspiration” we can find from the event despite the “losses and suffering involved in that human effort”. Johnson, occupied with attempting to win ratification of his Civil Rights legislation, sent a twenty-two member delegation led by Gen. Omar Bradley to Normandy in his stead (Kuhnhenh, 2014; Lowrance, 2014).<sup>30</sup> By the time of the thirtieth anniversary, Nixon was just two months away from resignation, so he, too, sent Bradley to Normandy for the ceremonies.

Reagan’s trip to Normandy for the 1984 D-Day anniversary included his speech / event at Pointe du Hoc, a tour of the Ranger Monument, visiting the American cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, an event at the Omaha Beach memorial, and other smaller anniversary events. Peggy Noonan, one of Reagan’s top speechwriters and the author of his very successful *The Boys of Pointe du Hoc* speech, wrote she looked to FDR as a template for “the modern president ... the one who set the standard for how the rest

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<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that former US President Eisenhower did travel to Normandy in 1964 for the twentieth anniversary of D-Day and was a key component in a two-part CBS television special hosted by longtime (1962-1981) *CBS Evening News* host Walter Cronkite.

should sound” (Noonan, 1990, p. 52). Jensen (2007) feels Noonan’s point significant due to a young Reagan being a strong follower of Roosevelt and his policies; even after his conservative turn, Reagan quoted Roosevelt in his speeches often (p. 41).

According to Brinkley (2005), Reagan’s “The Boys of Pointe du Hoc” speech is one of only three significant or memorable Reagan speeches, the other two being his speech on the Challenger shuttle explosion and when he asked USSR General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev to “tear down this wall” on June 12, 1987. The Pointe du Hoc speech, Brinkley writes, was “the opening salvo to a new American indebtedness to World War II veterans.” Brinkley hypothesizes:

If it hadn’t been for Reagan’s two elegiac June 6, 1984 homilies – written by Peggy Noonan (Pointe du Hoc) and Anthony Dolan (Omaha Beach) – there may have never been Stephen Ambrose’s *Band of Brothers*, Tom Brokaw’s *The Greatest Generation*, Steven Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan*, or numerous memorials – like the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans – built to exalt the citizen soldiers who liberated Europe. (2005, p. 7)

Brinkley describes Reagan on the morning of the Pointe du Hoc speech as a man on a mission, with the surviving gray Army Rangers and families as an audience and Noonan’s solid speech both in hand and on the teleprompter. That mission, complete with a flag salute replete with conviction, was “to remind the American people – with the English Channel and the Pointe du Hoc Ranger Monument at his back – what true patriotism was all about” (Brinkley, 2005, p. 185).

The story of the Rangers climbing up the cliffside on D-Day under heavy fire, according to Brinkley, fit neatly into Reagan’s worldview, and acted as a metaphor for life defined by determination and faith. There was no room for complaints, rather just a “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” and try again mentality wrapped up in the Noonan-penned speech that was also “a distillation of his anti-Communist thinking of almost four



decades” (Brinkley, 2005, p. 185). Reagan’s oration was deemed spot-on, or as Brinkley relates then-White House Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver description, “a home-run” (2005, p. 187). Brinkley notes that famed CBS television-news anchor Walter Cronkite, though not a pro-Reagan reporter, was nonetheless moved by the speech. In his book *Reagan’s America*, historian Wills (1987) describes the speech as an example of Reagan providing the “past as present,” and Reagan’s message, as interpreted by Brinkley, is if these guys could fight against the Nazis, don’t we have an obligation to fight against the Soviets?

Brinkley (2005) highlights a particular letter sent to President Reagan prior to his The Boys of Pointe du Hoc speech that shows the emotional foundation behind Reagan’s enthusiasm for commemorating The Greatest Generation. The letter was from Lisa Zanatta Henn, the daughter of Private 1st Class Peter Robert Zanatta, a soldier who had landed as part of the first wave on Omaha Beach. Peter Zanatta survived the invasion, and his company was cited for outstanding work. He lived a full life, complete with a family, but died in 1976 of a brain tumor. His daughter Lisa and her siblings had always made a big deal of the D-Day anniversary as a sort of quasi-Father’s Day to recognize her father’s accomplishments. Her father had always planned to return to Normandy but never did.

In 1982, shortly after her wedding, a then twenty-six-year-old Henn sat down and wrote a four-page “story” attempting to preserve her father’s D-Day recollections that she titled “Someday Lis, I’ll Go Back.” Since Reagan had a penchant for reading fan mail, going back to his days as a matinee idol, “particularly those imbued with sentimentality” (Brinkley, 2005, p. 165), speechwriter Anthony Dolan knew the value of Henn’s letter

when it reached his desk in March 1984. Dolan sent Henn's letter up the White House chain of command while also incorporating some of its contents into his Omaha Beach speech draft. Since Dolan's childhood placed him around military families, Henn's voice came across genuine, and he felt very confident it would have the same effect on the president.

The reason Henn wrote to Reagan was to ask for logistical help in coordinating their trip to Normandy to attend the 1984 D-Day fortieth anniversary celebrations. Lisa and her family hoped to act not just as tourists but as representatives of the US. This request was her cover letter with the four-page tribute to her father attached. Henn's letter eventually made its way to Richard Darman, an assistant to the president who oversaw approximately two-thirds of the White House staff and acted, according to Brinkley, as "the guardian, his cluttered desk the last stop before a policy speech, white paper, or postcard could reach the President's desk" (p. 126). Darman was moved particularly by the letter's last five or six paragraphs; he immediately placed it in the Oval Office's in-box.

Brinkley (2005) describes the staff reaction to the letter as one of appreciation, but "Reagan was *overwhelmed* by it" (p. 175). An official invitation was extended with the proviso that the US government could not provide travel and accommodations. Once Reagan read the letter, he made the suggestion, interpreted by staff as a mandate, to find donors to financially assist the Zanatta family getting to Normandy. Money was found, and the family enjoyed VIP treatment while in Normandy.

Brinkley hypothesizes both the reason Henn's letter had such a strong effect and how her father's story was so valuable to Reagan. After his 1984 Normandy speech,

Reagan continued to mention the story of Zanatta in future speeches as well as correspond with Henn and her family. It was the "family-oriented, cross-generational aspect" (Brinkley, 2005, p. 202) that captivated Reagan, an elderly man estranged from his own daughters. Brinkley (2005) concludes "as men grow older ... they often hope that their daughters will be caretakers for them ... it was as if he hoped Lisa's loving disposition toward her deceased father would rub off" (p. 202) on his own daughters, Patti and Maureen. Reagan's use for Zanatta's story as a real-life narrative comprised four aspects. These include son of immigrant makes good in America, celebrating patriotism via military service, wartime service had a positive, liberating effect, and it helped assuage Reagan's guilt about not being a better father (Brinkley, 2005, p. 203).

Brinkley notes that his predecessor as director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies at the University of New Orleans, Stephen E. Ambrose, was one of many who helped to popularize the "we" generation, or what Brokaw would refer to as The Greatest Generation. Brinkley suggests some may view Reagan's appeals to this generation cynically, as just political speeches during a campaign year, he thinks this evaluation would not be entirely accurate. Although chronologically a bit older than most young men who comprised The Greatest Generation, Reagan, like more successful actors of his generation who participated in the war, was nonetheless considered a part of the generation. Reagan was in his early thirties during the conflict, while, for example, fellow actors such as Jimmy Stewart was in his mid-to-late thirties and Clark Gable was in his forties and both participated in combat. Reagan, though never a combat participant, nonetheless felt himself a part of the war effort through his acting in training films for the

First Motion Picture Unit, and thus “believed his Normandy addresses to the bottom of his heart” (Brinkley, 2005, p. 195).

Reagan’s speeches at Pointe du Hoc and Omaha Beach in 1984 were tremendously successful. However, the gaffe at the German military cemetery at Bitburg destroyed much of the goodwill built up from those speeches. Brinkley (2005) goes so far as to suggest for a few months “He [Reagan] almost lost credibility with the members of the ‘we’ generation” (p. 200) over the Bitburg cemetery visit.

Noonan wanted to provide Reagan a “frank, sweeping, philosophical address” during his ten-day trip to Europe in May 1985 (Schlesinger, 2008, p. 343). Reagan would address the 434-member European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, to mark the fortieth anniversary of V-E Day. Noonan revised a polite, somewhat dull draft using candor and what she knew to be the President’s feelings. Focusing on the threat of the Soviet Union, Noonan’s draft read, “History has taught us a lesson we must never forget: Totalitarians do not stop – they must be stopped” (Schlesinger, 2008, p. 344).

The stop at the German military cemetery proved controversial for President Reagan. Chancellor Kohl wanted it because he had successfully visited a World War I battlefield at Verdun with the French president Mitterand in 1984 (Jensen, 2007, p. 17). Reagan agreed to do it for political reasons. His visit coincided with West Germany elections, with the cemetery located in a key region for Kohl’s party. In addition, the visit may have been scheduled to pay back Kohl for allowing US Pershing missiles to be deployed in Germany in 1983 and to keep US-West German relations strong in the face of Soviet opposition (Jensen, 2007, p. 17). Reagan met West Germany Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Washington, D.C., on November 30, 1984, and the Chancellor stressed

how important it was for his country to be included in the upcoming V-E (Victory in Europe) day commemorations as part of Reagan's European trip (Jensen, 2007, p. 16). When it became known that the cemetery held the remains of German soldiers who had served in the Waffen SS (Nazi party's military force), Jewish groups, veterans groups, and members of Congress called foul. In order to minimize the potential criticism, Reagan added the visit to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp to his itinerary and the later speech at the Bitburg Air Force base (Jensen, 2007, p. 17).

This is not to suggest that during the early to mid-1980s there were no alternative voices regarding the remembrance of World War II. Studs Terkel's 1984 book "*The Good War*" provided oral histories from those who participate in and lived through the conflict. The quotation marks on the title are deliberate, evoking a questioning of common assertions of the justness of the war. *The New York Times* writer Edward Rothstein noted in a posthumous remembrance of Terkel two days after he passed that in a 1986 reissue of Terkel's 1970 book about the Great Depression, *Hard Times*, Terkel wrote a new introduction targeted directly at Reagan's administration. "In the '30s, an administration recognized a need and lent a hand. Today an administration recognizes an image and lends a smile," Terkel wrote (Rothstein, 2008, para. 10).

### **III. 1984 News Media Commemorative Coverage**

"The D-Day commemorations, then, display the full powers of the mass media as mythic producers of teletraditional collective memory in America." (Luke, 1989, p. 163)

Virginia Tech distinguished professor of political science Timothy W. Luke, in his 1989 book *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination, and Resistance in Informational*

*Society*, described the 1984 D-Day commemoration as “reaffirming the icons, illusions, and images of 1944 to answer the challenges of 1984” (p. 160). The utility of the images created are equated by Luke (1989) to those from a classic rock concert or sporting match to be “screened up for perpetual citation at future political anniversaries, international summits, or bilateral meetings that might need some heroic recall of transnational Western unity” (p. 159). As a political scientist, Luke (1989) focuses on Reagan’s call to reaffirm transnational unity and attempts to create a bridge between generations of political elite or “ ‘veterans’ that see the world in these mythic terms and wishes its successors to share the same fantasies of power, solidarity, and destiny” (p. 165).

Luke, writing in 1989 describing the anniversary occurring in 1984, seems to be suggesting an occurrence of a sort of inverted prosthetic memory. Rather than being born within trauma of a war experience, it is built from a success derived from national alliances and is attempted to be passed on to the national elites of the 1980s. Luke’s interpretation of the 1984 commemoration is as an “ideopolitical commodity” that is remanufactured, renovated, and sold, rather than merely remembered by the corporate media in the “psychosocial markets” of the 1980s (p. 160). This interpretation fuses trauma, governmental commemoration, memory, and a propaganda war. Luke’s (1989) observation of the 1984 spectacle resulted in his categorizing the coverage around three images: 1) old battle footage sound-tracked to gunfire or big-band swing music; 2) veterans walking Normandy fields; 3) Western leaders acting out rituals of commemoration.

Both CBS and NBC reused old footage and scripts during their 1984 D-Day coverage. Both networks broadcast D-Day specials; CBS re-aired its 1964 *D-Day + 20*

*Years* featuring Eisenhower and Cronkite. NBC mixed 1944 with 1984 footage. As much as the power of this 1984 D-Day commemoration is the work of Reagan and his staff, *NBC Nightly News* anchor Tom Brokaw began his contribution to the eventual late 1990s remembrance here in 1984 as part of the NBC coverage. For example, during Brokaw's special *D-Day Plus 40*,<sup>31</sup> we got a taste of the nostalgic generalizations he would find a large audience for some fourteen years later when he said:

The passage of time has softened those memories, even the painful memories. The terrible personal sacrifices were cushioned by a common purpose, shared values unquestioned. What comes through is the innocence, the goodness of those days. The war was the not the same after D-Day, and neither were we. (NBC, 1984 cited in Zelizer, Tenenboim-Weinblatt, & Kitch, 2014)

Such flowery prose leads Luke (1989) to describe the commemorations as “jaded musings over American unity found in 1944 and lost since 1964, back scored with a medley of nostalgic big band swing hits” (p. 163). All of this nostalgia and commemoration as bridge for political memory is built around a single military event: D-Day. While the event certainly was covered prior to 1984 – especially in *The Longest Day* (1959) book and *The Longest Day* (1962) film – Reagan's opportunistic stagecraft, the incontestable victory it symbolized to the US and later Ambrose's book on the topic, *D-Day: June 6, 1944* (1994), began to take up a disproportionate amount of space in our memory of World War II.

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<sup>31</sup> The fifty-two minute NBC News special *D-Day Plus 40*, hosted by Tom Brokaw, came in at number thirty-eight for that week's A.C. Nielsen television ratings. While CBS's *D-Day & Eisenhower* came in at number forty-six. While neither show was in the top ten or even top twenty, NBC's special did beat popular programs *Knight Rider* and *Knot's Landing* (Broadcasting, June 18, 1984, p. 40). ABC's *Nightline* got more creative by constructing a broadcast that simulated how they would have covered the D-Day landings had there been satellite-relayed television in 1944 (Kaplan, 1984, para. 2).

## D-Day

Reaffirming our understanding of World War II as both a physical and informational war, historians Michael Dolski, Sam Edwards, and John Buckley in their book *D-Day in History and Memory: The Normandy Landings in International Remembrance and Commemoration* (2014) describe writers, filmmakers and photographers embedded with the invasion soldiers eager to interpret and record the event. They note that “many of those involved in Overlord were very aware that they were living history” (Dolski, Edwards, & Buckley, 2014, p. 15). Dolski et. al state that the effort to ascribe meaning to D-Day began from day one. This propaganda, followed by immediate post-war memory, was re-filtered through second-generation memory beginning in the 1980s. Roosevelt, via radio address at 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on June 6, 1944, framed the attack and the war effort in general, in moralistic tones. The men “fought not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate” (Roosevelt, radio address D-Day prayer, June 6, 1944).

Eisenhower’s order of the day prior to the landings described them as a “great crusade,” and his words received wide distribution (Dolski, Edwards, & Buckley, 2014, p. 46). This phrase was used in Eisenhower’s 1948 book on the war, reinforcing this early framing of D-Day. Within a week of the invasion, newsreels focused on honoring the common soldiers who won the day, emphasizing “the common ethos of the fighting forces” (Dolski, Edwards, & Buckley, 2014, p. 47) and, of course, embedded photojournalist Robert Capa’s photographs became a foundational reference for later remembering. We understand that World War II was a propaganda war with a deliberate attempt to use images to persuade and remember. However, my dissertation attempts to



nuance the 1990s engagement with World War II memory by going beyond just the “continuation of original propaganda” line of thought.

Dwight D. Eisenhower did mark the one-year anniversary (June 6, 1945) of D-Day but it was via “somewhat muted ceremonies and celebrations” (Dolski, Edwards, & Buckley, 2014, p. 15) since World War II itself did not end until September 2, 1945. When Eisenhower became president he was actually too busy to directly participate in the ten-year anniversary of D-Day. He nonetheless released a statement on the day of the anniversary, June 6, 1954, stressing the “hope and inspiration” people can find from D-Day despite the “losses and suffering involved in that human effort” (Eisenhower, 1954). A local monument to the D-Day dead was dedicated on June 6, 1954, in Bedford, Virginia as a tribute to the high number of young men from that county lost during the war and consisted of a slab of rock cut from the Normandy bluffs (Dolski, Edwards, & Buckley, 2014, p. 51).

Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon also had been too tied up in their own issues to directly participate on the twentieth and thirtieth anniversaries. President Johnson, sent a twenty-two-member delegation led by Gen. Omar Bradley in his place as he wrestled with getting his Civil Rights legislation passed (Kuhnhehn, 2014; Lowrance, 2014). However, in 1964, former US President Eisenhower did travel to Normandy for the twentieth anniversary and was interviewed by CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite for a two-part CBS television special about the anniversary. In 1974, President Richard Nixon was embroiled in his Watergate scandal, so for the thirtieth anniversary he, too, sent Gen. Omar Bradley to Normandy for the ceremonies. President Carter did visit the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial on January 5, 1978,

and gave a speech. However, since it was neither a round anniversary year, nor the right month, his speech did not attain the same resonance as Reagan's six years later.

Dan Schill, a communication scholar at Southern Methodist University, uses the 1984 Pointe du Hoc speech as a case study for analyzing media events in his book *Stagecraft and Statecraft* (2009). Working from speechwriting files at the Reagan library, Schill found extensive press clippings for the then-upcoming 1984 D-Day fortieth anniversary celebrations. Schill presumes these articles were used by the president's staff to plan their events and "set them in their appropriate contexts" (2009, p. 31). Schill theorizes that the US would most likely have rallied around World War II veterans for the anniversary without Reagan, but once Reagan planted himself in the setting of Pointe du Hoc, the country also rallied around him. The event allowed Reagan to present himself as a "new patriot who was willing to confront communism, but sought peace over war" (Schill, 2009, p. 95). An early memo from the advance trip planning described the objectives: "Normandy symbolizes the US commitment to Europe ... remarks at the Pointe du Hoc ceremony ... should be emotional, stirring, and personal" (Schill, 2009, p. 96 reproducing a memo from Reagan Library). Additional memos also show a priority for placing Reagan within dramatic and colorful settings.

Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Deaver and Special Assistant to the President William Henkel traveled to Normandy prior to Reagan's trip to scout locations among other advance duties. Both were drawn to the jagged cliffs of Pointe du Hoc as a dramatic setting, and Deaver in particular was focused on the choreography of the event, with the coast with its fleet of ships as a backdrop. The Reagan team sent TV producers stories about the veterans ("the boys") who would be in attendance. Deaver understood the

emotional impact he was helping to construct; thinking through the interplay between camera shot, Reagan's words, and the veterans in attendance listening. Reagan would say a word, the camera would cut to the veteran audience, when Reagan acknowledged them, and the camera would cut back to the President "wiping away tears. It would be a powerful image" (Deaver quoted in Brinkley, 2005, p. 176).

Schill compares the amount of time, money, and attention to detail that went into planning Reagan's Normandy trip to the amount of time and care a speechwriter puts into writing a magnificent speech. One particular effort was changing the time Reagan spoke. Originally, Reagan was to be greeted by French president Francois Mitterrand in a French-American ceremony at Omaha Beach at 4 p.m. (10 a.m. EDT). Knowing that 10 a.m. would be too late for morning television news shows in the eastern US, the Reagan team pushed for Reagan to speak early and got it (Schill, 2009, p. 99). The result was that Reagan was heard by millions on all three networks the morning after the final Democratic presidential primary of the year. Schill notes that most US television and newspaper coverage was positive, utilizing visuals not dissimilar to Reagan's own "Morning in America" television campaign ads. Major European networks also covered the speech as well (United States, Congress, House, & Committee on Veterans' Affairs, 1984, p. 17).

The 1984 fortieth anniversary of D-Day was an event both politically useful and memorable to President Reagan, but he wasn't the only contemporary member of the US government to enthusiastically embrace the commemoration. Thirty-year US House of Representatives member from Mississippi G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery led a delegation of eighteen House members to France to represent the entire House. This trip, as well as

other details from the commemoration, was documented in *D-Day Plus 40 Years: Report on Observance of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs* (1984).<sup>32</sup> H.J. Res. 487 (Public Law 98-311) was approved by Congress to designate June 6, 1984, as a day of D-Day National Remembrance. President Reagan issued a proclamation on May 31, 1984, for US citizens to commemorate “the valor of those who served in the D-Day assault forces” (United States et al., 1984, p. 1). Many of the members of the 1984 House delegation either participated in the invasion or saw action in the European theater during the war, including lead author of the *D-Day Plus 40 Years* report, Montgomery, who had served in both World War II and Korea. This 1984 report describes the Normandy invasion as “an impossible task ... a story that is a powerful part of our past and our future” (United States et al., 1984, p. 1).

For example, the Pointe du Hoc area, with its large stone monument, is administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission and was given in perpetuity to the US House delegation’s reaction to Reagan’s speech on June 6, 1984, mirrored many of the news media’s and general audience’s, mentioning it as a highlight of the trip and calling it a “glorious occasion” (United States et al., 1984, p. 16). Included with the House’s 1984 report is a set of press clippings positive to the commemorative events. In one sense, this is expected since Montgomery and his delegation probably would not have included negative assessments. In another sense, it supports the effect Reagan was hoping to accomplish as many in the news media responded positively to the anniversary. This could be partially explained by the perspective some scholars take

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<sup>32</sup> The report was not an official statement about the events of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, rather the delegation’s direct responsibilities were to evaluate the American Battle Monuments Commission and its administration of memorials in France.

regarding the desirability of anniversary coverage due to its cost-effectiveness (Keith, 2012; Johnson, 2008). Montgomery's choice of words could be mistaken for a World War II film's DVD box cover or publicity quotes from the latest World War II book. Montgomery describes these press accounts as capturing "the tributes, the memories, the drama, the solemnity, the daring and the personalities that marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary" (United States et al., 1984, p. 31).

It should be noted that the report includes a column by Andy Rooney from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on June 3, 1984, where Rooney presents conversational transcripts of fellow veterans who spoke to in France about the invasion. Rooney remarks these men's plain speech and matter of fact recounting of the invasion makes it difficult to know them as heroes without the context. This remark, along with Rooney's later words challenging the generation's "greatness," leaves the reader with a more open-ended feeling. Is Rooney praising them for being unassuming heroes or is he bringing to light the hype and heroic framing others force upon these level-headed men? However, when placed within the context of Montgomery's report, it falls squarely in the former category.

Another article included in *D-Day Plus 40 Years* was an article written by Peter Almond in *The Washington Times* dated June 6, 1984. Almond wrote in his article "journalists and historians have been working overtime to find new angles on the D-Day story" (United States et al., 1984, p. 36). Almond implies that the audience was tired of, apathetic to, or ignorant about the subject of World War II. One of those new angles or stories was about Juan Pugol Garcia, a Spanish double-agent, who had told the Germans that Normandy was only a diversion for a bigger invasion at Calais. I note this somewhat

anecdotal information from Almond's article included in the report to show support for the idea that Reagan reactivated an engagement with World War II. This re-engagement may not necessarily be the same as simply continuing propaganda or an eternal victory lap playing the greatest hits (Beidler, 1998). My interpretation is that for many World War II was not salient in their minds, with the exception of the Holocaust remembrances of the late 1970s, and when prompted by a White House supported commemoration had to figure out how to re-engage with it.

The result of Reagan's re-engagement with World War II, D-Day in particular, and the idea of the common soldier as hero was felt immediately in part in his landslide election victory in 1984 and later, in 1988, in the use of World War II bona fides by other candidates. Roeder mentions in his book *The Censored War* that during the 1988 presidential campaign candidates consistently called on World War II the most, and the most confidently, in order to "confirm their stature" (1993, p. 3). In that campaign, both GOP candidates Robert Dole and George Bush used imagery of the hazards each faced during the war in their campaign advertisements. US Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, a Texas Democrat, was ushered to the stage at the Democratic National Convention to the Army Air Corps song "Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder" to accept the vice-presidential nomination. President George H.W. Bush's inaugural parade float featured the same model of plane he flew during the war (Roeder, 1993, p. 3).

#### **IV. Early 1990s Commemoration**

The early 1990s the commemoration Reagan began in 1984 in Normandy and continued the forms laid down by him and the television networks during the fiftieth anniversaries of Pearl Harbor (1991), D-Day (1994), and the end of World War II (1995).

Scholars were witnessing commemorations and writing about them, as Michael C. Adams did in *The Best War Ever: America and World War II* (1994) and Philip Beidler did in *The Good War's Greatest Hits: World War II and American Remembering* (1998). The era of the Greatest Generation was perceived as becoming “a benchmark of excellence, not only in things military but in all areas of life” (Adams, 1994, p. 4).

Historian Philip Beidler published his book *The Good War's Greatest Hits* in 1998 and presumably wrote it perhaps in 1996 or 1997. His thesis is that World War II built up a large media production infrastructure that was used post-war to cyclically embark on a victory lap regarding our success in the war. The canon that comprises these remembrances is divided by Beidler as “The Good War” and “The Great SNAFU.” Reflecting on the 1990s, Beidler remarked that audiences were still buying *The Good War* while only the “literary-critical intelligentsia” (1998, p. 170) were interested in the Great SNAFU.

Remarking specifically on the fiftieth anniversary “market” as “flourishing” for “nearly a decade’s existence,” Beidler contends that the printed word about Allied victory seemed to always have an audience, while TV and film about World War II “fuel content for both classic movie channels and the home video market” (1998, p. 170). We can quibble with the nearly-a-decade’s-existence remark since it is probably closer to five years for Beidler yet he is nonetheless supportably cognizant of the seemingly institutionalized embracement of remembering World War II the way Reagan began it, Ambrose reinforced it, Brokaw sloganized it, and Spielberg would soon be rewarded for it.

It is interesting to note, too, that just prior to the start of the 1990s, there was an emphasis on television and cinema screens for representations of the Vietnam conflict. This emphasis was a bookend to the representations that had begun during the 1970s with *Coming Home* (1978), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and popcorn Vietnam films told through the lens of Reagan's style of patriotism, such as *Missing in Action* (1984) and *First Blood: Part 2* (1985). During the latter part of the 1980s, we saw films such as *Platoon* (1986), *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987), and *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989). On television we saw *China Beach* (ABC, 1988-1991) and *Tour of Duty* (CBS, 1987-1990). This salient Vietnam context is remarked on by Beidler when he mentions the 1989 release by Life Magazine's *Life's WWII*, describing it as "serious enough to run with the new competitors [Vietnam, death, PTSD] but familiar enough to strike the old appeal [World War II, clean war, The Good War]" (Beidler, 1998, p. 75).

A renewed patriotism due to a "successful" Gulf War (1990-1991) provided one helpful context. After Iraq occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990, a coalition force led by the United States – with the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt as major contributors – began with an air campaign on January 17, 1991. This campaign, combined with a ground attack, ended the occupation by late February 1991. Another exemplar of this early 1990s patriotism can be seen in the production of the NFL's Super Bowl XXV, with its highlight of a superstar rendition of the "Star-Spangled Banner" by then-pop sensation Whitney Houston. In late 1991, the dissolution of the USSR also provided context for World War II remembrance. On one hand, it reaffirmed that we had won the Cold War, thus pumping up national pride. On the other hand, with the absence



of our main antagonist on the world stage after some forty-six odd years, we craved nostalgia for older political formations and our victories against them.

President George H.W. Bush's speech on January 16, 1991, regarding the US's air strike in Iraq attracted the largest television audience in history up until that point (Carter, 1991). CNN enjoyed its highest rating in its history until that time, a 19.1 share, when the network's average during prime time had been less than one ratings point (Carter, 1991). Indeed, US media dominated coverage, particularly CNN. CNN had reporters and cameras embedded in Baghdad and Israel, and offered live coverage of government press conferences. This allowed both the Pentagon and the Bush administration to "control the flow of images and discourses and thus to manage the TV spectacle of the Gulf War" (Kellner, 2004, para. 2). These high ratings for a war with a high probability for a US victory were not forgotten by the networks when the fiftieth anniversary of our greatest victory drew near. After the success of the fortieth anniversary of D-Day for both Reagan and networks such as NBC, combined with an expanded need for programming thanks to the continued rise of cable television, 1994 was shaping up to be a large commemorative anniversary.

We also saw an expansion of cable television channels during the 1990s. Due in part to the repeal of the Financial Interest and Syndication (Fin-Syn) rules<sup>33</sup>, these channels were often off-shoots of existing network brands (e.g. CNBC in 1991) or niche programming backed by a joint venture, such as the Sci-Fi Channel begun as a national

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<sup>33</sup> The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) instituted these rules in 1970. These rules prohibited television networks from owning programming they aired beyond first-run syndication and from owning domestic syndication arms. By taking away some financial incentive, the FCC hoped to promote independent producers who could offer more diverse and innovative content. The rules began to be relaxed during the 1980s and were abolished completely in 1993 (see Edgerton, 2010; McAlister, 1995).

channel by Paramount Pictures and MCA/Universal after purchasing it from smaller entrepreneurs (Carter, 1992). Among the new channels that required content and a reason for audiences to stay tuned was The History Channel, launched on January 1, 1995 and operated by A&E networks, a joint venture between the Hearst Corporation and The Walt Disney Company (Carter, 1996).

Library of Congress film archivist Brian Taves, writing about the early years of The History Channel in his entry for *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (2001) shows how the channel's reusing and repurposing of existing content allowed renewed opportunity for visibility for quality content. Similar to Salvati and Bullinger's (2013) focus on technological fetishism, Taves too remarks on the channel's consistent focus on technological history. Taves was less kind when interpreting the channel's attempts at programming beyond pre-existing documentary. Some historians and viewers alike to flippantly note that the beginning of the channel seemed to run solely on the original US Signal Corps. World War II footage.

A plethora of highly-fictive dramas, extreme edits to films to allow time for commercials and historian comments, and a wide variety of historical rigor programmed alongside one another are all noted (Taves, 2001, p. 268). The channel eventually received the derisive nickname of "The Hitler Channel" due to its emphasis on World War II-based programming (Stanley, 2015). The initial demographic were "affluent white men between 24 and 54" and whose programming was "dominated by up to forty hours a week devoted to World War II" (Curtin and Shattuc, 2009, p. 122). The channel, like other cable channels, eventually moved away from its original content. Most of the

World War II programming has been moved to its sister channel, The Military Channel, begun on January 5, 2005 (Stahl, 2010).

#### 1991 Pearl Harbor Anniversary

The 1991 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor prompted thousands of veterans to travel to Hawaii to attend ceremonies, including one around the sunken battleship *USS Arizona*. Bodnar (2010) notes that news reporters at the time were quick to note the irony of the commemoration as American veterans passed large numbers of Japanese tourists who were visiting Hawaii for vacation. Then-president George H.W. Bush, a veteran of World War II, spoke during the anniversary events. President Bush stressed the victories of World Wars I and II as well as the Cold War, which had just recently come to a close.

Tensions that existed during the commemoration revolved around the US's decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and whether the US should formally apologize for doing so. A Japanese and US television co-production that aired on ABC titled *Pearl Harbor: Two Hours That Changed the World* provided a balanced perspective regarding the relations at the time between the two countries. The significant context for this in 1991 was the growing economic dominance of Japan and the delicate balance between touting its victory of 1945, recent victory in the Cold War, and their declining position as the sole post-war economic superpower. ABC's *Pearl Harbor* featured veterans such as Democratic US Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, who would later be one of many profiled in Brokaw's 1998 book, *The Greatest Generation*. CBS News produced *Remembering Pearl Harbor* using its top talent, Charles Kuralt and Dan Rather. PBS, via its *American Experience* program, produced *Pearl Harbor: Surprise and*

*Remembrance* (WGBH). Michael Hill, reviewing the ABC and CBS productions for *The Baltimore Sun* at the time, describes ABC's effort as a "first rate summary of the events" (Hill, 1991, para. 10) that nonetheless does not match the "emotional power" (Hill, 1991, para. 11) of CBS's effort. Hill's description of Pearl Harbor is couched in epic language when he describes it as the "fulcrum for the lever that would forever alter the history of the planet" (1991, para. 1). Hill also expresses the economic worries of 1991 in regard to the Japanese when he concludes with the idea that Pearl Harbor may have changed our thinking but "watching these two specials recorded on Japanese cassettes, playing on a Panasonic VCR through a Toshiba television set makes you think that maybe the thinking has changed again" (1991, para. 19). NBC chose, rather than a documentary, to re-broadcast instead ABC's 1978 fictional mini-series *Pearl*, starring Angie Dickinson, cutting the series down from six to five hours of programming.

## Holocaust

Shandler, in his 1999 book *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust*, notes our tendency during the mid-1990s to compare and refer to the Holocaust in our everyday interactions. Shandler's list of Invocations of the Holocaust includes the following. On the April 2, 1995, episode of CBS's *60 Minutes* story Tales from the Dirty War about 1970s Argentine government throwing dissidents out of planes into the ocean, an official compares the bodies to Holocaust photos. On July 27, 1995, an appeal to President Clinton from the Muslim Public Affairs Council runs before the CNN evening news with juxtaposed images of Nazi persecution and contemporary TV images from the Balkans. On September 28, 1995 US defense attorney Johnny Cochran, during the OJ Simpson murder trial, compares Los Angeles police detective Mark Fuhrman to Hitler

saying that his attitudes toward African Americans a “genocidal racist.” Later on ABC News *Nightline*, commentator Robert Philibosian compares his own Armenian heritage to the Holocaust: “own genocide at the hands of the Turks” (Shandler, 1999, pp. xii-xiii). *The New York Times* on October 23, 1995, reported increasing frequency within political campaigns of using Nazi and Hitler analogies, noting one political campaign using footage from *Schindler’s List*.

The early 1990s was a particularly salient time for public Holocaust remembrance. University of Bristol professor of social history Tim Cole, in his book *Selling the Holocaust: From Auschwitz to Schindler; How History is Bought, Packaged and Sold* (1999), called the early to mid-1990s obsession with the Holocaust a “relatively recent phenomenon” (p. 1). The book focuses on the rise of the myth of the Holocaust over the previous thirty years, focusing on three people, Anne Frank (Jewish diarist and victim of the Holocaust), Adolf Eichmann (German logistics commander for the Holocaust), and Oskar Schindler (German industrialist who saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust) and three places, Auschwitz (German concentration camp), Yad Vashem (Israel’s official memorial in Jerusalem to the victims of the Holocaust, established 1953), and the US Holocaust Museum (US’s official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, established 1953). Cole looks to the effect of years of Holocaust images available to us as a repository, remarking just “the sight of tattooed numbers triggers a whole stock of mental images” (1999, p. 2).

What Cole is driving at is the observation that “The Holocaust” in popular consciousness and as a significant destination within educational tourism, seems to have taken on a life of its own, separating itself from the actual terrible complex nightmare of

1933-1945, as it is publicly commemorated and sold back to the public. Phillip Lopate, a member of the Columbia University writing faculty, has been one of the most outspoken critics of this very distinct, public formulation of Holocaust remembrance of the late twentieth century. Writing in 1989, Lopate states, “in my own mind I continue to distinguish, ever so slightly, between the disaster visited on the Jews and ‘the Holocaust’” (p. 56). Elie Wiesel, a Nazi concentration camp survivor, prolific author, and winner of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, had his Holocaust memoir *Night* published in English in 1960. While the book was not a bestseller initially, it received favorable reviews that led to numerous media interviews, increasing Wiesel’s profile, allowing him to become a prominent voice and champion for the victims and survivors. Lopate strongly associates individuals such as Wiesel with the public, mainstream commemorative version of “The Holocaust” and wrote in 1989, “Sometimes it almost seems that ‘the Holocaust’ is a corporation headed by Elie Wiesel, who defends his patents with articles in the Arts and Leisure section of the Sunday Times” (1989, p. 56).

The early 1990s commemoration of World War II after 1991’s 50 anniversary of Pearl Harbor centered around two major events: the 1993 opening of The US Holocaust Memorial Museum and subsequent release of Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* and the 1994 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day. Subsequently, less time was given in 1995 for the anniversary of the conclusion of the war or VE (Victory in Europe) Day. The rest of this chapter is organized chronologically by year dealing with both the remembrance of the Holocaust and D-Day, while also accounting for Stephen E. Ambrose’s presence via his successful literary contributions.

1992

In the fall of 1992, MTV and other cable networks ran a public service announcement to get young Americans to turn out and vote in the national election and used liberation camp footage and Nazi book-burning footage with a voice-over that said, “We’d like to take this opportunity to remind you of why so many of us came to this country in the first place” and “Vote – for all the people who didn’t make it” (Shandler, 1999, p. 26). Shandler notes that no caption or narration is used to identify the footage. Rather it is assumed the young audience already knows what the footage represents. On one hand the Pearl Harbor commemoration was relatively fresh, and Reagan had begun laying a foundation for World War II remembrance since 1984. On the other hand, one wouldn’t necessarily expect eighteen-year-olds in 1992 to be cognizant of details of World War II. Their parents, however, would probably have supported World War II-themed efforts, particularly from author Stephen E. Ambrose. Ambrose’s books, wrote scholar Edward Wood Jr., have “helped America define the role of the infantry in Europe in World War II” (2006, p. 76).

Ambrose released *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506<sup>th</sup> Regiment 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne from Normandy to Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest* in 1992. Previously he had published *Pegasus Bridge: June 6, 1944* in 1985. In the acknowledgments and sources section of *Band of Brothers*, Ambrose mentions that he had wanted to return to military history after finishing his third volume of his biography on Richard Nixon. In particular he had wanted to write about D-Day but “did not want to begin the writing until 1992 with the intention of publishing it on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, June 6, 1994” (1992, p. 318). His involvement with his subject began in 1988 with an E Company reunion. On the last page

of *Band of Brothers* Ambrose notes he was ten years old when World War II ended and notes “like many other American men my age, I have always admired – nay, stood in awe of—the G.I.s. I thought what they had done was beyond praise. I still do. (1992, p. 320).

Ambrose in *Band of Brothers* begins with the dedication “to all the members of the Parachute Infantry, United States Army, 1941-1945, who wear the Purple Heart not as a decoration but as a badge of office” With this dedication, Ambrose situates his perspective not as third-party historian but as a narrator who feels it is important to differentiate awards from civic service and equates parachuting into Europe during World War II to someone who serves as an elected official in public office over a number of years. On the very next page Ambrose chooses a quote from William Shakespeare’s *Henry V* to frame the scale and the drama of the narrative he is about to present with the lines “From this day to the ending of the World,...we in it shall be remembered...we band of brothers.” In Ambrose’s first chapter from *Band of Brothers* he reaffirms the World War II cinematic trope of the melting pot regiment when he writes “the men ... came from different backgrounds, different parts of the country ... some ... poor ... others ... middle class ... they were citizen soldiers” (1992, p. 13).

However, here Ambrose is chronicling an elite unit within the Army, and this is a crucial context for his numerous platitudes. He calls the troops’ values – which included peak physical conditioning, respect for hierarchal authority, and wanting to be elite – special and writes that their training and values were what differentiated them from “the sad excuses for soldiers they met in recruiting depots or basic training” (Ambrose, 1992, p. 14). So, on one hand, some audience members may confuse Ambrose’s band of brothers with everyone who served, but Ambrose nonetheless makes the distinction. This



differentiation was not maintained later by Brokaw and his across-the-board awed generalizations of The Greatest Generation.

Ambrose, though, is not totally immune to similar language. Situating the men of this company as being shaped by the Great Depression or their lives interrupted by the war, Ambrose concludes “whatever their legitimate complaints about how life had treated them, they had not soured on it or on their country,” (1992, p. 15) a phrase that reads as the same type of generational swipe found six years later in Brokaw’s *The Greatest Generation*. Another interesting point is that while Ambrose connects them via their special values at the beginning of the book, later in the acknowledgments and sources section, he describes how he met them as older men and remarks “They helped each other in emergencies and times of trouble. And the only thing they had in common was their three-year experience in World War II” (1992, p. 318). Transitioning from Ambrose’s 1992 book that focused on the soldier, the next year, 1993, brought a salient focus to the Holocaust in the form of a film and a museum.

1993

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum was able to raise \$168 million in donations prior to its dedication on April 22, 1993. After its December 15, 1993, US release, Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* brought in over \$221 million in foreign box office and seven Academy Awards (Cole, 1999, p. 1) on a budget of \$22 million. The Holocaust during this time as understood in popular consciousness seems nearly ubiquitous to University of Bristol social historian, Tim Cole, appearing “not only centre stage, but also lurks in the background” (1999, p. 2).

Other iterations of this tension between a complex, authentic understanding of the nightmare versus the selective salience of a few key narratives in the public commemoration were also captured via the opening of the US Holocaust Museum, which was not without controversy. It is difficult to satisfy all museum patron expectations. For example, creators of the museum felt the “Americanization of the Holocaust” was fundamental to their mission. This strategy turned off some critics and patrons expecting a more complex, international narrative. Director of the museum’s research institute, Michael Berenbaum, pinpoints the source of tension as he explains the museum presents an era of history that “cuts against the grain of the American ethos” (Shandler, 1999, p. xiii), while other critics feel homogenizing such a varied experience leaves the museum simply as an abstraction without meaning.

1994

“By the time it's over on June 7, the French towns of St. Mere Eglise and Pointe du-Hoc should be permanently inscribed in the American memory.” (Lawler, 1994, para.2)

ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN each planned live coverage of the June 6, 1994, ceremonies at Normandy's Omaha Beach including participation from President Clinton, England's Queen Elizabeth II, and France's President Francois Mitterand. Sylvia Lawler, writing for Allentown, Pennsylvania’s newspaper, *The Morning Call* in 1994, provided an overview of what the television network’s had planned for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day: “Expect a convoy of World War II films -- with emphasis on *D-Day the Sixth of June*, *The Longest Day*, *Patton*, *A Bridge Too Far* and *Battle Hymn* -- to start rolling out in about 10 days” (Lawler, 1994, para. 25). This comment supports Beidler’s notion of The Good War’s Greatest Hits always ready and available to be rolled out and equated to

engagement with remembrance of this mediated and propagandized war. Lawler, the compiler of this television lineup listing, invokes the film representation by referring to June 6, 1944, as “the longest day.”

The year 1994 was one of the last for a form of media system that had dominated from roughly 1958. It was a system of best-selling physical books, daily physical newspapers, weekly magazines, television programs, and feature films released in theaters. In terms of news media, it was dominated by daily newspapers, three nightly television network news broadcasts (ABC, CBS, and NBC), and three weekly news magazines (*Newsweek*, *Time*, and *US News & World Report*). In 1994, we began to see the beginnings of rudimentary World Wide Web and expanded cable television offerings desperate to fill hours of available programming blocks. The following sections break down the engagement with the anniversary of D-Day across the three network news broadcasts and the three dominant weekly news magazines.

In April 1994, the CBN Family Cable Network provided one of the few bridges between 1993’s Holocaust remembrance and 1994’s D-Day remembrance when it re-broadcast *Holocaust* (1978) with the tagline “*Schindler’s List* opened your eyes. *Holocaust* will touch your heart.” (Shandler, 1999, p. 167). To provide context for the 1994 media ecosystem, other channels also offered World War II programming. A&E broadcast Lou Reda’s *Eye on History: D-Day* airing at 10 p.m. Wednesday May 18, 1994, and repeated June 5. Reda noted that the Department of Defense and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee referred his company and its archives to NBC and ABC and received cooperation from both the US Naval Institute and The Associated Press. Lou Reda, and his independent production company, ended up producing a large amount of filmed

content for A&E and The History Channel over the ensuing years. Reda also produced A&E's *Biography* of Gen. Omar Bradley, which aired on June 6. A&E also broadcast the three-part *D-Day: The Total Story* in primetime on June 5, 1994, and repeated beginning at midnight.

C-SPAN covered D-Day during the weekend of May 7-8, 1994, with a ten-hour program, *Remembering D-Day: 50 Years Later*, show recollections of people from soldiers to journalists to underground workers in two five-hour installments. It featured, among others, US Sen. Bob Dole, a World War II veteran. The program was repeated from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. on May 30-31. On May 30, Discovery broadcast *Normandy -- The Great Crusade* with seven repeats across succeeding days. Drawing upon diaries and letters, the show focuses on people "whose lives were changed dramatically by D-Day" (Lawler, 1994, para. 16). Even the Travel Channel chipped in with *Tours of Remembrance: A World War II Journey* on May 26, 1994, that visited with veterans in Normandy and at Dachau, among other sites. PBS provided a comedy-drama film titled *A Foreign Field* on *Masterpiece Theater* set in Normandy about a British veteran and a three-hour documentary, *A Fighter Pilot's Story*, about decorated World War II pilot Quentin Aanenson as he evolves "from cocky kid to an emotionally wounded survivor" (Lawler, 1994, para. 24).

## ABC

Live coverage from Normandy for *World News Tonight* was offered in a special co-production with *Good Morning America* from 7 a.m. to noon on June 6. During this five-hour special edition of *Good Morning America* Peter Jennings reported from the American cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach in Colleville-sur-Mer while Joan Lunden

broadcast from St. Mere Eglise. ABC offered a weeklong perspective on the Normandy Allied landings beginning at 9:30 p.m. June 1, 1994, with an extended version of the show *Turning Point* hosted by Peter Jennings. The show used “‘rarely seen’ documentary footage and interviews with veterans from both sides to look at the politics, planning, strategies, and people involved in what some have called the most ambitious endeavor -- military or civilian – ever” (Lawler, 1994, para. 13).

ABC on June 5, 1994, broadcast a special extended version of *This Week with David Brinkley* from the historic Chateau de Vierville near the beaches of Normandy. Brinkley, in essence, returned to the site since he covered the original battle as a young reporter. Also, Lunden continued to report from St. Mere Eglise for *Good Morning America/Sunday*. On the anniversary itself – June 6 – Peter Jennings anchored *World News Tonight* from Normandy. Later at 8 p.m. the show *Day One* investigated an SS general still at large.

## CBS

On May 26, 1994, Dan Rather co-hosted a special two-hour *CBS Reports* with Ret. Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf. On June 5, *CBS Sunday Morning* broadcast from the Normandy beaches. On the anniversary itself, a five-hour version of *CBS This Morning* relayed the ceremonies. The cast of commentators included veteran Andy Rooney; Walter Cronkite, who originally covered the invasion for UPI; Ret. Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf ; and Eisenhower’s grandson, historian David Eisenhower. CBS also offered a fictional version titled *Fall from Grace*, based on a Larry Collins novel, broadcast for four hours over June 2-3 about the Allies’ use of deception in planning the attack.

## NBC

NBC's coverage occurred between June 3 and June 6. On June 3 the *Today* show was broadcast live from Normandy and the *NBC Nightly News* was broadcast from Portsmouth, England, with Tom Brokaw. Portsmouth suffered sixty-seven bombing raids by the Germans during World War II. The June 5 editions of *Today* and *Meet the Press* covered the British ceremonies; *Meet the Press* focusing on the St. Mere Eglise parachute drop. NBC's coverage on the anniversary day itself featured Tom Brokaw, Bryant Gumbel, and Katie Couric in a five-hour block on the ceremonies at the American cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, France, and the ranger assault at Pointe-du-Hoc. The NBC Super Channel, anchored by then-rising star Brian Williams provided D-Day coverage "broadcast to more than 50 million European homes" (Lawler, 1994, para. 11).

As the three major television networks' news divisions brought the commemoration to life via live reporting and re-purposed original footage, their counterparts in the weekly news magazines, in a pre-ubiquitous World Wide Web era, shouldered much of the responsibility of educating the populace about the commemoration via color images, graphs, and text.

*US News & World Report*, devoted its May 23, 1994 cover to D-Day. Inside, it is noted that President Clinton cancelled a scheduled speech at Oxford University on the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. The speech was moved to a World War II cemetery just outside Cambridge. Writer Charles Fenyvesi notes speculation was that the President didn't want to remind attending veterans of his time as a Rhodes Scholar, when he led antiwar protests (Fenyvesi, 1994).

Clinton was also attempting to ease tensions with Germany since it was once again excluded from D-Day celebrations. The concession prize was a role in the following year's (1995) end of the war (VE Day) celebrations. Another note by Fenyvesi regarding President Clinton's preparation for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day reads as unintentionally ironic. Fenyvesi writes that "in his quest for an original and appropriate theme for his D-Day speeches" (para. 1) President Clinton would meet with author Stephen E. Ambrose and one potential theme would be to "ask his own baby boom generation to match the sacrifices made by the D-Day generation" (para. 1). This was ironic because this would merely reinforce Reagan's message of ten years prior rather than establish an original theme.

In the same issue of *US News & World Report*, Stephen E. Ambrose contribute an article titled *The Commanders* that acted as one of the issue's cover stories. Ambrose's piece drew upon his knowledge and publications on Eisenhower and also acted as publicity for his book *D-Day June 6, 1944: the Climatic Battle of World War II* released to coincide with the anniversary. Falling squarely within military history, Ambrose discusses details regarding Eisenhower, Rommel, and Hitler while the article's sidebars focused on the designer of the Higgins boat landing craft and King George's D-Day mission.

The third *US News & World Report* cover story is titled *Theirs but To Do and Die* by Gerald Parshall and John Marks. It attempts to draw a darkly poetic picture of the D-Day invasion with lines such as "pillboxes and zigzag trenches that disfigured the verdant bluffs like scars on the face of a beautiful mademoiselle" (para. 3) or "others frantically yanked at straps and squirmed out of their gear, thrashing about in a macabre underwater

ballet as gunfire tattooed the surface” (para.13). This article draws brief intimate portraits of three soldiers involved in the landing, focusing on personal rituals each performed that both replicate the melting-pot-unit trope of World War II films and also transfer personal memory via everyday minutiae. Pvt. Barnes tried to bargain with God in order to live; Pvt. Murdoch placed his fiancé’s photo inside his helmet’s liner; and Pvt. Branham had his boat team sign a 500-franc note he had won gambling and hoped to use as some sort of talisman.

The story of the invasion in this article is a story of moments experienced by the landing soldiers as they ran straight into gunfire and explosions. The overall effect is a combination of seeming randomness as men survive and die by both intentionality and circumstance, and a vicarious desire for the reader to ask “what would I have done in that moment?”

British military historian John Keegan wrote the lead article for *US News & World Report*’s collection of D-Day articles. Keegan focuses solely on the details of the battle. He mentions that on the afternoon of June 6, a German tank division was within three miles of the sea but lost in an ensuing gun duel with the Allies. Keegan writes: “No German unit ever again got so close to the beaches, and the eventual defeat of Hitler’s Reich may be dated from that hour” (1994, para. 4). The greater effect of such a statement, regardless of its accuracy regarding military history, is that when placed within the context of a D-Day remembrance in magazine form, reinforces the notion of ultimate US significance and victory on D-Day.

Keegan’s fifth paragraph is interesting for a few reasons. First, he describes D-Day as an “invasion spectacle.” Second, he acknowledges that “fear was universal,” a



“pervasive emotion” that other commemoration participants do not make salient.

However, he mutes this sentiment a bit by following it up with, “Yet many who felt it still said that they would not have missed the day for anything” (Keegan, 1994, para. 5). He then adds more to this sort of surreal majesty of such a horror by comparing D-Day to “the Great Plains before the destruction of the buffalo millions” because it could never be replicated. This leads us to the last interesting point of the article, where Keegan takes the stance that no media production could truly re-create the day, mostly due to the battle’s sheer scale. This stands out for two reasons. First, the film version of *The Longest Day* (1962) was known for its large cast and donation of military equipment – a particular sense of pride for producer Zanuck. Second, one wonders if Keegan was surprised or altered his thinking four years later when Spielberg and computer generated imagery allowed for such a scale in *Saving Private Ryan*. We can even wonder if Keegan’s statements worked as some sort of subconscious challenge to future filmmakers to attempt to “get it right.”

*Time Magazine*’s June 6, 1994, cover displayed Eisenhower with the tag “The Man Who Beat Hitler.” Bruce Nelan wrote a cover story for *Time*’s June 6, 1994, issue titled *Ike’s Invasion*, in which along with the minutiae of military history, he also reflects on the fact that this 1994 anniversary may in fact be the last time the original participants will be alive to remember the event, as Nelan knows it will likely be ten years before such a large commemoration occurs again (2004). Nelan breaks down the event to its fundamentals: “to remember a great battle in a good cause” (1994, para. 6). Speaking to the template Reagan created, Nelan marks the criticism then President Clinton received for avoiding military service and how it affects his role as commander in chief presiding

over the D-Day proceedings. Nelan remarks that Clinton will be fine because previous commemorations were carried “by the emotion of the moment” (1994, para. 6).

Nelan points out that by nightfall on June 6, 1944, 156,000 Allied troops had reached the ground in Normandy. Fewer than 5,000 were killed, wounded, or missing (Nelan, 1994, para. 17). The need to pass on memories of World War II is revealed in even the smallest of ways by the author. Nelan, while providing a profile of General Eisenhower, mentions “Americans who remember Ike at all tend to recall a do-little President or a mangler of sentences at press conferences” (1994, para. 19). So, even with the large amount of propaganda produced during World War II itself, combined with Beidler’s (1998) post-war canon of films and novels comprising the perpetual victory lap, there is still, by the late twentieth century, an absence of memory regarding even the largest of figures during the war on the part of citizens.

In the June 6, 1994, issue of *Time* magazine, one of three cover stories titled *Fascism Lives*, makes a direct connection between Europe of 1994 and Europe of 1944, with the opening line “50 years later, the legacy of Hitler and Mussolini still bedevils Europe” (Jackson and Brunton, p. 50) focusing on the rise of violence by neo-Nazis in Italy, France, and Germany and far-right political-party election results. The article seems to want to make this connection between past and present yet also provides numerous caveats, with words such as “minuscule,” this view “distorting,” and except for Italy, “neofascists wield no real power” (Jackson and Brunton, 1994, para. 13).

The third cover story from *Time*’s June 6, 1994, issue (“The Men Who Fought”) is a profile of four men who had fought during D-Day and tells their stories in their own words. The four men are: director of *The Big Red One* (1980) Sam Fuller (US), Gween-

Ael Bollore (France), Dan Darling (Canada), and Hans Von Luck (Germany). Fuller's contribution stresses the fear and danger present on the beach – "Bodies, heads, flesh, intestines; that's what Omaha Beach was" (para. 3) – and steps away from words like courage and heroism, pointing instead to anger, adrenaline, and doing their job. Bollore, a former French combat nurse, details the horrors of death and the gaping wounds he tried to attend to throughout the day. Darling details the moments when a sort of emotional detachment was needed in order to complete the job mixed with details of the environment. Von Luck details his position at Caen, a city in the region of Normandy, France, in a way that's almost like recounting a few unusual days on a job. His words are not overly emotional with only a few specific moments mixed in.

*Newsweek's* May 23, 1994, issue was titled "D-Day: Eyewitness to the Invasion" using famous wartime photographer Robert Capa's few black and white beach photos that survived a film developing lab mishap soon after he shot them. Senior editor Jonathan Alter's cover story for *Newsweek's* May 23, 1994, issue focuses on the challenges the Normandy commemoration posed for then-President Bill Clinton. Alter mentions Clinton's boning up on World War II via books as a different strategy from his normal reliance on instinct to prepare for certain speeches, military struggle not being a part of his repertoire. Alter describes Reagan during the fortieth anniversary ten years prior as at least "old enough to act the part" (1994, para. 1), with help from speech writer Peggy Noonan, even if he spent the actual war making training films only. Politics and commemoration mixed as Clinton let go the Republican leadership of the American Battle Monuments Commission, some of whom in 1992 attacked Clinton for his lack of military service. In 1994, Commission Chairman P.X. Kelley was replaced by Frederick

F. Woerner, Jr. Clinton would have had to deal with an awkward photo op with these men at Normandy for the 1994 anniversary.

Alter also sources some of the trouble between Clinton's 1994 duty at Normandy with the times, remarking that for Reagan in 1984, during the latter stages of the Cold War, the line between good and evil was clearer. It was difficult for Clinton "sounding the call to battle" in a post-1991 world with the Soviet Union as standard antagonist (1994, para 6). Connected directly to prosthetic memory in this piece are the remarks by House Minority Leader, Bob Michel, a World War II veteran, who said "The president has to use this forum to make sure the younger generation knows the sacrifices needed to secure freedom" (1994, para. 7). Michel also said he was sure Clinton would be moved emotionally by the event, and this emotionality and affect in the moment is the medium necessary to transfer these memories of great sacrifice to the younger generation.

This focus on the emotions of the moment, as experienced by youth, is often the crux of author Stephen E. Ambrose's approach to chronicling World War II. Ambrose published *D-Day June 6, 1944: the Climatic Battle of World War II* to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. In his acknowledgments, he notes Dr. Forrest Pogue, an Army oral historian collecting history aboard a hospital ship off of Omaha Beach on the day of the invasion, as "the first and the best historian of D-Day" (Ambrose, 1994, p. 8). Ambrose describes his interest in the subject of D-Day as being strengthened by Cornelius Ryan's 1959 book *The Longest Day*, even though subsequently Ambrose's conclusions differ from Ryan's.

In Ambrose's prologue, he makes the point that even though we possessed US industrial "brawn and organizational ability", allies, great preparation, brilliance of

scheme, and inspired leadership, ultimately “it all came down to a bunch of eighteen-to-twenty-eight-year-olds” (1994, p. 25). Due to the majority’s lack of combat experience, Ambrose calls them “citizen-soldiers, not professionals” (1994, p. 25). Ambrose situates these men as having been born during the “false prosperity” of the 1920s and raised in “the bitter realities” of the Great Depression. (1994, p. 26). These men are described as reading anti-war literature that portrayed “patriots as suckers, slackers as heroes” (1994, p. 26) and not wanting to go to war. Then Ambrose’s prose takes a major swing with big patriotic generalizations as he concludes the section “But when the test came, when freedom had to be fought for or abandoned, they fought. They were soldiers of democracy. They were the men of D-Day, and to them we owe our freedom” (1994, p. 26).

#### US Government’s Participation on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day

As occurred during the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, a Congressional delegation visited Europe for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1994. The delegation once again produced a report, titled *D-Day Plus 50 Years* (1994), and Representative Montgomery again was the lead author. This time, the Congressional Delegation to Europe (England, Italy, and France) now numbered twenty-seven, up from eighteen in 1984. There were still members of the 1994 congressional delegation who had been a part of the invasion force at Utah Beach (Robert Michel), other members had seen action in the European theater, while others saw combat in the Pacific theater.

Montgomery’s language in 1994 is both filled with exaltation yet informal, mentioning that the ceremony allowed veterans “to again see their buddies who were

with them when they met the enemy” and the delegation’s pride in representing “America’s heroes of the Normandy invasion” (United States et al., 1994, p. iv). The influence of the ensuing focus on the soldier’s narrative, accelerated by Reagan’s 1984 speech ten years prior, and the success of historian Stephen Ambrose’s soldier-centered books, is felt when Montgomery quotes Normandy veteran Donald Boyce as describing D-Day as “Somehow or other, a bunch of people who were only civilians went out and battled a professional army and made Europe free” (United States et al., 1994, p. iv).

The Congressional delegation’s report notes that on Friday, June 3, 1994, the group toured the Imperial War Museum in London. Montgomery’s report somewhat surprisingly describes the museum’s overall effect as giving “an unforgettable feeling of the terror of war and the misery it brings those engaged in combat” (United States et al., 1994, p. 4). The delegation’s trip also included a stop at Churchill’s Cabinet War Rooms. These rooms were closed in 1945 and in 1984, on instructions from Prime Minister Thatcher, were renovated and opened to the public as an extension of the Imperial War Museum.

If we compare President Reagan’s 1984 D-Day National Remembrance proclamation with the proclamation issued by President Clinton in 1994, it helps to illustrate the influence and effect Reagan’s 1984 actions had in our early 1990s remembrance of World War II.

Reagan’s proclamation begins with Eisenhower’s June 6, 1944, “dramatic announcement from London” (proclamation 5206, 1984, para. 1). Reagan’s first paragraph lays out the details regarding number of troops, names of the beaches, and number of aerial missions flown. Paragraphs two and three introduce Reagan’s

descriptors for the World War II servicemen's "great skill, unwavering tenacity, and courage" while continuing the narrative of the battle's difficult set of goals. Paragraph three is peppered with words and phrases such as "great sacrifice," "feats of leadership and courage," "highest honor," and "heroic" (1984). The fourth paragraph contains language reaffirming a contemporary desire for alliance in Europe before the proclamation ends with the formalities of declaring the day one of D-Day National Remembrance.

In President Clinton's 1994 D-Day National Remembrance proclamation #6697, his first paragraph also provides statistics, number of ships, aircraft, soldiers, and soldiers lost, similar to Reagan's. However, it also displays a much more flowery prose than Reagan's first paragraph. It is as if the template Reagan offered now became the agreed upon pattern to use. Clinton's proclamation begins: "... the largest armada of land, sea, and air forces ever assembled embarked on a great crusade across the English Channel to free the European continent of a tyranny that had taken hold and threatened to strangle the very freedoms we cherish most" (proclamation #6697, 1994). While Eisenhower certainly used the phrase "great crusade," the rest of the line sounds as if it could have come from one of Reagan's own speeches.

Clinton's second paragraph refers to World War II German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel who had said to his aide, "The first twenty-four hours of the invasion will be decisive ... for the Allies, as well as Germany, it will be the longest day" (proclamation #6697, 1994). This quote from Rommel had appeared in Cornelius Ryan's 1959 book *The Longest Day* on page twenty-eight. Clinton's use of this quote works on multiple levels. First it calls to his generation's understanding of war as hell, or the longest day.

Second, it venerates the soldiers who did indeed go through a hellish landing experience. Third, it uses terminology or a title from one of the canonical texts of US World War II remembrance. Fourth, it invokes US Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman's 1879 quote "I tell you, war is hell!" whereas Reagan began a renewed enthusiasm in his own unique experience of stagecraft, subsequent commentators, like Clinton, drew upon this renewal via the archive Reagan helped reintroduce.

Bodnar (2010), via his own study, *The Good War in American Memory*, describes Clinton as having "eagerly embraced the mythical view of World War II" (p. 206) via his 1994 commemorative speeches and comparing his effusive praise of World War II GIs as comparable to both Ambrose and Brokaw. Clinton also focused on the themes of gratitude and responsibility his generation felt and should feel so that such a massive loss of life would be redeemed by making sure The Greatest Generation's lives will be remembered "fifty or one hundred or one thousand years from now" (Clinton, Remarks at Utah Beach, 1994). While the media focused on Clinton's lack of military service and protest against the Vietnam conflict, Clinton, in his own words, described himself as a "child of World War II" (Clinton interview with Brokaw, 1994), watching war films and looking at photographs of the father he never knew dressed in his military uniform.

Clinton's third paragraph draws upon the extremely-just-versus-the-extremely-evil narrative by using phrases "defenders of justice" and then introduces an element absent from Reagan's 1984 proclamation, Clinton quotes from the diary of Holocaust victim Anne Frank. Clinton follows this quote up by saying "those who landed on the beaches of Normandy ... were responsible for the liberation of many of the concentration camps" (proclamation #6697, 1994, para. 4). This of course, is technically true, but as



used the words work to support the extremely-just-vs.-extremely-evil-narrative that itself is used as a mechanism to include the Holocaust, a topic very salient during the previous year of 1993.

We can continue to view the influence of 1984 if we move on to President Clinton's various remarks during the 1994 commemoration itself to veterans of the air campaign of World War II at the US cemetery in Cambridge, UK, on June 4, 1994. He uses generational language with this line from paragraph fourteen: "The victory of the generation we honor today came at a high cost" (Clinton, 1994). Clinton continues this language in paragraph sixteen with "the generation that won the Second World War completed their mission" and infers their comparative superiority with lines like "the skies ... they once commanded" (1994, para. 16). Obviously the context of commemoration must be acknowledged, but Clinton nonetheless embraces the contemporary generation of 1994 taking on the memory of The Greatest Generation as its own with his last significant line of the address "And let us send them a signal ... a signal that we do remember, that we do honor, and that we shall always carry on the work of these knights on wings" (1994, para. 16).

President Clinton's remarks at the US National Cemetery above Omaha Beach and at the Utah Beach Ceremony<sup>34</sup> on the fiftieth anniversary shows how Reagan's template and expectations to follow it weigh heavily on Clinton's choice of words. In paragraph two of the Utah Beach speech, Clinton invokes the heroic generation saying, "We pay tribute to what a whole generation of heroes won here" (1994). At Omaha

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<sup>34</sup> The Normandy landings during World War II consisted of five beaches codenamed Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword. These beaches were on the French coast facing the English Channel. Utah was the westernmost beach located on the Cotentin Peninsula. Omaha beach was located just east of Utah and was vital in order to link up the landings parties west at Utah and east at Gold.

Beach, Clinton continues to invoke the generational language combined with the awe and tinge of guilt with “Now the question falls to our generation: How will we build upon the sacrifice of D-Day’s heroes?” (1994, para. 21), A call for continued military engagement as a direct and unbroken mission begun during World War II is conveyed with the line “Avoiding today’s problems would be our own generation’s appeasements” (1994, para. 21). Clinton gives a laundry list of what comprises our mission today (expand freedom, expand citizen potential, strengthen families, etc.). He then follows up with “our parents did that and more; we must do nothing less” (1994, para. 21).

UK Prime Minister (1990-1997) John Major began his 1994 speech with the theme of brotherhood on the scale of nations, supporting the message begun by Thatcher regarding an Atlantic alliance and on the scale of soldier to soldier that may have been drawing upon the nomenclature begun by Ambrose two years prior. We saw a similar occurrence on January 17, 1961, in President Eisenhower’s farewell address when he used the phrase “military-industrial complex” five years after sociologist C. Wright Mills expressed similar concepts in his book *The Power Elite*. While Ambrose is no Mills, it is important to note the influence and reciprocity occurring among the admirers of The Greatest Generation during this time period.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of and potential linkages among the US’s coming to grips and naming the Holocaust, the rise of conservative governments in the 1980s in two countries (US and UK) that played large roles during World War II, US President Ronald Reagan’s active role in mythologizing the soldier in World War II remembrance in 1984, and the effect this form of remembrance had on early 1990s engagement with World War II remembrance. The next chapter

chronologically moves ahead to late 1990s commemoration that acts as a pinnacle of sorts for the type of commemoration begun by Reagan in 1984. Drawing heavily upon Landsberg's (2004) prosthetic memory, the chapter highlights four artifacts: the films *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and *The Thin Red Line* (1998), the book *The Greatest Generation* (1998), and the video game *Medal of Honor* (1999).

## Chapter 5: Late 1990s Commemoration

Yet, the longterm effect of World War II on the thinking of the world was pernicious and deep. It made war, so thoroughly discredited by the senseless slaughter of World War I, noble once again. (Zinn, 1998, para. 4)

America's dedication to war became even clearer to me when Tom Brokaw and Steven Ambrose first began to tell me that I was a member of a 'Greatest Generation.' I knew immediately that this was not true. I had done nothing great in World War II. (Wood, 2006, p. x)

### I. Introduction

The United States experienced the fortieth anniversary of D-Day in 1984 made salient by Ronald Reagan, attended by and inspiring Tom Brokaw. The previous anniversaries in 1974, 1964, and 1954 were relatively low-key as Nixon was busy with Watergate, Johnson busy with his civil rights bill so he sent Gen. Omar N. Bradley instead, and Eisenhower himself stayed in the US and issued a modest statement (Bumiller, 2004). Ambrose had been writing all along and transitioning to popular history in the 1980s. In 1992 Ambrose publishes his first best-seller *Band of Brothers*. This is followed by a fiftieth anniversary of D-Day in 1994, enthusiastically embraced by Brokaw and his television network, NBC. Ambrose publishes his blockbuster *D-Day* in 1994 as well and in 1997 Spielberg began filming *Saving Private Ryan* from Robert Rodat's script, which was inspired by the recent D-Day commemoration productions. While the foundation was certainly in place for this renewed interest in World War II, it was Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* that built an eye-catching spectacle that could not be ignored and cemented this new form as a desirable and potentially profitable aesthetic.

This chapter applies Landsberg's theory of prosthetic memory to the film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), the book *The Greatest Generation* (1998), the film *The Thin Red Line* (1998), and the video game *Medal of Honor* (1999).

Author and World War II veteran Edward Wood Jr., discussing President Clinton's use of force in Somalia, Yugoslavia, and Serbia in 1993, writes "At the same moment – and this is where the timing seems so exquisite – our worship of World War II as the apogee of the nation's greatest honor, glory, and patriotism simply exploded in all forms of media" (2006, p. 3). Wood builds the foundation for this apogee by noting Terkel's *The Good War* and Reagan's The Boys of Pointe-du-Hoc speech in 1984, Ambrose's citizen soldier, Brokaw's *Greatest Generation*, and Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*. Wood concludes by writing, "World War II evolved into a warm and fuzzy glow when American soldiers were giants, heroic, stoical, and always true their country and the cause of freedom" (2006, p. 4). Indiana University historian John Bodnar continues to set the context for 1990s World War II commemoration when he mentions how pervasive the embrace of commemorative activities was during the 1990s: "citizens who had no direct knowledge of the war or the concerns of the 1940s acted as if they did in mounting countless commemorations" (2010, p. 200). Bodnar describes these commemorations with the term "sentimental gaze" bestowed upon the Greatest Generation. Bodnar's insight and turn of phrase, actually reveals a phenomenon more powerful than sentimentality, one that is better explained via prosthetic memory as this chapter shows.

US President Ronald Reagan, in 1984, used prosthetic memory when he highlighted daughter Lisa Zanatta's letter about her World War II veteran father to pay

tribute to the World War II generation via his “Morning in America” conservatism. The use of prosthetic memory for this purpose is distinct from the type employed for Holocaust remembrance highlighted by Landsberg (2004). This might lead us to a particular question: Did Reagan's use of prosthetic memory in 1984 help to drive the use of prosthetic memory for Holocaust remembrance in the early 1990s? Landsberg (2004) would disagree, because for her prosthetic memory is employed as a strategy due to the obstacles present to remembering the Holocaust, including the lack of rituals and the passing of survivors. In addition, there was initially a split immediately after World War II between World War II and Holocaust remembrance. Holocaust remembrance was minimized, as the literature has shown, while World War II soldier glory - and to a lesser extent trauma - illustrated by Beidler's (1998) *The Good War* versus *The Great Snafu*, was more salient initially post-war. Then, in the early 1970s, with 1967's Six-Day War still fresh in everyone's minds, the rise in identity politics, and advances in recording survivors via interview, there was a greater need to re-embrace survivor testimony for the Holocaust so that it became more salient in the public consciousness, culminating in the late 1970s television mini-series *Holocaust*.

Reagan's use of prosthetic memory in 1984 is another example of his administration's excess. Landsberg's definition of prosthetic memory and its appropriate connection to the Holocaust occurs due to the lack of rituals and objects available for Holocaust remembrance and the horror of the Holocaust leaving few survivors. In contrast, there were memorial rituals and objects, including the Iwo Jima memorial (dedicated 1954) and Veterans Day (renamed in 1954), available to aid in remembrance of the US military version of the soldier experience of World War II. Yet Reagan

nonetheless attempts to construct a prosthetic memory and emotionality. Reagan's imagined version of America and what World War II meant is what he was trying to attach via the prosthesis of memory.

Nonetheless, readers of this chapter may still be asking, "Isn't Reagan's 1984 rhetoric simply a continuation of the propaganda begun by the US government during World War II?" A piece of propaganda issued during World War II is something that would appear as a new and unique object to an individual US citizen during that time period. The person would have some foundation or context via his or her personal experience or social or cultural capital, to draw upon in order to situate and make sense of the propaganda. Whereas collective memory in 1984 is itself already the capital that people are drawing upon to understand their world. So the difference between first-hand experienced propaganda during the war and second-generation or second-hand collective memory in 1984 is the added authority that it's being drawn from tradition, the authority of the eternal yesterday (Weber 1922/1958). So what's the difference between President Franklin Delano Roosevelt using propaganda to get us involved in and eventually winning World War II and President Ronald Reagan in 1984 using collective memory to remember his particular version of victory in World War II? To answer this, we need to jump ahead briefly fourteen years, to 1998.

The year 1998 is unique from other post-World War II eras because it is the epitome or peak of an emotionally-charged form of remembering towards US soldiers via prosthetic memory as begun by Reagan and Ambrose. My theory can stand if we accept the idea that Reagan's 1984 collective memory of World War II is fundamentally different from FDR's 1942 propaganda for World War II because Reagan's deals with an

emotionally-charged form of tradition, of history, and a familial relations that crosses generations in ways that I would argue can be more powerful than firsthand experienced propaganda, which has emotion moored in future potentialities only. Reagan's focus was on the experience of the individual US soldier, a focus paralleled by Ambrose's books and Brokaw's television specials and books, and Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* film. So what is that narrative transmitted via memory about the individual US soldier?

Wood's interpretation is that there are three stories told in these 1990s representations about the American men who fought in World War II. Ambrose and Brokaw tell the first: almost all the men and women are heroes although both use the words "kill" and "wound," the reader "never really senses the blood" (Wood, 2006, p. 77). Wood sees Ambrose's work as more sophisticated than Brokaw's, but both authors' soldiers nonetheless return home, "shut up, do not complain, and go about the business of building a new America" (Wood, 2006, pp. 79-80). Bodnar also notes that mourning of the dead – "a key response to seeing war as tragic" (p. 201) – receives little space in either author's work.

The third story is the one presented by James Jones's 1962 novel *The Thin Red Line*, adapted into a 1998 film by Terrence Malick. Wood uses this story to make the point that the generation after The Greatest Generation has "a choice of stories it can use to understand and interpret the war" (2006, p. 85). I don't think Woods's third point is accurate. Technically, it is accurate – you could choose. However, the original propaganda, combined with producers and audience blurring multiple productions all together under a generic World War II subject umbrella makes this more difficult. Not to mention also the power of the media networks backing a talent such as Ambrose,



Brokaw, and Spielberg, with their budgets and cross promotion. Plus, the desire for prosthetic memories, *not* from an anti-war position but rather from the sacrifice-of-soldiers perspective, makes the emotional, generational appeal seem strong and authentic – minimizing the need for an alternative or anti-war perspective.

Wood works from Mosse's (1990) research on the memory work of World War I survivors and concludes that modern countries engaging in industrial warfare must produce this type of war memoir in order to mask the actual arbitrary brutality of war. This mask is built from "myths of heroism and comradeship" (Wood, 2006, p. 102). Wood attributes Ambrose's and Brokaw's success at penning such war books to a glorification of sacrifice, heroics, and brotherhood, remarking that "killing and being killed become pathways to a treasured eternity" (Wood, 2006, p. 102). The memory of individual soldier sacrifice, heroics, and brotherhood is not merely a mask to cover up the arbitrary nature of war and its death, but is actively transmitted as memory to be carried on by the succeeding generations.

## **II. Saving Private Ryan**

Some reasons offered about why new material covering World War II began to appear during the late 1990s include children of the war generation making films venerating their father's wartime activities, a new political conservatism in the US and the UK and a commemorative moment at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century prompting a desire to re-evaluate the past (Basinger, 1998). By 1998, this political gesture on the part of Reagan in 1984 combined with NBC's and other networks' war anniversary coverage in 1994 primed the audience for resurgence in World War II productions, particularly from the US's most prominent filmmaker, Steven Spielberg.

Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan* has been labeled "the first key movie in the new era" (Basinger, 1998, para. 25), though Spielberg's intentionality in this attempt is debatable. For example, in *Citizen Spielberg* (2006) Lester Friedman writes:

one can never be sure if his work actually creates a cultural moment, if it acts as a focal point that brings together various strands of thought, if it shines a spotlight on already existing materials, or if it simply rides atop the waves of the social zeitgeist ... *Saving Private Ryan* shows that it remains impossible to separate the dancer from the dance as the cultural ripples expanded beyond the screen. (p. 220)

This interpretation of Spielberg's role seems borne out of the filmmaker's position as a consistent moneymaker and fan favorite who nonetheless received very few serious critical accolades, especially from cinema scholars. Spielberg never seems to be the leading thinker via his films, yet is also so widely popular; millions see and copy his work. At the time of *Saving Private Ryan*'s release, Spielberg himself said he didn't expect it be a hit. Typically, Hollywood wants stories that appeal to a young demographic. Historical, and certainly R-rated historical films, do not, on paper, seem to fit this business plan. What Friedman's (2006) and Spielberg's statements disregard is the sheer financial power and status afforded to Spielberg from his consistent box office profits, his reputation, and his celebrity as a auteur. University of Salford film studies faculty, Martin Flanagan, notes "*Schindler's List* (1993) had cemented Spielberg in the popular consciousness as an active contributor to the public record of the war" (p. 125). The studios backing Spielberg hyped the director's role as "artistic chronicler of World War Two" through whose imagination "people could rediscover the experience of the conflict gradually becoming lost to eyewitness testimony" (Flanagan, 2003, p. 125). In fact, later home video packaging for *Saving Private Ryan* touted it as "The Film That Inspired the World to Remember."

By 1998, Spielberg was leader of his industry and between Universal and his own company, Dreamworks, could depend upon a huge advertising budget along with his box office track record to practically assure a very loud and consistent marketing campaign for *Saving Private Ryan*. At the same time Spielberg's intention was for the film to be an educational production and actively developed the accompanying video game, *Medal of Honor* (1999), for the Playstation video game home console. So while Friedman might be correct that we can never be sure if Spielberg creates the moment, we can be sure that he certainly works very hard for people to see his moment across media platforms. Even if Spielberg internally thought of this project as a smaller independent-type of film, aimed toward only his father and father's friends from the war, the film production studios, entertainment media, theater owners, and associated media ecosystem needs the productions from prominent filmmakers to be large-scale events in order to keep money flowing through the system they each rely on.

#### Origins of Saving Private Ryan

Interviewed during the production of *Saving Private Ryan*, Spielberg acknowledged "I've had an obsession with World War II" (Axmaker, SPR entry on TCM.com), a sentiment he repeated in the bonus features introduction to the film when it was released on a special DVD in 2004. This interest was sparked in part by his father, Arnold Spielberg, having participated in the Burma campaign as a radio man.<sup>35</sup> Arnold

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<sup>35</sup> During World War II, Japan invaded Burma beginning in 1942. At the time, Burma was a part of the British Empire. Chinese and British Commonwealth troops, with support from the Americans, fought against Japan in Burma from January 1942 through July 1945. Radiomen operated communications systems during the war. Arnold Spielberg was always fascinated with radio technology, designed airplane radio antennas during the war and ultimately became an electrical engineer of some note for helping design small mainframe computers for General Electric.

told his son many stories about the war (Friedman, 2006), and as a typical youth, Spielberg was inspired by these stories to build models and play war with his friends. As a non-typical youth, Spielberg in eighth grade filmed a fifteen-minute World War II adventure about flying aces on super 8 film with his neighborhood friends that he called *Fighter Squad* (Friedman, 2006, p. 189). This escalated in high school to a forty-minute film about German and US soldiers fighting in North Africa titled *Escape to Nowhere*. More familiar to most audiences is Spielberg's output as a professional filmmaker, in which he revisited the topic of World War II in the home-front comedy *1941* (1979), explained a child's experience in an internment camp in *Empire of the Sun* (1987), and told the story of a Holocaust savior in *Schindler's List* (1993). Spielberg also conceded in the *Saving Private Ryan* bonus features introduction "I've always had a fascination with 30s and 40s – half my movies are based in that time" (2004).

In a piece of revealing self-reflection, Spielberg said, "I'm closer to the '40s personality ... I love that period ... It was the end of an era, the end of innocence, and I have been clinging to it for most of my adult life" (Forsberg, 2000, pp. 128-29). This sort of perpetual uninvestigated boyhood awe is also supported by the story of Spielberg optioning Andrew Scott Berg's biography of US aviator Charles Lindbergh. Spielberg bought the rights to the book sight unseen in 1998 but without knowing of Lindbergh's isolationist views, Nazi sympathies, and anti-Semitism. These details "came as a shock to Spielberg, who evidently had been drawn to the project because of his boyish fascination with Lindbergh's aviation heroics" writes film historian Joseph McBride (2010, p. 467).

The mid- to late 1990s was a particularly busy time for Spielberg in his familiar position as director and in his then-new role as one of three principals of the Dreamworks

SKG venture begun in 1994. Spielberg, with very little downtime, directed three feature films back to back: *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (September 5 through December 11, 1996); *Amistad* (February through March 1997); and *Saving Private Ryan* (June 27 through late 1997). This timeline is mentioned to make clear that Spielberg never had time really to formulate with any sort of intentionality a World War II renaissance. He was simply attempting to crank through a number of feature films in the style of a Hollywood director from the golden age of the studio system in order to keep his newly formed company afloat and hopefully make successful. Nonetheless, Spielberg had always demonstrated an interest in the World War II period throughout the body of his work, though up until *Saving Private Ryan* he had never created a professional World War II combat film.

Robert Rodat's spec script for *Saving Private Ryan* came to Spielberg as a package from his agents at CAA with Tom Hanks already attached (McBride, 2010, p. 467). Rodat's script was inspired in general by the renewed interest in D-Day surrounding the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (*Looking Into the Past*, *Saving Private Ryan* bonus feature) and in particular by a monument in his New Hampshire town that listed everybody who had been lost in the war (Freer, 2001, p. 263). Rodat's research took him first to history books that presented grand overviews but eventually moved on to first-person accounts focusing on day-to-day struggles and dangers faced by soldiers, including the Niland brothers, also discussed in Stephen E. Ambrose's *Band of Brothers* to which Rodat's story drew certain parallels. The Nilands were four brothers from Tonawanda, NY who served during World War II. At the time, it was believed three of

the four had been killed.<sup>36</sup> The military, not wanting entire families to be decimated, sent the surviving brother, Frederick, back to the US to serve out the remainder of his service. Tom Hanks, speaking in the *Saving Private Ryan* special feature *Miller and His Platoon*, says that Ambrose's books "take it further" than some films and other writings "to the guys named Steve and Chuck." Spielberg states in the *Saving Private Ryan* bonus feature documentary *Looking Into the Past* that this story of three brothers killed in separate units caught his attention. Ultimately, Rodat wrote eleven drafts of his script for producer Mark Gordon.<sup>37</sup>

During production, Spielberg relied upon both Stephen E. Ambrose, whom he considered a friend, as a historical consultant and retired US Marine Captain Dale Dye as senior military advisor on the film. In addition, a great deal of time and money were spent to achieve an authenticity as production personnel researched and copied archival images and sources. During this drafting process, as is typical in the Hollywood screenwriting occupation, many changes were made between drafts. Once Spielberg was on board, he had Rodat re-instate the death of Tom Hanks's Captain John Miller and the section with the elderly Private Ryan as bookend scenes appearing at the beginning and end of the film, which had been lost in intermediate drafts (Freer, 2001, pgs. 263-264). Spielberg has stated he saw a real veteran drop to his knees when visiting the Normandy cemetery back during a promotional tour for his film *Duel* during the 1970s, and thus inserted a similar action for the elderly Private Ryan when he returns to the cemetery at Normandy.

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<sup>36</sup> Edward Niland actually had not been killed but was taken prisoner by the Japanese in Burma. He was later liberated on May 4, 1945, leaving two, not one, Niland survivors.

<sup>37</sup> Mark Gordon is a prolific television and film producer and former president of the Producers Guild of America from 2010 to 2014. His numerous credits include *Swing Kids* (1993), *Speed* (1994), *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *The Patriot* (2000), *Criminal Minds* (CBS, 2005-present), *Grey's Anatomy* (ABC, 2005-present), *Ray Donovan* (Showtime, 2013-present), and *Quantico* (ABC, 2015-present).

### Saving Private Ryan: Prosthetic Memory

When *Saving Private Ryan* opens, we view the title cards (time code: 0:45-1:06) which appear in a style reminiscent of a Ken Burns documentary. A simple but refined greenish-blue line underscores the white title on a black background, giving the impression that we, as an audience, are about to watch something dignified and important. At first glance, such aesthetic choices might seem to counter choices made to transfer prosthetic memory. A genre such as documentary can artificially “other” the audience from its subject, potentially building a wall between them. However, these title card opening choices cue the audience that what they are about to see is real, with a documentary style, and important to remember. The technical film process used in *Saving Private Ryan* was a de-saturated color image (bleach bypass) that results in a film that almost looks black-and-white. Frederick Wasser, in his book *Steven Spielberg’s America* (2010), notes Spielberg’s conscious effort to evoke previous war films and the public’s own history with them: “color, sound, and the use of the camera ... flattered the viewer by confirming her or his shared memory of World War Two” (p. 176).

However, the film’s construction is unique for a war film with its inclusion of bookends to the narrative via the remembrance of a now elderly Pvt. Ryan as he returns to Normandy. The elderly version of Pvt. Ryan literally embodies the memory of the soldier experience for the audience. His physicality as an older man, combined with the dialogue between him and Tom Hanks’s character toward the end of the film, helps crystallize the memory of sacrifice for the audience. Hanks’s Miller is the educated, fair good troop leader in the mold of the upstanding characters played by actor Jimmy Stewart in the past. Some have viewed *Saving Private Ryan* as baby boomer sons

kneeling in ritual before their World War II dads (T. P. Doherty, 1999, p. 301). The focal point of the film where Tom Hanks's Captain Miller sits dying and says to Matt Damon's Pvt. Ryan, "Earn this" has been described as a message "to baby boomers and Gen X and Y; every generation must somehow deserve the sacrifices made" (Auster, 2002, p. 212) or an "eloquent call for Americans to take a good look at themselves" (Basinger, 1998, para. 20) to make "a plea for the restitution of traditional family values and forms of self-restraint" (Bodnar, 2010, p. 214). Interpreting the overall effect of the film, historian Howard Zinn (1998) writes: "now *Saving Private Ryan*, aided by superb cinematographic technology, draws on our deep feeling for the GIs to rescue, not just Private Ryan, but the good name of the war" (p. 139).

The older, survivor Pvt. Ryan is haunted by the memory of the men who died so he could live. Wood believes the film should "be given the highest marks for his [Spielberg's] grasp of war's resonance over time" (2006, p. 83). Such a statement by veteran Wood supports the notion that individual soldiers' memories are still fresh, even in their retirement years, and such tenderness to the psychic or emotional trauma makes it a good candidate for transference to the next generation.

*Saving Private Ryan's* first scene (time code: 1:09-4:30) is the first bookend, with the elderly Pvt. Ryan, played by actor Harrison Young, returning to the graveyard at Normandy presumably during present day. The elderly Ryan is walking quickly and with purpose, ahead of his family members, who look expectantly, quizzically at him as he briskly walks. The family includes his elderly wife, son or son-in-law, daughter or daughter-in-law and three granddaughters, plus one very young grandson. The family passes two women, a presumably mother and daughter, who are walking away somewhat



solemnly from the graveyard. The son-in-law or son takes a photo of the elderly Pvt. Ryan walking quickly toward his destination. The sister or wife looks over almost puzzled as to why he would take a photo, and gives a sort of scolding look.

This photography on the part of the son figure represents his generation's attempt to finally capture the moments and memory of the father's generation. Caught in the moment, there is seemingly no longer time for stories or finer points, but just a clumsy and somewhat detached effort to use the camera to record or pause the events and actions that are so very meaningful to his parent's generation, as represented by the elderly Pvt. Ryan. Ryan's family next passes a younger couple who are holding hands in a way that shows the man is supporting the woman with his hand pressed against her side as her right hand is crossed over her body to meet his on her left side. Like the mother and daughter the family passed earlier, this couple helps reinforce the solemnity of the space as well as carving out a role for the daughters of the World War II generation, as well as the sons.

At this point, veteran Ryan's elderly wife, played by Kathleen Byron, during a moment when the cameras stays on her, gives the slightest of approving smiles, the left side of her mouth curling upward subtly. Ryan arrives at his destination to find another veteran, dressed impeccably, standing in the cemetery to usher in visitors who wish to remember but simultaneously also ushering in the film audience to remember as well. Reaching the grave he sought, Ryan falls to his knees and begins crying. His family members run up and touch him. This represents the most salient sequence in the film for the transference of prosthetic memory as they embrace his memory while embracing him. Ryan's family members are with him as he relives the memory of his salvation during the

war. They are not merely consoling him or acknowledging his emotions but attempting to carry his burden themselves, exemplified by the son yelling out "Dad!" after the elderly Ryan falls to his knees.

This is a memory conveyed throughout a majority of the film through narrative as well as emotion and affect, particularly during these bookend scenes with the elderly Ryan. It is interesting that during this sequence, when the son and daughter and wife rush over and touch Ryan, his grandchildren do not. This works on multiple levels. First, it supports the notion of war as a proper rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, the grandchildren could never understand the raw emotionality Ryan is reliving and attempting to communicate and transfer. Second, it reaffirms the notion that this 1990s moment of remembrance is a burden meant for the next direct generation, the sons and daughters, who will finish their obligation to preserve the memory by passing it on to their own children. The wife, son and daughter's reaching out to Ryan is prominently framed as the camera pushes into a close-up to denote the transition into the memory that has stirred such emotions inside him. At this point the film transitions back to his time during World War II.

Before we return to the symmetrical bookend to this graveyard scene at the end of the film, it is important to mention a couple of sequences during the World War II portion of the film in terms of prosthetic memory. There is a three-minute sequence (time code: 2:00:38-2:03:06) where Captain Miller's (Tom Hanks) squad has reached the town of Ramelle, a village a few kilometers from Sainte Mere Eglise, inland from the Normandy beach invasion, which will serve as the climatic final set piece. As is customary in such genre pictures, there are a few moments of quiet before the final chaos that allows the

storyteller to convey more information about the narrative's characters. Here, Spielberg shows us some of the squad's soldiers, after a beautiful tracking shot beginning from the clock tower down to, and framing, a townhouse where these soldiers have congregated. These soldiers have placed a large and beautiful phonograph near the steps of the townhouse. It plays a French pop song as the soldiers sit on the steps telling dirty stories to one another and building camaraderie. At first glance, this scene works merely as an update to the trope of the US military fighting force as a melting pot of US ethnicities. However, by situating the characters in a familiar setting, sitting out on the front stoop, listening to music and gossiping with friends, it becomes an effective space of transference for both history and memory. The individual soldier personified as an average guy from your community or neighborhood helps the audience member to take on the memory of war and sacrifice much more easily as it acts as a mediating and profane context for the heightened, hellish, and yet sacred acts on the battlefield that are not to be forgotten.

The second scene within the film's World War II sequences arrives twenty minutes after this scene (time code: 2:23:03-2:26:55). Still set in Ramelle, it shows the German forces have now begun attacking Captain Miller's troops and we are in the midst of the film's final battle. Here we see the character of Corporal Upham (Jeremy Davies) as the young, book-smart soldier with little practical experience and Private Mellish (Adam Goldberg) a Jewish-American with a personal hatred toward the Nazis. Mellish is stationed on the second floor of a building when his position is overrun by German soldiers, and he quickly finds himself in a hand-to-hand confrontation involving a blade. Upham, hearing the struggle, and beginning to run upstairs to offer assistance to Mellish,

freezes out of fear on the stairs and provides no assistance. Upham, crumbled on the stairs, listens as the German soldier fatally stabs Mellish with the blade. The German soldier descends the stairs, looking at, passing by, and in no way engaging with Upham. The message is clear: Upham is absolutely no threat and not worth this German soldier's time.

From a narrative perspective, this scene successfully conveys tragic trauma. In addition, from the perspective of prosthetic memory, Upham as an individual soldier works on multiple levels. First, he acts as a surrogate for the audience as a generation that might choose not to do something, a citizenry that chooses not to engage in war. The consequences of such inaction are made clear. Second, Upham symbolizes the emotional trauma and sacrifice of the individual US soldier whose war ordeal is as much mental as it is physical. This reinforces the focus on soldier trauma begun by Reagan rather than the broader message that war brings hell to everyone, regardless of whether that person wears a uniform or civilian clothes. Third, the guilt stemming from this inaction, based upon the new camaraderie built between Upham and Mellish shown previously during the phonograph and front stoop scene, is easily relatable for 1990s audiences that might otherwise see the war as an event from another era, somewhat foreign, not easily engaged with. Upham's guilt is our guilt; he let down Mellish, but we can't let down our parents by forgetting their trauma. The shame on Upham's face is a memory to be "burned in" (Landsberg, 2004) for the audience in the hope of never repeating. To do nothing means you will be killed, or worse presumed to be a non-factor in a great crusade whose glory will shine eternal.

To continue the analysis, it is necessary to return to the bookend or wraparound

scene of the elderly Pvt. Ryan, presumed to be living in the late 1990s. The scene begins and is set up by the end of the climatic battle in Ramelle (time code: 2:35:51-2:42:06). After Hanks' Captain Miller attempts to defend the town and falls back his position, he is wounded. He reaches a motorcycle, and sits and leans against it in a futile attempt to fire a handgun at an encroaching German tank. Thankfully, Allied forces reach Ramelle, turning the tide and saving the surviving members of Captain Miller's squad. World War II-era Pvt. Ryan (Matt Damon) walks over and stands above the still-leaning Captain Miller. Pvt. Ryan looks directly at Miller's (Tom Hanks) physical sacrifice and prominently sheds a tear. Miller's hands shake, a condition that was introduced earlier in the film and due most likely to a combination of nerves, stress, and injury, but that here acts as symbol for the sacrifice and the age of now elderly veterans. Leaning into Pvt. Ryan, Miller utters the film's now nearly iconic line, "Earn this," and dies. Risking no possibility for error in conveying this message, Spielberg has Corporal Upham, the soldier whose fear cost Mellish's life, walk over to Miller's body, a move that symbolically acts as a bow to the shrine of The Greatest Generation.

The simple open-endedness of the statement "James ... earn this ... earn it" provides it added strength as the audience, as children of the World War II generation can interpret it as they need to emotionally. On the surface, it means to earn this chance at staying alive after so many others perished in the attempt to do so. At another level, it provides some sort of point or purpose to the war as it validates the death incurred for the greater outcome. On an individual level, the character of Private Ryan must somehow live his life in such a way as to validate the deaths of the soldiers who went looking for him. Audience members, having shared this assumed-to-be-realistic portrayal of a

wartime search and an intimate deathbed moment with their paternal stand-in (Hanks), now must justify their own lives and choices, carrying with them the ringing memory of being told to “earn this.”

Along with the term “The Greatest Generation,” the discourse of World War II also uses the phrase “the ultimate sacrifice,” which connects strongly with the script’s “earn this.” This concept of sacrifice also was embedded in Reagan’s June 6, 1984, *The Boys of Pointe du Hoc* speech, which included these lines: “The men of Normandy had faith that what they were doing was right ... It was the deep knowledge -- and pray God we have not lost it -- that there is a profound, moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest ... You all knew that some things are worth dying for” (para. 12-13). In these selected excerpts we see similar themes of unwavering belief and purpose, the talkback to younger generations who do not possess the same pro-military beliefs; and the willingness to die for the national cause, it is presumed,

We can imagine alternative concepts that are absent from the film. Dying against the motorcycle, Hanks’s Capt. Miller could have said “It’s been an honor,” “tell my wife I love her,” “your war and mine are over,” “was it worth it?,” “I hope this is our last war,” or even “We’ll beat ‘em; I know it.” These lines would have put the focus solely on the characters and their experiences in the war without a conscious effort to connect the generations through, at best, pride and, at worst, guilt via inadequacy. So, Capt. Miller’s quiet, yet demonstrative, “James ... earn this ... earn it” in the film’s denouement fits within the discourse of remembrance began by Reagan in 1984 and sustained by Ambrose and Brokaw during the early 1990s.

At this point, the scene (time code: 2:38:51-2:39:03) shifts to a low-angle close-up of the World War II-era Pvt. Ryan (Damon) that morphs into a low-angle close-up of the elderly veteran Ryan (Young). At first glance, this is simply a popular computer-generated imagery flourish added to make the film not seem out of place in a 1998 cinematic marketplace. More subtlety, however, what it accomplishes is to make the eras of World War II and the late 1990s, more seamless as Matt Damon transforms into elderly Ryan, played by Harrison Young and the audience members in this space of transference transform into their parents. The camera swings from facing veteran Ryan to taking his point of view helping the audience to embody Ryan and his experiences. As close as an audience can, we become him.

The elderly Ryan addresses the gravestone directly and says that his family is with him and that “they wanted to come with me.” This line of dialogue affirms the post-World War II generation’s desire to engage with and take on the burden of their parents’ memory. Ryan continues his dialogue, an overt response to Captain Miller’s sacrifice that also speaks for his children’s generation with the words: “I tried to live my life the best I could. I hope in your eyes, I have earned what all of you did for me.” Ryan then proceeds to ask his wife whether he led a good life; she, acting in the role of both spouse and mother to The Greatest Generation’s children, affirms he did. The effect is the weight of a mother’s support lionizing her husband’s accomplishments and potentially questioning the children’s. Those accomplishments are most often symbolized by the event Ambrose wrote about, Reagan and Brokaw commemorated, and that has come to represent the best of US accomplishments during the war: the D-Day landings. Spielberg’s 1998 film was especially singled out for its representation of this event. This film sequence has been

discussed and written about ad nauseum, but nonetheless is engaged with briefly here to support some points regarding prosthetic memory.

It is the film's opening beach-storming scene that most cements the film's reputation for realism via a point-of-view perspective combined with the potential for sensory overload in many audience members' minds. Many film critics and movie-goers praised *Saving Private Ryan* "for recreating battle so realistically as to bring truth to the representation of war" (Haggith, 2007, p. 177). Since we know that Spielberg was inspired by both Robert Capa's still photographs and John Ford's documentary footage, it is not a great leap for Haggith (2007) to compare Spielberg's opening twenty-six minute scene with the actual battle footage taken by US and British cameramen.

There seems to be a desire from certain audiences for war films to be as realistic as possible. We can hypothesize this desire is due to participants of the war events wanting their experiences accurately portrayed, as well as audiences who are interested in history, desiring to consume something that is as close to accurate or authentic as possible. The common complaints about unrealistic elements in war cinema, according to Jeanine Basinger, a film scholar of the World War II combat genre, center on narrative content within three areas: the sentimentalizing of relationships, propagandizing of motives, and battle violence that "could not logically recreate the true battle experience" (1998, para. 13).

However, Basinger (1998) thinks the issue of combat accuracy regarding *Saving Private Ryan* is not the key issue; but rather "accuracy about the history of the World War II combat genre and *Saving Private Ryan's* place in that history" (para. 2). Basinger's conclusion is that previously released World War II films such as *Bataan*



(1943) were actually also praised for their gritty realism at the time of their release. She also writes of *Saving Private Ryan*'s story format and uniqueness by displaying inner squad conflict and questioning: "In fact, the combat film was always grounded in the need to help an audience understand and accept war" (Basinger, 1998, para. 21).

There was large acceptance by 1998 audiences during *Saving Private Ryan* original theatrical run of the film's attempts at a new technological depiction of realism that audiences felt successfully transmitted the moment to their theater seats. To Wood, *Saving Private Ryan* is visually realistic but ultimately falls back on the same clichés found in Ambrose and Brokaw – "those visions of heroism and glory so derided by Hemingway" (2006, p. 84). The majority of Spielberg's story is one of loud, incessant gunfire and soldiers talking – the opposite of Wood's own experience, defined by a silent, quiet, isolation.

Nonetheless, these in-film scenes were supported by the film's publicity machine, which "asked veterans of the invasion to testify to the "truth" of the opening sequence" (Wasser, 2010, p. 178). Veterans were made available to journalists in order to "recount psychologically damaging horrors and endorse Spielberg's reconstruction" (McMahon, 1998). This type of low-key promotion was done so purportedly out of respect for the subject matter (Gumbel, 1999, p. 16). Nigel Morris, in his book *The Cinema of Steven Spielberg* (2007), writes in regards to *Saving Private Ryan* "Realism equated with truthfulness, and both with horror" (p. 271). As a result "this film ... bore witness; to look away was "cowardly, disrespectful" (Morris, 2007, p. 271). For Wasser (2010), however, this truth of a perceived realism is "only emotional" (p. 178). Yet, that's the key here. Beyond quibbles with Wasser's minimization of emotional truths, the fact that he

focuses on emotion – though here it is really affect – is nonetheless spot-on. Reagan trumpeted the soldiers' sacrifice; Ambrose chronicled it; Brokaw televised its commemoration; Clinton institutionalized Reagan's rhetoric. Now, in 1998, via a combination of experienced, talented filmmaking, a desire to exalt, and cinema technology that could replicate battlefield chaos via sight and sound immersion, *Saving Private Ryan* can attach a prosthetic memory moored in affect, built in the experiential space within and around the film.

Spielberg has articulated in the *Parting Thoughts* section of the *Saving Private Ryan* bonus material (2004) that there really is no lesson from making a World War II film because “we all know war is hell.” Nevertheless, Spielberg hoped the film would teach audiences who are thrilled by violence something new. The film according to Spielberg is “intended to show the other side, what that violence does to human beings” (Reed, 1998, p. 14). The odd statement is that Spielberg mentions he believes audiences are desensitized to violence due to their exposure to both motion pictures and video games. Yet, even if *Saving Private Ryan*, as Spielberg intended, shows the fatal consequences of violence, he nonetheless simultaneously developed the successful first person shooter video game series *Medal of Honor* (Spielberg, 1999) as a companion piece to *Saving Private Ryan*.

So, for Spielberg, the point of making *Saving Private Ryan* is to ask “How do you find decency inside a war that is hell?” This is articulated in the film by actor Tom Sizemore's character, Sgt. Mike Horvath, who says “Saving Private Ryan might be the only decent thing in this whole war.” This desire for decency, civility, human rights and a better way is informed by the politics *some* of the daughters and sons fought for in their

youth during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The film balances this ethos with a reverence for their parents' generation. In the introduction to the *Saving Private Ryan* bonus features on DVD, Spielberg states the film "is about and for those veterans ... none of us would have a life now without those veterans." Spielberg's senior military advisor on the film, Dale Dye, said he told the actors during their mandatory ten-day boot camp – so that they could get into their roles as soldiers – "I want you to bring honor and dignity to the men who died for your freedom."

Brokaw, in his 1998 book *The Greatest Generation*, wrote the following about the *Saving Private Ryan*:

A new generation of Americans has a greater appreciation of what was involved on D-Day as a result of Steven Spielberg's stunning film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). For younger Americans, D-Day has been a page or two in their history books or some anniversary ceremony on television with a lot of white-haired men leaning into the winds coming off the English Channel as President Reagan or President Clinton praised their contributions. *Saving Private Ryan*, although a work of fiction, is true to the sound, the fury, the death, the terrible wounds of that day. (p. 27).

Brokaw fails to mention his own contribution as one of these "white-haired men leaning into the wind" who helped set up the foundation for *Saving Private Ryan*'s success or his own publisher's desire to piggy-back off the success of the film for the holiday book-buying season of late 1998.

### **III. *The Greatest Generation***

*Rolling Stone* magazine describes Tom Brokaw's book *The Greatest Generation* as a result of Random House "sniffing a marketing opportunity after the success of *Saving Private Ryan*" (Conroy & Sheffield, 1999, para. 1). Don Evans, writing for *Advertising Age* in 2000, explains the success of *The Greatest Generation* this way:

Brokaw, as author, provided Random House with “a trusted and likable public figure with a household name and familiar face” (para. 2). Random House president, publisher, and editor-in-chief Ann Godoff is quoted as saying, “Absolutely everything clicked ... it was a wonderfully orchestrated thing” (Evans, 2000, para. 4). The pieces of this plan included “guaranteed prime time” and mass media publicity due to NBC’s involvement, *Saving Private Ryan* renewing interest in the subject matter, releasing the book just before the Christmas shopping season, and after the holidays, NBC would air the book’s tie-in documentary.

Many reviewers in 1998 were not kind to Brokaw’s enthusiastic embrace of nostalgia in this book *The Greatest Generation*. *The American Spectator*’s book review was not kind especially when describing Brokaw’s prose: “Its usual path is between a network news human-interest feature and a Sunday-supplement advice column” (King, 1999, p. 76). Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, reviewing for *The New York Times* called Brokaw’s writing style “boring” and reminded readers that today’s generation also has hurdles – including “fighting poverty, prejudice and cultural displacement” (1998, para 16). Michael Lind, also reviewing the book for *The New York Times*, writes that Brokaw “with the best of intentions” nonetheless reinforces two myths: “the myth that World War II was an uncontroversial war, and the myth of generations” (1998, para. 2). Lind also takes issue with Brokaw’s comparison between the generations, in particular the pride in serving that Brokaw seemingly believed to be unique to the Greatest Generation. Lind countered by offering that “In 1980, 77 percent of Vietnam veterans agreed: ‘Looking back, I am glad I served my country’” (1998, para 3). Conroy and Sheffield, writing for

*Rolling Stone* magazine in August of 1999, offered a blunt rebuke to Brokaw's claim regarding The Greatest Generation:

Granted, they deserve sympathy for surviving the soup lines and some credit for keeping their heads low on D-Day, but let's face it -- they've pretty much had a free ride ever since. The boats home from Europe and the Pacific took them to a land of cheap gas and housing, free college education (the GI Bill) and the only viable economy in the world -- an economy that chugged along nicely until the greatest generation got old enough to stop taking orders and start giving them. And then what happened? The Seventies, that's what. Under greatest-generation leadership, America had two recessions, two energy crises and twenty percent inflation. Our cities were dying. The only high-tech innovation was polyester. We lost a war to a tiny Asian country and watched Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew disgrace the presidency and the vice presidency. The pitiful helpless-giant act continued when a medium-size Middle Eastern country took hostages. Things got so bad that we had to call in a pre-greatest-generation politician, Ronald Reagan, to straighten things out. So the next time some old geezer makes you feel inadequate, ask him these questions: "Clinton or Carter?" "Kosovo or Khe Sanh?" "The Internet or the 8-track? (08/19/99, p. 87)

While Conroy and Sheffield's note is one of the harshest, it also shares Brokaw's methodology of nonetheless comparing generations. Generations, particularly his father's, is Brokaw's laser-like focus that ultimately misses its target when passed through the prism of nostalgia.

In "The Greatest Generation," Brokaw (1998) writes that his infatuation with the men and women who lived through World War II began in 1984 when he went to Normandy for a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day documentary for NBC (p. xvii). He was forty-four in summer 1984 and states that prior to the trip, his early memories of growing up around an Army base had not been salient. Instead, his memories up to that point were marked more by the major benchmarks of the post-war 20<sup>th</sup> century era "innocence in the fifties ... political turmoil brought on by Vietnam ... the social upheaval of the sixties ... Watergate in the seventies ... the prospects of the Cold War" (Brokaw, 1998, p. xviii).

Describing how he interviewed the veterans NBC had flown to Normandy for the documentary it was shooting in 1984, Brokaw calls it “an instructive moment for me, one of many, and so characteristic” (1998, p. xxiii). The reason he describes it as “characteristic” is that these veterans were discussing a low-lying bluff that forty years prior had been filled with land mines and soldiers whose legs had been shattered from them, yet the veterans’ conversation flowed as “calmly as if they were remembering an egg-toss at a Sunday social back home” (p. xxiii). This calm re-telling is for Brokaw immediately symbolic of the entire generation in the form of stoic bravery. The idea of men in their 50s responding with a mixture of experience and mellowing due to age doesn’t seem to be considered by the author. While Brokaw certainly drives home the point throughout his book that many of these men previously never spoke about their war experiences, it doesn’t mean that they hadn’t replayed the landmine bluff story in their minds thousands of times and so to articulate it was not dramatic. Also notable in this passage is Brokaw’s choice of the phrase “egg-toss at a Sunday social back home,” which is the verbal equivalent of a Norman Rockwell *Saturday Evening Post* cover.

Like many individuals who reach mid-life, Brokaw (1998), too, began to look backward to his youth and the people who raised him, and he realized he “had failed to appreciate what they had been through and what they had accomplished” (pp. xviii-xix). While many people realize that as teenagers or career-minded young people, they didn’t appreciate their parents’ efforts, for Brokaw this was a life-changing moment. Brokaw returned for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day in 1994 and describes himself as having a missionary zeal for telling the stories of this generation, drawing more inspiration from his friend Stephen E. Ambrose’s book *D-Day*. In fact, Brokaw mentions having Ambrose

on the fiftieth anniversary coverage on NBC, where Ambrose reminded the television hosts to discuss the savagery of the Normandy landings “stomachs opened; their faces shot away” (Brokaw, 1998, p. 17). Ambrose serves as a source of academic authority for Brokaw, yet sharing his passion for the men who fought. Brokaw, in his book, also discusses Leonard “Bud” Lomell, who served as a US Army Ranger and scaled the cliffs at Pointe-du-Hoc on D-Day. Brokaw originally met Lomell when the veteran was featured on NBC’s fortieth anniversary coverage in 1984. Ambrose has also written about Lomell’s accomplishments as well. Brokaw’s project is to interview people about the “charter members of this remarkable generation” (1998, p. vii); he mentions Ambrose as also encouraging him to write the book.

When Brokaw, at the end of his acknowledgements, suggests to friends and families “you now begin to ask the questions and hear the stories that have been locked in memory for too long” (1998, p. ix), you wonder why Brokaw didn’t just suggest that they read Studs Terkel’s *“The Good War”* – published fourteen years prior. Works such as Terkel’s *“The Good War”* as well as a plethora of combat film, propaganda film, popular magazine articles, and history of World War II combat genre films – exist as an archive for anyone interested.

Brokaw chose to make an argument that relies upon the difficult-to-define concept *generation* and then proceeds to compare it against other generations perceived by the author. One of many slippery slopes created by embarking on such an argument is to conflate generation with accomplishment. I am in no way diminishing or disproving the accomplishments of those who fought in the war or provided support for it. Men did climb cliffs and did take out enemy gun posts. Female nurses did perform surgery to save

lives under the worst of operating conditions. Generation, though is hard to define, and it seems as though Brokaw downplays or makes salient certain aspects of this proposed homogeneous generation when it is convenient to make his argument. As Brokaw (1998) writes, “because the lives of these people are so special I didn’t want to do anything in a book that would not live up to their deeds, heroic and otherwise” (p. vii). The argument itself built upon a precarious foundation.

Brokaw acknowledges that he has been challenged on his assertion that one can a) accurately define and characterize a generation, b) compare generations, c) develop a metric that would allow one to name one generation the best or greatest, and d) believe that such an argument is a fruitful endeavor. Nonetheless, Brokaw writes that even in light of these challenges he believes he has “the facts on my side” (1998, p. xxx). In his first chapter, *The Time of Their Lives*, Brokaw offers to buttress his argument. These include the year 1940 being “the fulcrum of America in the twentieth century” and 1940 being “equal to the revolution of 1776 and the perils of the Civil War” (1998, p. 3). The rest of his first chapter reads like the novelization of singer Billy Joel’s song *We Didn’t Start the Fire* (1989) as it rattles off basic historical events and names one would remember from a 10<sup>th</sup> grade history class.

#### Brokaw and the Tension between Prosthetic Memory and Nostalgia

Brokaw states he first used the phrase “Greatest Generation” on Tim Russert’s *Meet the Press*, a Sunday current affairs program featuring prominent journalists, during NBC’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary coverage of D-Day (1994). In his book, Brokaw depends on The Baby Boomers as “another distinctive generation” (1998, p. xx) even though there were seventy-six million US children born between the years 1945 and 1964. Such a large



volume of children born over such a lengthy time period makes attempts at homogeneity shaky at best. While it is true that the children of this generation began to self-reflexively define themselves against values and institutions associated with their parents, not everyone in the cohort thought this way and those who embody our remembrance of protest were often a smaller subset of white, educated, and middle-class people born during that time. Brokaw's desire for forgiveness from his parents' generation for his pursuit of career and turning away from the type of small town life he now is revering, creates a blind spot towards his parents regarding political upheaval during the 1960s. Brokaw writes "they [the Greatest Generation] hated the long hair and free love ... but they didn't give up on the new generation" (1998, p. xx). While it's true that most parents would never give up entirely on a child – even during rough patches in their lives including breakups, legal mistakes, addictions, etc. – it is nonetheless convenient to describe The Greatest Generation this way at a time when children are finally ready to reconcile.

One of the surprising elements within this book is not only the platitudes exemplifying what makes this particular generation so great, but also the inclusion of shortcomings perceived to be held by younger people back in 1998. These deficiencies include: a loss of personal responsibility, too casual an attitude toward religion, loss of national purpose and its attendant personal ties, too much affluence, lack of focus on starting adult life, old-fashioned patriotism, lack of camaraderie and affection, increased legal protections / fear of being sued, not enough direct parenting, loss of close neighborly ties, and a turning away from domestic politics and international affairs. So Brokaw offers a variation on the concept of prosthetic memory. The variation is the result

of a reliance on pure nostalgia and its resulting negative comparison between generations that hurts our ability to see Brokaw's efforts purely as the creation of prosthetic memories.

Through this haze of nostalgia and hero worship, Brokaw carries a mission to educate a public unaware or forgetful about the accomplishments of the war generation. As such, there are specific lessons and goals he hopes the reader will take away from watching his tie-in specials or reading his book. In the five short paragraphs Brokaw devotes to introducing his shame [racism] section (1998, p.183), he lays out three ideals he believes World War II testifies to: America's resistance to tyranny, "ingenious industrial machinery", and the common values of a varied people facing a common threat which he sees as the nation's – "greatest strength." The hardships endured by those living through The Great Depression did force people to have to depend upon one another for resources in order to survive. Brokaw is correct when pointing to this aspect with his flowery prose of "where life was a team effort" (1998, p.232) but once again lets his argument fall apart, by viewing the purpose of these efforts as benefiting "a common good" (1998, p. 232) rather than being merely the result of a desire for survival or a lack of other viable options.

What the World War II generation meant or what legacy it has left for future generations to remember, take on as their own and emulate, is of course the running theme throughout Brokaw's book. This legacy, as Brokaw see it, includes a strong commitment to family values, community, personal responsibility, honesty, discipline, leadership, fiscal discipline, taking chances (betting on themselves), the idea that life is precious, noble simplicity, self-reliance, morality, humility, religion, and nationalism.

Brokaw's methodology for achieving this transference is to "applaud the ordinary life" and attempt to pass the memories of the generation via individual biography or profile.

The first profile of memory acting as the biographical lesson within the section *Ordinary People*, is that of Thomas and Eileen Broderick. Brokaw presents Thomas Broderick's eventual overcoming of great physical limitations not just as a personal triumph but as a generational one. Broderick was a smart and ambitious nineteen-year-old pre-med student at Xavier College in Cincinnati from a working class background. Wondering which branch of service best fit his sense of adventure, he joined the Merchant Marines and earned both good pay and private quarters but was soon bored. While in Algiers, he saw cocky paratroopers and wanted to be one. His Merchant Marine superior thought this was a bad idea. His parents thought it was a bad idea. The draft board clerk thought it was a bad idea. Once Broderick was in airborne training, his captain offered him an instructor's job and the rank of sergeant because he thought it was a bad idea for Broderick to go into battle.

But Broderick did go into battle, was shot, and completely lost his eyesight. He became depressed and did not embrace the re-training and therapy the military provided him. He tried returning to work for his father but did poorly because he was still grieving from his traumatic situation. After a long period, he finally accepted his obstacle, learned Braille, began selling insurance over the phone, married a girl and had seven children. When Brokaw interprets Broderick's story on page twenty-four, he writes that Broderick "embodies the best qualities of his generation." This is due to his enlisting in two types of service (Merchant Marine and paratrooper) – although as stated, everyone at the time felt this eagerness to be a mistake. After coming to grips with his blindness, Broderick "set

out to be the best husband, father, businessman, and citizen he could be – sight or no sight. He didn't grow bitter and dependent on others. He didn't blame the world for his condition" (p. 24). Brokaw believes the current generation often blames the world for their situations. This profile illustrates how problematic Brokaw's mission is. Dramatic narrative may elicit emotion or affect for the principal involved, which may in turn help to burn-in this memory to the non-participant. However, by insisting on a generational comparison that builds in a negative comparison to the generation after that of World War II veterans – more so than Reagan's, Clinton's, and Spielberg's rhetoric did – Brokaw hurts his intended goal. Second, by myopically focusing on generational rather than individual attributes, Brokaw builds a weak foundation for his argument. Briefly, let's re-examine Broderick's story to support my points.

First, I'm sure Broderick was bitter after going blind and he seemed to stay that way for roughly eighteen months to two years after the injury. Second, war or no war – rather than sight or no sight – Broderick seemed to be an ambitious go-getter, who probably would have succeeded regardless of the circumstances. Broderick is unique and impressive because of who he was, not because of what generation he was a part of. Later in the chapter on *USA Today* founder Al Neuharth, Brokaw actually does admit the publisher would have been successful in whatever field he chose because he happened to be bright and ambitious. Such cherry-picking colors Brokaw's work as nostalgia more than an attempt at memory maintenance and transference. Furthermore, Broderick's story can be interpreted as a series of bad decisions on the part of an overly adventure-seeking youth who over time used those same pre-war personal qualities to overcome disability and succeed in post-war life.

Brokaw's story of Lloyd Kilmer is used to teach a similar lesson. Brokaw looks at Kilmer's choice to sign up when he could have qualified for a deferment as heroic and indicative of the attributes of his generation, when really Kilmer, like many young men, signed up because all his buddies were doing so. Brokaw paints Kilmer's story as giving up a cushy job in a Midwestern small town hotel, for participation in war, as heroic. But, how many idealistic and somewhat naïve young men would choose the monotony of everyday minutiae in a small town rather than the perceived adventure of life as a pilot and a war hero?

Brokaw also profiles his own personal hero, Joe Foss, whom he considers to be the quintessential World War II hero. Foss was born into a poor farming family during The Great Depression in the Midwest and lost his father at an early age. Charles Lindbergh inspired him to want to fly, so he pumped gas to earn money for college and flying lessons. He played football at the University of South Dakota, enlisted as a Marine, and taught and flew missions during the war (1998, p. 115).

Brokaw describes Foss as "a warrior of the old school, mourning the losses of friends from his squadron but never crying" (1998, p. 118), once again making artificial constructions of masculinity and war as a rite of passage. In the Foss profile, as in others, Brokaw glosses over any instances of straying from the Generation's decades of married monogamy when explaining Foss's divorce as simply "there was no scandal here, just a troubled marriage" (1998, p. 121). We can chalk up Brokaw's inconsistencies within the Foss profile to boyhood hero worship, but nonetheless these exist and are troublesome. Broderick, Kilmer, and Foss's biographies are used to provide a narrative of great personal drive, integrity, ambition, and selflessness seemingly absent from the generation

of readers in 1998. Yet inconsistencies within his approach, combined with a blurry vision obscured by too much nostalgia makes his lessons via biography more useful to the already initiated rather than new conscripts. Obviously, Brokaw considers members of this generation not just to be good people, but as heroes for what they accomplished during military missions but also what they contributed to their families and communities. Furthermore, Brokaw conflates the source of this hero worship with an ahistorical interpretation of media, celebrity, and hero existence during the war.

#### Pinholes for Counter-Perspectives to Shine Through

Within *The Greatest Generation*, Brokaw also devotes a relatively small amount of space to perspectives that work against his rose-tinted thesis. For example, Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield – whose profile is among those of veterans in high-profile public-service jobs, politicians mostly – discusses his anti-war and anti-nuclear-weapons stances. He was present for the immediate aftermath of the atomic bomb drop in Hiroshima, and his time there trying to help starving Japanese children led him to vote *against* war in Vietnam, Grenada, and the first Gulf War.

Other veterans express opinions in *The Greatest Generation* that do not match the mythmaking. Gordon Larsen mentions being grateful that none of his sons ever had to serve due to his own hellish war experience in the Pacific. Member of the Greatest Generation Dorothy Haener clearly counters Brokaw's thesis when she explains the pragmatic reasons behind some of the Rosie the Riveters of the time: "what people forget now is that people went to work because they wanted to live" (1998, p. 96). Brokaw writes Dorothy makes it clear "she was not motivated by patriotism alone" (1998, p. 96). Even Brokaw's boyhood idol, Joe Foss, after nearly dying in an aerial battle, admitted he

questioned why he was in the war and hadn't stayed home. Foss chooses to stay not for patriotism or understanding his own inherent greatness but because at age twenty-seven he felt like a leader to the eighteen-and nineteen-year-olds who enlisted and watched him fly and survive (this nonetheless reinforces the theme of brotherhood and fighting for one another advanced in Stephen E. Ambrose's books and foreshadows the use of this theme in the influential television mini-series based upon Ambrose's books in 2001 and 2010).

Another subject of Brokaw's oral history project is fellow television personality Andy Rooney (*60 Minutes* on rival CBS), who was a member of The Greatest Generation and participated as a sergeant working as a *Stars and Stripes* correspondent. This is a newspaper published by the Department of Defense for member of the military. Brokaw begins the chapter explaining that Rooney, who died in 2011, challenged Brokaw's thesis and the sweep of his conclusion. Rooney believed the generation of adults of 1998 was just as strong. The difference, The Greatest Generation had The Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War to live through. In addition, Brokaw takes space to note that Rooney was not an "emotional romantic" (1998, p. 296) when it came to the subject of World War II.

Rooney has stated bombardiers required little skill; they just dropped where they were told and missed quite often. He also held that the American Legion and VFW expected too much of society; he believed only disabled and seriously wounded veterans should receive special treatment. Since he estimated ninety percent didn't get anywhere near the fighting, he thought they were not owed anything extra. Brokaw uses passages from Rooney's memoir *My War* (1995) to attempt to establish some sort of emotional truth that somehow validates Brokaw's argument. At the end of his chapter on Rooney,

Brokaw quotes Rooney discussing visiting Omaha Beach: “On each visit I’ve wept ... even if you didn’t know anyone who died, the heart knows something the brain does not – and you weep” (1998, p. 298). Brokaw writes directly after the quote “exactly” and with that one word seemingly negates Rooney’s challenges to Brokaw’s thesis. An attempt is made to show that even though Rooney believed Brokaw’s thesis to be false, he nonetheless understood the emotional truth of the war and thus ultimately supported Brokaw’s mission. Rooney is quoted as saying that after he viewed Buchenwald, “for the first time I knew that any peace is not better than any war” (1998, p. 296).

Ironically, it is the profile Brokaw presents of one of his harshest critics, and the one Brokaw uses to “prove” his thesis, that works as an outlier, the exception that proves the rule. Rooney’s quote “the heart knows something the brain does not” can be the gateway within the transferential space for prosthetic memory. Brokaw has tried to follow this structure throughout the book, repeatedly drawing upon convenient anecdotes to pull at the heart-strings of readers in an attempt to inspire and educate. Yet these biographical inspirations are always wrapped in a comparison that judges the late 1990s reader providing little space for a desire to reciprocate in thanks or awe for 1998 sacrifices. Yet, Rooney’s simple passage from his own memoir, which Brokaw quoted, relies simply on the emotion of the human experience, the tragedy that is available to even the most rational of thinkers. If it is not an emotional truth per say, then it is an accuracy of feelings or stable passage to empathy that Rooney simply provides, and that Brokaw aspires to but fails by wrapping it all in so much gooey nostalgia and heavy-handed lessons.



#### IV. The Thin Red Line

Among the “themes of American decency and heroic individualism” (Bodnar, 2010, p. 200) perpetuated in part by the version of World War II presented by Reagan, Ambrose, Brokaw, and Spielberg, alternative conceptions were present but muted. Critical and humanitarian perspectives existed but were given only limited attention or bracketed by a Holocaust narrative. One prominent case in point for these alternative conceptions was 1998’s feature film *The Thin Red Line*. By 1998 filmmaker Terrence Malick had taken on an intriguing if not completely mythological persona. This was due primarily for how well his first feature-length motion picture, *Badlands*<sup>38</sup> – first released at the end of 1973 and then wide released in the spring of 1974 – was received by critics. After much delay due to editing, his second film, *Days of Heaven*, was finally released in 1978. While not as well-received as his first film, it nonetheless won awards for its lush cinematography. *Days of Heaven* (1978) was the last film Malick directed before 1998’s *The Thin Red Line*. This twenty-year gap, combined with the rise of a blockbuster style of Hollywood films begun by Malick’s contemporaries Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, made some film audiences hungry for a return to the 1970s style of auteur filmmaking. This genre by 1998 had itself become somewhat mythologized.

*The Thin Red Line* was released for Christmas 1998. This release, combined with George Lucas’s *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace* on May 19, 1999, as well as Stanley Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut* on July 16, 1999, made film audiences hopefully expectant for a return to the 1970s style of filmmaking from three of its most unique directors,

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<sup>38</sup> Set in 1959, it tells the story of fifteen year-old Holly Sargis (Sissy Spacek) who gets involved with twenty-five year-old troubled greaser Kit Carruthers (Martin Sheen) as his anti-social and violent ways set them on the run toward the badlands of Montana.

especially within the context of a blockbuster Hollywood industry symbolized by films such as *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991) and *Jurassic Park* (1993). So as film studies scholar Martin Flanagan (2003) mentions, Malick's *The Thin Red Line* had a challenging context to grapple with upon its release more so than most films. *The Thin Red Line* was released five months after Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* – a film that was a continuation of the dominant perspective on the depiction of World War II – focused on the individual soldier in a manner begun by Reagan's 1984 speech. Flanagan (2003) notes, “Fox’s promotional campaign comprehensively failed to locate *The Thin Red Line* within public discourse surrounding World War Two” (2003, p. 125). I would add it would be nearly impossible to, when based upon the message Malick chose to craft. The plot is difficult to succinctly summarize beyond the focus on US Army Private Robert Witt who seems connected to the larger natural world within which the war in the South Pacific is taking place. He and his unit land on Guadalcanal and eventually engage with the enemy. This combat reveals the stresses, mistakes, and minutiae of combat. In the end Private Witt sacrifices himself in order to save an inexperienced Lieutenant Band. In the end, Witt is buried and the war goes on.

Malick delivered a film that philosophizes on the larger issue of nature and man's place within it, thus questioning the significance of man's war. James Morrison and Thomas Schur, in their book *The Films of Terrence Malick* (2003) compare *Badlands* to the precision of a tone poem, *Days of Heaven* to a ballad, and call *The Thin Red Line* “the impersonal grandeur of the epic” (p. 24). This led many reviewers and audiences alike to show distaste for the film because it neither fit the mold set by Spielberg and the previous canon of post-World War II pictures, nor did it fit the previous mold of antiwar pictures.

Morrison and Schur note its superficial similarities to films such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979) but state Malick's film is "almost entirely free of anger or bitterness" (2003, p. 24). Rather, Malick's images of combat – which were in fact lauded for their power – in opposition to Spielberg's message, "expose ... the fundamental outcome of war, the death of boys" (Morrison & Schur, 2003, p. 25).

In addition, Malick's film was supposedly based upon veteran James Jones' 1962 novel *The Thin Red Line*, a book that fits comfortably into the anti-war genre. However significant elements of the novel were changed in Malick's film, angering some viewers. Another area critics and audiences took offense to was Malick's choice to significantly downplay the impressive Hollywood star power that lined up to act in his film. This choice to have soldiers blend in to one another and have his A-list stars seemingly randomly pop in and out of scenes, along with a narrative structure not often seen in war films, left many audiences and critics confused at best and angry at worst - especially many of those who had been primed by Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* only five months prior (Michaels, 2009, p. 60).

John Streamas (2003), in his piece *The Greatest Generation Steps Over the Thin Red, Line* argues that Malick's film is built from his concept of a reinvented Judeo-Christian myth of the Fall shaped by his "Vietnam-era political consciousness" (p. 139). Man falls due to his guilty disobedience of God; here the fall is symbolized by his participation in war and its associated horrors. Streamas situates this myth of a fall against the rise or revival of The Good War myth helped along by Spielberg and Brokaw. Beidler (1998) would see this as a continuation of The Good War versus The Great Snafu. Flanagan (2003) uses *The Thin Red Line*'s promotional website copy to show how

differently it was marketed from *Saving Private Ryan*. However, I disagree with this interpretation on one point. The blurb ends with “They were no longer fighting solely for patriotic reasons or the larger world and its issues which had brought them there; they were fighting for survival and for the men next to them” (quoted in Flanagan, 2003, p. 128). The last line connotes a brotherhood, and this theme was prominent in Spielberg’s work and certainly in Ambrose’s work that helped to inspire Spielberg.

Still Malick’s *The Thin Red Line* as a text to be interpreted for the presence of intentionality to construct and pass on a prosthetic memory is vastly different from the dominant texts. It is a memory of seemingly arbitrary or avoidable chaos, pain, suffering, and death disguised as a cause of great significance but ultimately an individual experience and struggle over the smallest of material desires. Landsberg’s (2004) conception of her term *prosthetic memory* is a hopeful one. She sees the good that can be accomplished by burning in such memories to a new generation so that lessons of previous tragedies can be learned, the lives of those who suffered, remembered, and progress achieved within the human experience. My application of prosthetic memory is to show the distinctiveness of second-generation memory from first-generation or first-hand experienced propaganda. When applied to Spielberg, Ambrose, and Brokaw’s version, prosthetic memory helps expose the excess of sentimentality, nostalgia, and narrow perspective on a World War. When applied to Malick’s philosophical take on a classic anti-war text, it reveals a memory of sensory awareness within the physical world while raising unanswered questions about our individual relationship to it. Malick’s memory isn’t about World War II but rather the conflict seemingly inherent within ourselves and our environment.

One interesting way to locate Malick's film against the dominant representation of World War II in 1998 as presented by Reagan, Ambrose, Spielberg and Brokaw is to attempt to conceptualize what a first-person shooter video game based upon *The Thin Red Line* would offer. Spielberg of course did just that with his *Medal of Honor* video game based in part on his film *Saving Private Ryan*. The linear story and the seven levels in *Medal of Honor* translates the combat genre film rather well. However to imagine a video game based upon *The Thin Red Line* certainly would test the limits of potentiality for alternative histories as mentioned by video game scholars (Gish, 2010; Uricchio, 2005). It would completely upend our notions of war as a linear narrative with a particular objective as it would test the open world quality video games possess today, simulating a seemingly endless and random pattern of chaos and quiet for the individual soldier.

## V. Medal of Honor

*Medal of Honor* was released for the Sony Playstation gaming system on Veteran's Day (November 11) 1999. Containing mini-history lessons, background on weapons, and still and video clips to convey a particular mood, the game was called "arguably the most educational FPS ever made" by the UK gaming magazine Edge (Edge Staff, 2015, para. 15). The game was developed by Dreamworks Interactive LLC, an interactive division of Spielberg's Dreamworks that existed from 1995-2000. Before being sold to Electronic Arts and renamed Electronic Arts Los Angeles, Dreamworks Interactive's software division was originally staffed with ex-Microsoft employees (Edge Staff, 2015, para. 5). Spielberg was no mere figurehead. Always interested in video games as a then-newer medium, Spielberg was described by *Medal of Honor's* executive

producer Patrick Gilmore as thinking “games could unlock new ways to tell stories” (Edge Staff, 2015, para. 7).

Development of the video game began with a meeting on November 11, 1997, between Spielberg, who was in the middle of post-production for *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and the Dreamworks Interactive team. Along with his own interest in video games, Spielberg drew upon his son Max’s love for the then-popular first-person shooter *Goldeneye*, set in the James Bond universe. The Dreamworks team did not initially share Spielberg’s zeal for sharing World War II with a younger audience via videogames. At that time, Dreamworks Interactive was focusing on the PC market instead of home consoles, and first-person shooters were not a big Playstation genre. As *Medal of Honor* writer and producer Peter Hirschmann wrote, giving voice to objections about the game’s audience, “World War II is old; it’s got cobwebs on it” (Edge Staff, 2015, para. 10). However, once the development team worked quickly to deliver a rough demo as per Spielberg’s orders, they quickly found out how satisfying it was to shoot digital Nazis.

Spielberg had retired Marine Dale Dye, who had worked as a military advisor on *Saving Private Ryan*, also work with the *Medal of Honor* team to ensure accuracy, and lend his voice to the game’s opening narration. Still, as development continued, obstacles arose, including temporary objections from Paul Bucha, president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Bucha wrote a letter to Spielberg implying that the idea for such a game would be terrible and dishonor what the Medal of Honor stood for (Edge, 2015, para. 24). There was also the media’s conflation of first-person shooters with the-then recent Columbine massacre. Bucha was won over while Columbine caused the team to remove all blood from the game. This, along with the desire to educate, made *Medal of*

*Honor* seem a little more grown-up compared to other shooters reveling in digital blood and guts.

That being said, *Medal of Honor* represented a real shift for Dreamworks.

Spielberg's company has a logo of a boy sitting in the crescent moon casting his fishing line into the water below. The DreamWorks Interactive variation on this logo, appearing at the beginning of *Medal of Honor* (1999) is that same child in the moon, throwing away his fishing line and instead putting on an army helmet and jumping out of the moon with a parachute. The child's parachute gets caught on the bottom hook of the crescent moon and the boy let out a joyful sound. The childlike quality of the DreamWorks logo reinforces Spielberg's interest and passion in the childlike world of imagination his films help to foster but also reinforces his own child-like passion for his father's generation, playing the part of excited child re-enacting the spectacular battle stories of World War II. This focus on history, education, and the self-conscious reverence of its companion-piece *Saving Private Ryan*, led *Medal of Honor*'s executive producer Patrick Gilmore, to state "The history of Medal of Honor is in many ways the history of public acceptance of video games" (Edge Staff, 2015, para. 30). The seriousness of the subject matter, combined with the rise of powerful home gaming consoles such as Sony's Playstation, made a game like *Medal of Honor* seem much more mature than the previous stereotype of all video games being *Space Invaders* or *Pac-Man*.

Of course, not all were on board. Noted Harvard historian Niall Ferguson, in a 2006 article in *New York* magazine, referred to *Medal of Honor* derisively as a "profoundly unhistorical ... Space Invaders ... with fancy graphics" (para. 7). Though, Ferguson's opinion was in the minority. First-person shooters attempt to simulate an

immersive experience. *Medal of Honor* deepened that experience in two specific ways. First, the replication and inclusion of informational texts from World War II adds to the game's selective authenticity (Salvati & Bullinger, 2013). As I and media historian Andrew J. Salvati have written (2013) selective authenticity is defined around three components that can be found in first-person shooters, especially *Medal of Honor* (1999): technology fetishism, cinematic conventions, and documentary authority.

After the opening DreamWorks Interactive logo, a video of World War II newsreel footage with new voiceover from military advisor Dale Dye begins to play immediately. This video begins with the idea that conflict has always existed within civilization beginning in ancient times. But that the scale of conflict during the 20th century expanded to such a degree that it now involves the entire world. It mentions World War I and that afterward Hitler fanned the flames of his desire to make Germany strong again and expand his control. It then focuses on Britain's ability to survive under intense attack and then after Pearl Harbor the US gets involved in Africa, Italy, and then to Western Europe with footage of the actual landing on the beach for D-Day shown. At the end of this initial newsreel-style video, Dye, as narrator, asks the player whether he's ready to be part of the "Great Crusade" and answer "The Call of Duty." The date June 6, 1944, comes up as white text on a black background before the game transitions to the main menu screen from which a player starts a new game among many options. This would fall under Salvati and Bullinger's (2013) notion of cinematic convention in constructing selective authenticity. Interestingly, Dye's voiceover is reminiscent of the tone a news anchor, such as Brokaw, would use in a voice over for a D-Day or World War II documentary.



In terms of Salvati and Bullinger's (2013) documentary authority, this is first conveyed via the main menu screen where aesthetic touches successfully evoke the mood of war time. The main menu screen, war room, is a very authentic representation even considering the limited 1999 graphics. The scene uses lots of greens and browns with dim overhead lighting that illuminates large maps and documents on wooden tables with certain rudimentary electronics equipment and a bank of old-school telephones used to communicate with other forces. Your mission briefing is meant to simulate World War II-era information systems, including the look of both typefaces and papers as documents sit on top of a table that is full of maps. The screen a player goes to save their game mimics an old typewriter as you're entering a name for your saved game. Here it is called a "code name" and on the typewriter, instead of a confirm or return key, there is instead a "send" key to simulate the feel of sending secret messages on the then-current information system.

The original *Medal of Honor* (1999) videogame was separated into seven separate missions. The objectives for the seven missions focused on rescuing personnel, recovering stolen art, and various demolition missions used to cripple the Nazi war effort. The protagonist in this game is named Lieutenant Jimmy Patterson, a West Point graduate and OSS operative. The mission briefing before level one provides the background for Patterson and it makes him a bit of a super soldier with straight A's from his schooling, high proficiency in his basic training, and expert marksman. In addition, his image depicts him as an amalgamation of every good-looking leading man from war films. Your French liaison for your first mission is female resembling a cinematic leading lady, who informs you of the French Resistance named the Maquis. Your mission is to

rescue a G3 operations officer who was shot down the previous night. It is significant to the French Resistance effort.

The level load screen has a simulated propaganda poster with one soldier standing in the middle and the words “On To Victory.” Upon completing the first level, the load screen says “Triumph – Keep It Up Soldier” with a soldier at the front of the advancing troops waving for others to follow him as planes fly in the background. The load screen between before the second level says “The Fight Continues” in a propaganda poster-style typeface. When working in concert with each other, this technological fetishism, cinematic convention, and documentary authority produce a “historical realism” or selective authenticity which places this sensory immersive gameplay within attempts to satisfying audience expectations for both game play and historical experience.

Beyond these specifics regarding the historical first-person shooter’s ability to replicate a sense of authenticity via technical details, visual media conventions, and authoritarian curation, other scholars have argued the interactive potentialities of video games to history’s various fixed narratives (Gish, 2010; Uricchio, 2005). Such potentialities have effects on video games as transferential spaces for prosthetic memories. From one perspective, representations are different from simulations, which are “capable of generating countless encounters that may subsequently be fixed as representations ... a simulation is a machine for producing speculative or conditional representations” (Uricchio, 2005, p. 333). This perspective would make burning in or attaching prosthetic memories troublesome. However, first-person shooters are much more limited regarding this type of speculative play since ultimately the Nazis always end up losing, even in the simulation that is *Medal of Honor*. Rather, players of *Medal of*

*Honor* are immersed in the sensory simulation of a first-person perspective of conducting missions during World War II that are built upon the narrative history and convention built from both fiction and documentary films. For example, *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* (2002), the first in the series<sup>39</sup> released for the personal computer rather than the Playstation home gaming console, attempted to mimic key scenes from Spielberg's film *Saving Private Ryan*.

Second, the game used composer Michael Giacchino who in part built his career on the great success his audio work on this video game franchise brought him. Also, the addition of realistic sounds to the game "like officers yelling commands and dogs barking off in the night, add to the feeling that you're deep behind enemy lines, while the creaking deck in the ship level and the onrushing clomp of soldiers' footsteps add to the intensity of the experience" (Fiedler, 1999, para. 3). Joe Fiedler, reviewing for Gamespot.com at the time of *Medal of Honor's* release, also calls Giacchino's score "wonderful," writing that it "builds and weaves with the action, much like the orchestral movements heard in an old war movie" (1999, para. 3). This is not inconsequential since many would view *Medal of Honor* as only a simulation of *Saving Private Ryan* or just a continuation of World War II's original propaganda. However, as York University doctoral candidate Stephanie Fisher (2012) reminds us in her chapter *The Best Possible Story? Learning about WWII from FPS Videogames*, players are not a homogenous mass. Fisher, who interviewed World War II FPS players to discern to what extent these players used these games as learning tools, found the role these games play in the players' everyday life and the extent

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<sup>39</sup> The *Medal of Honor* series (1999-2012) included fourteen major title releases, two expansion packs, and three compilation releases. The series was set predominantly during World War II but also covered contemporary war zones as well.

and quality of their existing WWII knowledge were the most salient considerations concerning this question.

This type of player data is important since it links my own textual analysis of these 1990s World War II creations to how audiences or players interpret them. As Fisher's (2012) study notes, certain players of first-person shooters view the games themselves as a possible valid piece of historical reference material. Games scholar Jerome de Groot, in his 2008 book *Consuming History*, writes that for some players these are leisure activities, while for others a serious hobby they feel is very important. Historically based video-games, of which first-person shooters are a part, are played by a global, all-ages, and predominantly male audience (Groot, 2008, p. 133). First-person shooter players do attain a certain level of historical awareness due to their immersion in them, though that knowledge is skewed due to a multitude of factors including the player's own agency, the limited format of these games, and ambitions of the creators. As such, the first person shooter can act as both a transference space for prosthetic memory as well as a more traditional text of historical reference. These games can act as a mixture of both history and memory for particular players. Since the player audience is not homogeneous, one particular player may see a game as a site of historical reference while another may interpret it as a sensory immersion of a particular prosthetic memory that he or she hopes to move forward and carry on into the future. Of course, the player who sees it merely as a historical reference is also attempting to remember it as well – but for that person it is more an objective fact, than emotion-filled personal memory built from a particular trauma.

Both Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* and Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation* struck a chord at the close of the twentieth century, and their influence and relevance only increased after the attacks of September 11, 2001. The personal and professional connections among Spielberg, Brokaw, Ambrose, and Hanks and their shared mission to educate about and subsequently laud the accomplishments of the Greatest Generation has fundamentally altered and added to the post-war repository of media representations of the war. Through genre, visual style, and the way they lived their lives post-war, these children of The Greatest Generation believe there are lessons to be learned from their fathers' collective experience. These include duty, honor, nationalism, and value of the ordinary life, war as a proper rite of passage, marriage vows, and finding decency in the hell of war. So strong has their impact been, that their style and themes have both been copied and almost always accounted for when the subject of World War II media representations, is tackled while alternative conceptions and mediations on war, such as Terrence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* are minimized as not fitting the pre-set template of sanctioned memory or dismissed as auteur directors' self-indulgence.

In the early twentieth-first century, new institutions dedicated to this narrow remembrance would be erected – The National WWII Museum (est. June 6, 2000) and The National World War II Memorial (est. May 19, 2004) – as Reagan, Ambrose, Spielberg, and Brokaw's memory of World War II would transform from new attempts at building mnemonic structures to the new foundation for the contemporary structure of World War II remembrance. There remained counter perspectives from a variety of sources including *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006) from director Clint Eastwood, certain elements from *The Pacific* (2010), and certain exhibits presented by established

institutions including both The New York Historical Society and the Imperial War Museum North. World War II remembrance in the early twenty-first century is covered in the next chapter.

## Chapter 6: The Early 21<sup>st</sup> Century

“For with the closing of the distance between information and reality, it is the technologies of remembering, the forms and processes as themselves the grounds of authority and genealogy, that will increasingly prevail.”  
(Beidler, 1998 pp. 170-71)

### I. Introduction: The Mnemonic Structure Reagan, Ambrose, Brokaw, & Spielberg Built

In late 2001, in his article for the periodical *The American Prospect* regarding nostalgia entitled “*Selling Private Ryan*,” Nicholas Confessore discussed the premiere of the TV film *Band of Brothers* (2001) in Normandy. Courtesy of American Airlines, veterans were flown from New York City to France to attend the premiere of the film on the fifty-seventh anniversary of D-Day. Confessore (2001) details the relationships among Spielberg, Ambrose, and Brokaw over the years. These men have “produced a body of loosely collaborative, thematically intertwined works about World War II” and “share a sense of mission ... they seek not to entertain but to educate” (pp. 21-22).

In the 2004 DVD box-set release for *Saving Private Ryan: The World War II Collection*, there is included a documentary entitled *Price for Peace*. This documentary, as part of the box-set, acts as an artifact illustrative of the relationships and cross-promotions among Spielberg, Brokaw, and Ambrose. The introduction is hosted by Spielberg, who tells the audience “freedom is not free.” Then, the original host introductions from the NBC Memorial Day premiere broadcast of the *Price for Peace* documentary on May 27, 2002, are shown and hosted by Tom Brokaw. Also included are two advertisements for the National D-Day museum (now known as the National World

War II museum) and an interview with Stephen E. Ambrose, who explains that the museum is important because it brings generations together. Another documentary included in the 2004 DVD box-set, titled *Shooting War: World War II Combat Cameramen*, is hosted and narrated by Tom Hanks.

What these creators are educating the audience about includes, from their perspective, a more accurate view of the war told from the everyday soldier's point of view; the men and women who gave us our lives today; and who, why, how, and what we fought and ultimately triumphed over. They educate across media platforms. Confessore mentions Ambrose's best-selling books, his newspaper columns, chat show appearances, and his narration of documentaries. These appearances, along with *Saving Private Ryan's* success and Brokaw's books selling in excess of five million copies, leads Confessore (2001) to strongly state "for many Americans, World War II has been replaced by *World War II* – written by Stephen E. Ambrose, directed by Steven Spielberg, hosted by Tom Brokaw, and starring Tom Hanks" (p. 22).

Journalist Bob Minzesheimer, writing for *USA Today* roughly four months prior to September 11, 2001, captures in his article the robust World War II industry begun by the "one-two punch" (2001, para. 4) of *Saving Private Ryan* and Brokaw's book. During this period of late spring 2001 Minzesheimer is reviewing the then-new book *Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission* (2001). He also notes the big budget Hollywood film *Pearl Harbor* is due out in theaters May 25. There was also a two-hour National Geographic special on Pearl Harbor on NBC narrated by Tom Brokaw premiering two days later. Brokaw himself just released his third book,



*An Album of Memories: Personal Histories from the Greatest Generation*, because “the stories keep coming” (Minzesheimer, 2001, para 8).

Stephen E. Ambrose was publishing a children’s book about the war in May 2001 and another book about B-24 pilots in August 2001, while the TV adaptation of his book *Band of Brothers* was due in September of 2001. Ambrose notes that the country was struggling with our involvement in Vietnam for so long that films and movies reflected the mistakes that were made. However, the subject of World War II reminds us of the positives, “our involvement in World War II was us doing right” (Minzesheimer, 2001, para. 10). Minzesheimer notes that for Father’s Day back in 1997 not one book about World War II was on *USA Today’s* bestseller list and yet in 2000 there were four. Tom Brokaw is also quoted as saying the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Pearl Harbor back in 1991 wasn’t “treated as big news” (2001, para. 6), with Brokaw having been the only TV anchor to attend the Hawaii ceremonies.

Military historian Dr. Thomas Bruscino of the United States Army School of Advanced Military Studies, blogging in 2004, captures this sense on the part of news and entertainment media to lump Spielberg, Hanks, Brokaw, and Ambrose together. While Bruscino doesn’t agree with the media’s equating of these four men, his acknowledgement that the media is doing so, lends support to my observation. The crux of Bruscino’s (2004) argument is that “grouping broadly the work of a distinguished scholar and first-rate historian like Ambrose with the books of journalist Tom Brokaw and movies of filmmaker Steven Spielberg is ridiculous on its face” (para. 3). Using book reviews from both *The Washington Post Book World* and *The Atlantic Monthly*, Bruscino shows how these editors compare the reviewed book to the “facile popularizers” such as

“Tom Brokaw, Steven Spielberg” of a “romantic, sentimental view of World War II” (para. 2) and the “sanctimonious military romanticism of Messrs. Ambrose, Brokaw, and Spielberg” (para. 2).

Speaking to the mass popularity of Brokaw’s book as representative of this newer form of 1990s remembrance, but understanding its shortcomings, Connor and Connor’s (2000) review for *Armed Forces & Society* concluded: “*The Greatest Generation* will probably not share space with the works of Stephen Ambrose, John Keegan, Forrest Pogue, Russell Weigley on any World War II scholar’s shelf, but that is not where it belongs. As a tribute to America’s greatest generation, it belongs in America’s homes” (pgs. 336-37).

Bruscino’s observation that some label these creators as some sort of homogeneous mass lends credence to my concept of Reagan, Ambrose, Spielberg, and Brokaw perceived as a homogeneous and dominant filter for remembrance of World War II. Certainly they were influenced by the propaganda of the war years, but they nonetheless created their own unique, albeit narrow, version of World War II, a distinct form of remembrance best understood via Landsberg’s (2004) prosthetic memory.

An interesting phenomenon is discussed by Brian Horrigan regarding Minnesota’s Historical Society and its “Greatest Generation” Project. The project was launched on August 14, 2005, for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of V-J Day with an exhibit launched in 2008. It speaks to the power and popularity of Brokaw’s phrase as well as the continued interest for The Good War during the Iraq War of the 2000s. A year after the US World War II Memorial was dedicated and opened in Washington, D.C., Minnesota broke ground on its

own World War II Veterans Memorial. It also shows how successful ideas or interpretations of historical recollections are imitated and copied.

Another interesting case study that sheds light on Tom Brokaw's legacy as a chronicler of World War II collective memory comes in the form of a 2004 summer musical attraction entitled *Studs Terkel's "The Good War."* The authors reviewing this musical attraction describe the producers' attempt to present Terkel's work in a "post-Brokaw" way: "Under Bell's direction, it wants to be true to the self-examining ambivalence of its inspirational source, but it also wants to be a feel-good retro theatrical pageant that will sell a lot of tickets to veterans and those grateful for their sacrifices. It can't have it both ways" (2004, para. 3). In a July 26, 2000, interview with Brokaw conducted by SeniorNet.org, volunteer Joan Pearson asks Tom whether he had read Studs Terkel's "The Good War." Brokaw responds by saying "I think that there are good wars. I think that you have to say that if we had not gone to war, that Hitler might have prevailed, and imperial Japan might have prevailed, so there was a goodness in standing up to them. There are times that you have to do that" (SeniorNet.org, 2000, para. 3). This is in contrast with Terkel's position, which chose to include quotation marks around the title of his book because he felt when "good" is mated to "war" it is incongruous.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century began, Tom Brokaw continued his successful publishing record by continuing to release books in the vein of *The Greatest Generation*. Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks continued their collaboration by producing together the television mini-series *Band of Brothers* (2001), based upon the book of the same name by Stephen E. Ambrose. The series premiered on HBO on September 9, 2001, and quickly took on new appreciation due to national events. All the while, beginning in 1999, a

nearly annual release of popular first-person shooter video games occurred, beginning with *Medal of Honor* and then in 2003, *Call of Duty*. Both games often focused upon World War II as a setting. Often minimized for being thought of simply as “games for kids” these two franchises combined have sold hundreds of millions of units and recorded billions of dollars in sales. This video game market as a chapter in the story of this new World War II phenomenon in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century should not be ignored. However, an older form of World War II commemoration was nonetheless creating spaces for twenty-first century remembrance.

## II. The National World War II Museum

Museums provide scholars an opportunity to observe and analyze which cultures or which specific aspects of cultures are deemed significant by their curators and validated via attendance from museum patrons. Often acting as windows into the past, museums’ choices for exhibits reveal multiple frames acting upon the historical subjects’ presentation. Considerations made by curators and museum operators, presumed expectations from patrons, and the potential influence of popular history constructions on choice of exhibition subject each play a role. Similar to mass media artifacts, museum exhibits have only a finite amount of space, time, and budget to present an edited presentation of the subject matter on display.

As University of Arizona historian Susan Crane (1997) observes, memory housed in a museum dynamically operates as both a resource and product. Museums are a part of what NYU professor of performance and Jewish Studies Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) calls the heritage industry. Heritage, she has written is “a mode of cultural

production in the present that has recourse to the past” (1998, p. 7). French historian Pierre Nora offers a succinct form of this sentiment when he writes “memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects” (Nora, 1989, p. 9). It should also be noted that intentional material commemoration also occurs when the object in question is a ruin or residue of what once was. What remains partial, broken, incomplete is imbued with meaning to remain as it is, yet always recalling what it can never be again.

A key component to analyzing museums is to understand their exhibits as constructions; even ethnographic objects are made, not found (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). The act of exhibiting itself – Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s “what does it mean to show?” – adds a layer of meaning to the interaction between patron and object. Museum exhibits are traditionally high-status authoritative physical and symbolic constructions both fragmentary and theatrical in nature. Often the items displayed were never intended for mass public consumption and are physically placed among other objects in a way that implies a relationship that also may never have been intended. At their most rudimentary level, museums operate from the interplay of objects and knowledge. The exhibitions themselves are performances of the knowledge the museum has created (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998); without the knowledge to “animate” them, the objects would simply be inert actors.

When patrons enter a museum, they bring with them knowledge. This knowledge – combined with a sense of who they are, values and perspectives, and a sense of their own communities – form an agency that must be accounted for (Watson, 2013). One manifestation of this agency is in the form of expectations. As Crane (1997) writes,

“‘visitors’ expectations, shaped by consumer culture and tradition, have been recognized as valuable resources for museum educators and curators” (p. 47).

On the micro-level, patron agency can most immediately be expressed via expectations. It is what Crane (1997) refers to as a “historical consciousness – a personal awareness of the past as such and a desire to understand experience with reference to time, change, and memory” (p. 45). When our expectations based upon this historical consciousness do not parallel with what the museum curator has constructed to represent the event, then we experience what Crane (1997) has defined as “distortions.” These distortions’ potentiality for occurrence increases within modern Western societies, where numerous domains of memory are erected (e.g. monuments, the media, and museums) that add to patron expectations.

On June 6, 2000, the *D-Day Museum* opened its doors in New Orleans, Louisiana. John Pope, writing for *The Times-Picayune* in 2015, states that around 1990, author Ambrose and his faculty colleague from the University of New Orleans, Gordon H. Mueller, had an informal conversation where Ambrose introduced the idea of a place to house all the interviews and artifacts he’d collected during his research for his books *Band of Brothers* and *D-Day* (para. 4). The 1990s provided momentum for the idea of a museum, and Ambrose became the public face and Mueller the chairman of the board of directors, guiding final fundraising efforts and the beginning of construction. Mueller was appointed president and CEO in 2000, a position he continues in currently. His friend and colleague Ambrose died in 2002.

The day before the *D-Day Museum* opened in 2000, Republican US Senator from Alaska, Ted Stevens, a US Senator from Alaska and a World War II veteran, was given a

tour during which he told Ambrose and Mueller they should expand the museum's scope to the entire war. If they did so, he would do what he could to provide assistance.

Stevens, influential with the Senate Appropriations Committee, came through with \$4 million annually for three consecutive years and a 2004 Congressional designation and name change to The National World War II Museum (Pope, 2015, para. 7-10). Due to the time required to plan such a change, combined with Hurricane Katrina, the name change did not occur officially until 2006. Before his death, Ambrose was nervous about raising the money required for such a museum, a number originally estimated to be roughly \$80 million. Mueller states that number, including their ambitious plans for expansion, is closer to \$300 million, and the museum recently surpassed four million total visitors (Pope, 2015, para. 2, 6). Mueller's statements about Ambrose's feelings toward the museum's mission helps specify what Ambrose was attempting to achieve. Journalist Pope quotes Mueller as stating Ambrose "always believed that the idea for this museum and this mission were so big that people would come and they would come in hundreds of thousands forever. He had no doubt about the power of the story, the importance of the story for America and the world" (2015, para. 22). The museum is a significant example of a well-meaning but nonetheless institutionalization of a specific perspective on the war and attempt to crystallize and pass on a particular memory.

I visited the current incarnation of *The National World War II Museum* in April 2015. The museum frames its contents as authoritative or significant. This effect is strengthened through the museum's efforts at branding, via its distinct red, white, and blue WWII logo adorning the exterior wall of the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion which faces a parking lot. The message of the museum's purpose, as stated by Ambrose and of

that expansion discussed by Mueller, is salient, with a large billboard for the “Liberation” Pavilion opening in 2016. The museum promotes its cross-promotional TripAdvisor bona fides via a banner proclaiming it the number one attraction in New Orleans, the number four museum in the United States, and the number eleven museum in the world. The sprawling museum campus is dotted with attractions, such as a replica soda fountain acting as the museum eatery, replica Stage Door Canteen, and smaller outdoor exhibit on planting Victory Gardens. There is a relatively small memorial to the Holocaust, but it is not located on the museum’s property but rather blocks away in Woldenberg Park on the bank of the Mississippi River.

The museum as transferential space for prosthetic memory is alluded to even in its advertisements placed in New Orleans near the French Quarter. A large billboard for its *Road to Berlin* exhibit has the subtitle “Follow in Their Footsteps.” On the surface, this is just a playful twist on the subject matter of soldiers traveling and fighting their way to Berlin and its subsequent capture. Underneath is the potential and admonishment to follow the generation’s example, to successfully understand its hardship by “walking a mile in their shoes,” and to continue its mission of success, righteousness, and liberation.

The atrium of the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion is a large open space with various posters for the museum’s exhibits, images of Rosie the Riveter, the necessary museum admission ticket booth, two full-size vintage planes hanging above, full-size land vehicles and weapons, a make-shift stage, and a full-size Higgins landing craft. Elderly surviving World War II veterans nearby are ready to answer questions. The most significant element of this space is toward the far end of the atrium where visitors see the words “Departing Trains” in white type on a black background beside train schedule boards.



Beyond these boards, and assuming visitors have bought their admission ticket, guests see a period passenger railcar marked in orange letters with “Union Pacific North Platte.” Guests enter the left end of the railway car and take a seat. The interior is a replica of a wood-paneled train car with the addition of small video screens in front of each passenger and video screens outside each window so as to simulate motion. A conductor’s voice provides instructions for the journey, an upbeat 1940s pop recording plays loudly as the train “departs” and individual audio-commentary re-enactments from soldiers play. The museum has attempted to be inclusive in choosing the participants and their reasons for joining. There is a Caucasian male soldier, a female Caucasian WAVES enlistee, and an African-American male soldier, among others. Here, you inhabit the space as an interactive participant, sitting in a period setting, your imagination combined with technology simulating going off to war as a young soldier boarding a train to begin your service. The simulation acts as a transference space, taking those who enter from outside visitor to willing museum patron immersed in the museum’s message, from twenty-first century visitor to 1940s participant, and from a multi-perspective on the war to only that of a young soldier signing up to fight within it.

Within the first floor of the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, off to the right in a space between the atrium and the Soda Shop, near the gift shop, is the National D-Day Museum Founders Society Hall of Heroes polished stone engraved plaque hanging on the wall. The plaque is significant because it supports both the close ties among the children of The Greatest Generation as well as the relatively narrow perspective presented about a world at war. The plaque’s names are divided up into the following categories: “American Spirit,” “Leadership,” “Courage,” “Optimism,” and “Loyalty.” Among the

seven names under leadership are included Ambrose and his wife, Moira; The Shell Oil Company Foundation; and director Steven Spielberg. Under courage are listed New Orleans Saints owner Tom Benson and wife, Grace; Tom Brokaw; Military.com; and the Phillip Morris Companies, Inc. Under Optimism are Tom Hanks and his wife, Rita Wilson, and The History Channel, among roughly forty other names of private individuals and private and public institutions. Near the plaque is a distinguished-looking set of eleven framed photographs under the title Chairmen of the Board. All are older or elderly Caucasian men in suits and ties, photographed in color, except for the deceased Stephen E. Ambrose, whose photo is black and white.

A cornerstone of the museum's attempts at building interactive spaces in which to make a connection via the transference of memories is its self-produced short film *Beyond All Boundaries*. A separate ticket purchase is required to view the film which is hosted and was executive-produced by actor Tom Hanks. Released and shown exclusively at the museum beginning in 2009, the film is advertised as being shown in "4D," as the specially designed Solomon Victory Theater uses special effects, lighting, three-dimensional props, and vibrating seats in conjunction with the filmed sequences to convey its message. The film was co-created by the Museum and Phil Hettema, a veteran theme park attractions developer who worked for both Universal Studios and Disney Theme Parks prior to beginning his own company. The historical consultants and co-writers included museum CEO Mueller and Stephen E. Ambrose's son Hugh Ambrose. Hugh also served on the museum's board, ultimately authoring the book *The Pacific* (2010) after his father's passing in 2002, before he himself died of cancer in 2015. The list of voice-actors for *Beyond All Boundaries* reads like a virtual who's who of

Hollywood and includes Kevin Bacon, Patricia Clarkson, Kevin Connolly, James Cromwell, Blythe Danner, Viola Davis, Jesse Eisenberg, Jennifer Garner, John Goodman, Neil Patrick Harris, Emile Hirsch, Justin Long, Tobey Maguire, Chris Pine, Brad Pitt, Giovanni Ribisi, Gary Sinise, and Elijah Wood.

Audiences gather in an outer area where a museum staff member provides verbal instructions about the short film they are about to view and how to enter through the doors and be seated inside the theater. While the staff member speaks, the outer area's sound system plays a version of Glenn Miller's popular song *Chattanooga Choo Choo* from 1941 to help set the space's mood. The film and its subject matter of World War II is declared by the theater's pre-recorded announcer as "the most significant event in the twentieth century." The pre-film begins with the somber horns reminiscent of films such as *Saving Private Ryan*. We hear Tom Hanks begin his speech with "Sixty-five million lives, more civilians and soldiers killed, more cities destroyed than in any other war in history." Hanks introduces himself and then says, "It is hard to imagine today a world where freedom has vanished, a world ruled by tyrants, but in the 1930s, that was the world the leaders in Germany, Japan, and Italy, tried to create." Such dialogue attempts to balance delicately between the pointless slaughter of a World War and the victorious appreciation of the US's contribution to winning the war. Hanks continues by stating the new technology developed and the "test of heroism and courage, sacrifice and loss to face moral choices that took our nation and the world beyond all boundaries" that US soldiers faced during the conflict.

Hanks continues by explaining in voice-over laying out the difficulties of the US during The Great Depression, mentioning the lack of electricity, the isolation of small

rural towns, women not working outside of the home, and legalized racism. He then outlines the desires of Japan and Germany under the phrase “the dark shadows are rising ... for war is brewing” as ominous music plays underneath. Hanks begins with the atrocities of a militaristic Japan before moving on to Hitler’s Germany, outlining its goals as the acquisition of territory and the annihilation of Jews and other groups deemed non-human. He then covers the bombing of Britain and the deep advancement by Hitler’s forces into the Soviet Union, remarking “nothing it seemed could stand up to the relentless onslaught of German war machine.” Hanks notes that even with radio reports of alliances of tyranny among Germany, Japan, and Italy, many Americans do not believe it is their fight to enter into. Covering President Roosevelt’s “Arsenal of Democracy,” blockade of materials to Japan, and movement of the US fleet from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, the short pre-film ends, and the museum audience enters the main theater.

*Beyond All Boundaries* begins on December 7, 1941. Taking the audience members through the attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent declaration of war by Germany on the United States, the film uses audio from President Roosevelt, who states “we are now in this war, we didn’t want to get in it, we are in it, and we’re going to fight it with everything we’ve got!” As a part of this film, using this audio is somewhat deceptive. There was indeed an anti-war movement present within the US prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, an anti-war sentiment that is often minimized or diminished in certain retellings of the war experience. However, it was not a universal, national feeling prior to 1941, and certainly not symbolized by Roosevelt’s administration, which provided much aid to the war effort short of officially joining the cause. Used here,

however, the audio paints the US as a whole as not wanting war and perpetuates the idea of the US as a noble reluctant fighter.

The film uses audio re-enactment commentary from young men who signed up to be soldiers. One says “it was not a matter of revenge against Japan, but just that they had to be stopped.” During these testimonials, a patriotic score has swollen, underneath their words. Narrator Tom Hanks mentions that the US Army’s roster now swells thanks to enthusiastic enlistees, and it is moving to face any enemy that has “smashed every resisting force in its path.” Sound, music, and voiceover hyper focus on the individual soldier experience in the jungles of Asia, the visuals and theater sound system approximating a Spielberg cinematic experience or first-person shooter environment. Discussing the naval battle defeat at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, Hanks says it is the worst defeat for the US Navy since “its creation by the founding fathers.” This is an odd turn of phrase and only present in order to construct a master commemorative narrative linking the Navy and it’s fighting at Guadalcanal with the ethos and purpose of the US Revolutionary War and the men who helped craft the country.

The film details the early war’s losses and retreats and the Nazis subsequent mocking of the US. Similar to Brokaw’s book, it doesn’t leave much space for women who wanted to work or saw it purely as individual opportunity rather than nationalistic purpose. The film holds the banning of occupationally based racial discrimination for companies with government contracts as a positive outcome of the war rather than a mere necessity at the time. Through choice of quote, it also normalizes the long wait for civil rights some twenty-years after the war effort. Unity between front lines and home front is reinforced by quoting female workers as saying they were building to bring the boys

home, while bomber pilots flying missions against Germany say they felt like they had their whole country at their backs. The death of German civilians is blamed on “poor weather and stiff German resistance,” rather than Allied mistakes or incompetence.

The film then highlights three events over three weeks that could have changed the war: fighting the Germans on the road from southern Italy to Rome, the D-Day invasion, and the attempted invasion of Saipan, in what is now the North Marianas Islands. The audio re-enactments from soldiers mention how scared they were in the fight to Rome, while D-Day is presented as motivated by courageous desire to avoid dying alone on the beach but rather to push ahead behind the German defenses. The post-D-Day section is scored in a melancholy fashion with a strong tie to the home front via written letters never sent by the dead. Kevin Bacon is narrator for the battle of Saipan section, discussing the desperation of Japanese forces, civilians, and children sacrificing themselves for the Emperor. No parallel is made between the sacrificial nationalism of Japan and that of the US. Rather, the residents of Saipan are presented as just a seemingly desperate and stubborn Japanese force awaiting US invasion.

The narrative moves back to Europe as the Germans begin a counter offensive and the battle rages for forty days as the Allies are surrounded. Audio re-enactment is used to explain that the US soldier will use any means necessary to destroy a German soldier, but “you don’t become a killer. No normal man who has smelled and associated with death ever wants to see any more of it. The surest way to become a pacifist is to join the Infantry.” Such statements help reinforce the notion of soldier experience as a noble, reluctant one and a US exceptionalism where even when we choose the tactics of our enemy, we are ultimately spared from its effects.

The story shifts back to Iwo Jima and the ferocious fighting. The young soldiers, both in Europe and the Pacific are exhausted, believing the war will continue forever, and looking middle-aged, continue on as they deal with deaths of their comrades. The soldiers enter Germany and discover the evidence of the Holocaust. The film then briefly covers the death caused by Soviets advancing from the east and Allies from the West on German civilians, but an audio re-enactment expresses regret but concludes “it was necessary.” The suicide of Hitler and the victory in Europe are relayed but seem to have little impact on the soldiers still fighting and preparing to invade Japan. Journalist Ernie Pyle’s chronicling of the soldier experience and death are also touched upon. The bombing of Japanese cities and the stench of death due to firestorm is re-enacted via audio commentary. Anticipating losses of up to 250,000 men, the US government chooses to drop the atomic bomb on Japan, causing its surrender. Hanks concludes with:

At their core, the American citizen-soldiers knew right from wrong; and they did not want to live in a world where wrong prevailed. They saved humanity from the darkest of futures. Shattering the visions of the tyrants who almost ruled the world and they paid for it in blood, tears, and innocence. A struggle for freedom that took them and the world beyond all boundaries. (National WWII Museum, 2009)

The patriotic score once again swells after this passage. During my viewing of this film, my audience gave it a rousing round of applause at the conclusion.

The *Road to Berlin* exhibit was dedicated over two days December 11 and 12 2014, Brokaw served as the master of ceremonies for the event (National WWII Museum, 2014, para. 2). The *Road to Berlin* exhibit at the National World War II museum is not designed to be a literal walk or ride on the road to Berlin. Rather, it is designed to evoke the atmosphere through symbols expected by audiences familiar with the color schemes, presentation styles, and “US versus Them” framing often invoked

when discussing the war. The first item patrons see is a floor-to-ceiling, five-paneled board titled on the left “Axis” and on the right “Allies” with black-and-white photographic portraits of Mussolini, Hitler, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, each with his national flag. The Roosevelt quote, isolated on a separate wall, about “fighting to maintain our right to live among our world neighbors in freedom, in common decency, without fear of assault” plays with new reverence to a post-9/11 museum audience. The interior of the exhibit is dressed to resemble an old building with stone floors, exposed dark brown beams in the ceiling with hanging circular lights.

The aesthetics of this space, of all the exhibits at the museum most closely mimic the canonized, expected aesthetic perpetuated in movies, television shows, board games, and video games, an aesthetic I, along with my co-author, media historian Andrew J. Salvati, have referred to previously as *BrandWW2* (2011). A case in point is just after the introductory foyer of the *Road to Berlin* exhibit where “Weapons in Europe” are displayed - featuring numerous rifles, handguns, grenades, knives, and a bazooka against an Army green background. The title is cut out of the black presentation board in a style reminiscent of spray-paint masks typically used during the war to mark jeeps or motorcycles. Next to it, in a much smaller, white on black typeface is the subtitle “Deadly Instruments of War” presented in a much more traditional museum presentation. The overall effect is one of “look over here! This is the World War II you’ve been expecting!” followed by a more sober museum data presentation about the weapons.

The Howitzer exhibit is representative of the *Road to Berlin*’s strategy of presentation, a strategy that can also be seen later in the *Bitter Setback at Kasserine Pass* North Africa campaign exhibit prominently featuring the US Jeep. Moody overhead



lighting illuminates the large-wheeled weapon to evoke either a night scene or perhaps a night mission from a World War II first-person shooter as camouflage netting covers the gun and ammo boxes and sandbags surround it. The night scene interpretation is betrayed as an illuminated photographic backdrop representing day, leaving the viewer to conclude the overhead lighting is for dramatic purposes only. The overall effect is a set piece from a film or video game, or at least a convincing television commercial with good set design. In this type of set up, the prosthetic memory is in great tension with the canon of World War II images and Hollywoodesque set decoration.

In the next section, the audience inhabits an Air Force hangar with moody blue lights and hanging circular yellow lamps. A large “hole” in the ceiling displays enemy fighters overhead. Uniforms, photographs, and a large recreation of pilots’ collection of pin-ups and “cheesecake” photos adorn a large portion of the corrugated metal wall. Mixed among the colorful displays and dramatic lighting are two quotes that moor the experience of war squarely to the individual soldier. One continues the reluctant warrior motif: “They were the enemy and they started this war. We meant to get it over with as quickly as possible.” The other challenges the heroic myth: “It had been horrendous. I turned white-haired at the age of twenty-two.”

After the hangar, the audience transitions into walking through rubble from bombed cities with moody blue and white lighting. Again, at its best, the overall effect is a re-creation of the drama of either still photographs or first-person shooter World War II environments; and at its worst, it like an outtake from a night scene from the 1970s television series *M\*A\*S\*H*. The tools and machinery that caused the destruction and the materials that suffered their effects are present, yet bodies are strangely absent from the

design. We could mark this up to just a matter of taste, as re-created bodies or graves might make museum patrons uncomfortable. However, since it is a transferential space for prosthetic memory of the individual soldier's experience only, and in this part of the narrative, he is somewhat safely ensconced in his bomber, the absence of bodies is not all that unexpected. Personal stories of soldiers are present through photographs and text; and a concerted effort for inclusion is apparent via race (John R. Fox) and gender (Ellen G. Ainsworth). Fox was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for calling in an air strike on his own position in northern Italy in order to stop a German attack, thus sacrificing his own life. Ainsworth was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for evacuating forty-two patients under heavy fire in Anzio, Italy. She died after taking shrapnel to the chest during this event.

A particularly effective design within the air raid bombed exhibit is the projection of film onto a bombed-out wall while patrons sit on benches that are designed to resemble old wooden crates. In a very limited way, this design space draws upon the work of visual artist Shimon Attie's *The Writing on the Wall* project, where he projected incomplete pre-World War II photographs of Jewish everyday life onto the same buildings left standing sixty-years later in Berlin. The experience of sitting inside a museum and watching a film projected onto a wall is reminiscent of outdoor movie screenings, evoking a close, family time. At first glance the choice to project a film for visitors on the burned-out husks of other peoples' former lives may seem crass. However, such an intimate setting situates the bodies of the patrons within the traumatic space and forces them to sit intimately with one another as friends and family interacting with what was once a residential space for others. In the middle of the exhibit, in another film

viewing area dressed to mimic a corrugated metal hangar, plays a film about the US invasion of Europe, particularly the events of D-Day, narrated by then-NBC News anchorman Tom Brokaw. With the museum opening in 2000, on the heels of Spielberg's successful film and Brokaw's hit book, Hollywood took notice and wanted to give the same treatment to December 7, 1941.

#### 2001 Film and Television

On May 25, 2001, director Michael Bay's film *Pearl Harbor* for Disney/Buena Vista was released. A hoped-for potboiler of a love triangle amid the chaos and terror of December 7, 1941, this film never worked up enough steam among critics to actually boil over. Financially, however, it was successful both domestically and overseas, bringing in almost \$450 million against a \$140 million budget (*Pearl Harbor* entry on [boxofficiemojo.com](http://boxofficiemojo.com)). Director Bay, known for the action features *Bad Boys* (1995), *The Rock* (1996), and *Armageddon* (1998), attempted to craft an action film for younger audiences wrapped in a classic romance narrative found in some World War II-era films, including *A Yank in the R.A.F.* (1941), *Casablanca* (1943), and *Crash Dive* (1943).

Disney producer Jerry Bruckheimer (*Top Gun* (1986), *Crimson Tide* (1995)), and director Bay seem hell-bent on adapting the patriotism of *Saving Private Ryan*, combining it with Bay's knack for loud spectacle and sell it as the backdrop for a youth romance. As such, there seems to be no intentionality on the part of any of these creators to burn in or evoke a particular memory as much as there is to simply replicating or existing imagery and narrative structures. Critics at the time, such as Desson Howe (2001), writing for *The Washington Post*, picked on this, writing that while the movie

was supposed to be based on a historical event, it is “actually based on the movies ‘Top Gun,’ ‘Titanic’ and ‘Saving Private Ryan’” (para. 5), leading Howe to suggest the alternate title “Bore-a, Bore-a, Bore-a” (para. 4). Richard Schickel, reviewing for *Time* magazine, postulates the creators saw the success of *Titanic*’s (1997) romance as “the perfect device to narrow the distance between a great historical happening and today’s essentially antihistorical audience” (2001, para. 3). Yet, the failure of the underwhelming love story leads Schickel to jokingly nod toward the influence of Brokaw’s version of World War II when he writes “They’re nice kids and all that, but they don’t exactly claw madly at one another. It’s as if they know that someday they’re going to be part of ‘the Greatest Generation’ and don’t want to offend Tom Brokaw” (2001, para. 4).

If we focus on the intentionality of the effort, it does not match up with the other artifacts discussed, including those connected with Reagan, Ambrose, Brokaw, and Spielberg. This film most closely adheres to Beidler’s (1998) argument about a post-war victory canon and others who interpret late-1990s re-engagement with World War II remembering as simply re-entrenchment of the war’s original propaganda. This is a film made to tap into the market created by *Saving Private Ryan* but adapted for youthful blockbuster movie audiences looking for romance and spectacle, a popcorn movie repurposing existing imagery and stakes torn from its original meaning to provide a backdrop of danger and excitement for ticket buyers. In a sense it is one of the last war films to appear before war death from an attack on US soil was made unfortunately relevant again for us in the form of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Bay’s creation itself would be re-purposed two years later in 2003’s first-person shooter video game *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*. The 2003 game was initially meant to

merely draw inspiration from the 2001 film but ultimately acting as a vessel for some players to take out their frustrations regarding the September 11 attacks, substituting wartime Japanese for al Qaeda.

### III. Band of Brothers

The premiere event for this mini-series occurred on June 7, 2001, and featured veterans being flown in to Normandy and to testify to the series' authenticity. Possessing an incredibly high budget for a multi-part television film, the series was shot on the same lot in England where *Saving Private Ryan* was filmed. As with *Saving Private Ryan* and the video game *Medal of Honor*, Dale Dye once again acted as a boot camp instructor for creators and even played an on-screen role.

It is important to situate *Band of Brothers* as an adaptation, shown in ten episodes on HBO, of the 1992 book of the same name by Stephen E. Ambrose. That book was history constructed in part from a collection of interviews Ambrose conducted with the surviving members of E Company, one of the more successful light infantry units during World War II. Their experience included parachuting into Normandy during D-Day, Operation Market Garden, and the Battle of the Bulge. Reed Business Information, Inc.'s synopsis from 1992 calls it "a terrific read for WW II actions buffs." Since the original book relied so heavily on the friendships and interviews Ambrose established with E Company, it is not surprising that the 2001 telefilm adaptation uses filmed interviews with surviving members before the episode's narrative begins.

However, beyond fidelity to the original book, these interviews frame the telefilm and its seven screenplay writers, including actor Tom Hanks, as an authentic representation of memory. Its effects are similar to the framing device used in *Saving*

*Private Ryan* with the elderly Ryan's emotional return to Normandy with his family bookending his saving during the war. When *Band of Brothers'* reverent and emotional score and somber black and red title cards are added to the mix, the overall effect is that of a prestige documentary or at least docu-drama whose presentation is expected to be received as authentic, authoritative, and significant. The often point-of-view (POV) camera view, especially during battle scenes, supports this documentary perspective, providing authenticity via sensory overload (explosions, gunfire, yelling, and shaky cam), and simulation of first-person shooter video games, such as *Medal of Honor* (1999). The whole series is shot in an intimate way, so that we, as an audience, have these experiences with the characters.

Each episode begins with interviews against a black background with surviving veterans. These interviews serve to introduce themes for episodes, and like *Saving Private Ryan's* elderly Ryan framing device, allow the audience to more easily embody the soldier's experience. None of the interviews are captioned or credited. These are just older to elderly Caucasian men speaking into camera, nameless. In the segments, there are spaces that seep through The Greatest Generation label. In episode one, some of the veterans admit signing up for paratrooper duty solely due to it paying \$50 more than other assignments. Episodes two and seven reveal the emotions behind losing comrades, and the fact that everyone was genuinely afraid of dying is relayed in episode three. Episode seven's veteran interviews voice the sentiment, "death was all over" and there was "no time to mourn friends' deaths." One veteran mentions that he had trouble in later life as he re-lived those moments, hinting at post-traumatic stress disorder. The tenth and final episode has no introductory veteran interviews, but the identities of the veterans are

revealed at the end of the last episode.

There are also moments within the series that challenge the superhero myth of The Greatest Generation. Actor Ron Livingston's character (Capt. Nixon) seems to be a functioning alcoholic with responsibilities for the unit. Active thinking on the part of the men is shown to be discouraged by an inflexible bureaucracy in episode one. In episode two, after landing near Normandy, a US soldier recognizes a German soldier from home. This soldier had heeded the call to serve the country of his roots and finds himself fighting for the wrong side. This scene, combined with the next, when the soldier and his comrades are needlessly murdered by a US lieutenant, serve to disrupt the perfect generation myth. The second episode shows accidents in the field, including bobbling a grenade, and the absolute waste of men as they are shot out of the sky during D-Day while trapped in their respective airplanes. Even the attempts at light comedy in episode one involving a broken fence and letting a herd of cows loose on the roads speaks softly to human foibles.

Still, as an adaptation of Ambrose's original book, there are also plenty of scenes that revere these soldiers. One element, particularly salient in the first episode, is the preparation for war being analogous to prepping for a big game. Of course there is historical accuracy to the idea that the US Army attempted to reach and train young men through sports, since some most likely played youth sports. It is also accurate and practical that football helmets were used as practice paratrooper helmets since they were available. Nonetheless, the narrative structure, football equipment in training sequences, chalkboard diagramming of missions in England, combined together, results in a feeling of a football coach prepping his players for "the big game," rather than a war film, this

structure wouldn't feel out of place in a formulaic sports film. Vietnam veteran and on-set technical advisor Dye also does some acting, playing a tough, fair, and approving father-figure / military man. Tom Hanks achieves a particularly tangible form of prosthetic memory by hiring his actor son Colin Hanks in episode eight to co-star as replacement soldier Lt. Henry Jones. Hanks the father, producer, writer, and director allows his son a chance to embody the re-creation of memories of The Greatest Generation, which he so reveres.

One of Dye's scenes is to reinforce the elite quality of the Band of Brothers by removing actor David Schwimmer's character from command. Schwimmer's Capt. Sobel is an excellent paratrooper trainer who crumbles when actually out in the field leading infantry. The message of this story point is clear: No Schwimmers are allowed in this elite group of World War II superheroes. This message, also found within Ambrose's original book, is reiterated in the first episode, that it is volunteers for paratrooper duty and not the enlisted men you want to depend on when stuck in the foxhole. These men also displayed a mental toughness (veteran interviews, episode two), a fear of letting your fellow man down that was greater than individual fears (veteran interviews, episode three), a focus on men lost rather than any battlefield success they achieved (Dick Winters in episode two), and the idea that anyone who reluctantly got involved with war ultimately created a lifelong desire for peace (voiceover from episode two).

Episode five essentially acts as a love letter to Easy Company commander Richard "Dick" Winters, the consummate leader, paternal figure, and symbol for how Americans like to think of themselves, especially during World War II. It begins with veteran interviews that profess "I trusted him, but I wouldn't trust other officers."



Memory is salient in this episode as episode director, Tom Hanks, uses Dick Winters writing his after-action report as a framing device for the episode's narrative. It is his memory that is the authoritative version; we, as viewers relive the moments as he commits them to paper. Hanks, in attempting an artistic directorial flourish, matches the striking of Winters's typewriter keys with the firing of bullets in the field. The secondary effect is to equate the power of Winters' memory with the force and immediacy of gunfire.

Other elements from this episode also reaffirm Winters as the best of what the US has to offer. When Winters notices one of his men has a particular bloodlust one day, he allows the man only one round of ammunition when escorting eleven prisoners so the soldier cannot "accidentally" kill them. Winters's good leadership is rewarded with a promotion to Battalion Executive Officer. Later in episode ten, Winters extends respect and military etiquette to his surrendering German counterpart. While on a deserved forty-hour pass to Paris in episode five, Winters is allowed moments of PTSD. However, these are constrained to his role as paternal figure and leader as he agonizes over killing a German soldier who appeared to only be a young teenager. This is similar to soldier Lynn "Buck" Compton in episode seven, who suffers a PTSD episode by losing two close buddies in the unit. Bodnar (2010) notes that the tele-film, more than its source materials, allow space for anguish and regret. Ultimately, Winters and his elite unit's uniqueness trump any traumatic feelings when he is informed of the dire battlefield situation awaiting him and his men. Winters responds "we're paratroopers, we're supposed to be surrounded" as the episode ends with the unit walking into a seemingly no-win situation. They do so with a quiet confidence as the musical score swells.

The end credits feature the unit's scrapbook from the war in which the men wrote they had "no thought of falling back." This parallel's episode six's story about the unit's medic and his heroism and dedication ultimately trumping his constant fatigue and trauma. Episode six's end credits also support this idea when it is offered that history has been written so that General Patton rescued the unit from its hellish conditions at Bastogne during the war, but "no member [of the unit] has ever agreed the division needed to be rescued," thus reaffirming their elite fortitude.

There are other aspects of this series that supports the solidarity of this message and the memory of exceptionalness. It is a series professionally and beautifully photographed. While it is a world filled with violence and chaos, at times those elements are hypnotizing in their beauty. The fire-on-the-water evening sequence from episode three is an illustrative case study. This is a beautifully choreographed scene where the men walk in spaces where debris on top of the water is alight and reflected in the water's surface. This isn't used to convey the darkly hypnotic pull of violence to the average American boy / superhero but rather the play set constructed to express the idea that war is striking in its moody dramatic flair. If it's not the visual aesthetic reaffirming the memory of exceptionalism, it is the end title cards used to convey the achievements or special purpose of these men and their memories.

For example, episode one ends with Eisenhower's now famous "great crusade" quote in order to bracket the training of the first episode and the remaining nine episodes' worth of missions in the European theater. The second episode's end titles mention the number of medals awarded to the soldiers depicted in the episode. This is somewhat odd because proponents of the generation – Reagan, Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hanks

– tend to express how nonchalant World War II heroes were regarding their accomplishments. Also the second episode's end titles institutionalize their greatness by mentioning that West Point uses the assault featured in the episode as a textbook example of how to perform one.

Episode four's focus on the replacement soldiers who ultimately had to join the company due the heavy losses incurred is prime fodder for re-entrenching the unit's heroic bona fides and reverence. During the introductory veteran interviews, one of the elderly replacement soldiers mentions "we looked up to them; they were our heroes." The majority of the episode falls back on war movie tropes of initially suspicious veterans wearily surveying and testing these green troops but ultimately dropping their gruff exteriors as they soften toward their new comrades after sharing battle experiences.

Another moment from episode four that ultimately re-affirms our idea of mythical heroes involves a US soldier giving a young Dutch boy who had been in hiding his first chocolate bar. Again, there are no questions of historical accuracy here; similar scenes must have played out during World War II. However, the way the filmmakers decided to shoot the scene makes it reminiscent of the famous 1979 Coca-Cola Mean Joe Greene television commercial. This is not merely a weary soldier giving a weary child some chocolate in a grim situation but rather the liberator / hero introducing one of the most beaming and appreciative children ever committed to celluloid a piece of candy / freedom / the good life of democracy. The overall effect is a visual to cement the myth.

One of the more interesting stories told is episode three's focus on PFC Albert Blithe, who spends most of introduction acting like one of the characters from Malick's *The Thin Red Line* (1998). He is often looking upward seemingly thinking, and often very

afraid. He admits mid-episode he did not immediately attempt to locate his unit after parachuting in, mostly out of fear. He spends most of the episode in an apprehensive daze, often hiding in foxholes. Capt. Ronald Speirs, a fearless soldier suspected of murdering surrendered Germans, joins Blithe for a conversation in a foxhole. Speirs relays the following theory to the scared Blithe:

You hid in that ditch because you think there's still hope. But Blithe, the only hope you have is to accept the fact that you're already dead, and the sooner you accept that, the sooner you'll be able to function as a soldier's supposed to function. Without mercy, without compassion, without remorse. All war depends on it.

Here we're presented by the screenwriters with two poles of the soldier experience: one too scared to qualify as a proper Greatest Generation soldier and one whose mental toughness, apathy, and possible murders are so extreme that his effectiveness as a killing machine is overshadowed. Eventually Blithe is stricken with blindness and has a heart-to-heart with Dick Winters, the beloved company leader. Winters is paternal, assuring, fair and willing to send Blithe home. At the mere mention and intonation of this option and its resultant guilt of letting down his unit, Blithe is surprisingly cured and assures Winters he can continue. In the episode's big firefight, Blithe is yelled at to stand in his foxhole and to begin firing his rifle. Blithe seems to find his courage and purpose by firing his rifle; it becoming easier and more comforting with each shot. The ping sound of the spent rifle shell is prominent in this scene, an audio release for Blithe's fear and tension. During the fight Blithe targets a German soldier across the field and shoots him. He has now taken his place in the respectable middle position of the Greatest Generation soldier – not too scared to be ineffective, but also not so emotionless that he is merely a rote killer like Speirs. After the fighting ends, Blithe walks over to where he shot the

German soldier and follows the blood trail into a small wooded area. Earlier in the episode the unit had found a dead German soldier with an Edelweiss flower in his lapel symbolizing, according to Ron Livingston's character, "the mark of a true soldier." Now, Blithe takes the flower from the dead German's jacket and places it on his own. The message is clear: Blithe, finding a measured acceptance and enthusiasm for killing is beginning to earn his place in memory.

Another significant element of the *Band of Brothers* (2001) series is the repetition of the cinematic techniques established in *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and combined with the first-person shooter perspective from *Medal of Honor* (1999) during combat scenes. For example in episode two, the main combat sequence involves the soldiers moving from one German dug-in gun nest to another, and the sequence feels like a level and objectives checked-off from a video game. Episode three's small town street war scenes are directly analogous to *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) (both series used the same back lot in England) and could have been a designed level from *Medal of Honor* (1999). Episode three moves the action from the "small town level" and relocates it to the "farmhouse level" of a first-person shooter.

Episode seven is the first episode to directly engage with the notion of propaganda and the way the war has been portrayed across various media. The most obvious reference is when we see a Signal Corps cameraman with the men, shooting film and documenting soldiers after a recent battle. I, having spent six episodes with the men and the way the series presents them, react to the camera and the way the soldiers act differently in front of it, as an artificial construction. Though, it should be noted, they reaffirm their belief General Patton need not to have attempted to rescue them, keeping

consistent in their portrayal of confidence. The episode focuses heavily on actor Donnie Wahlberg's character, C. Carwood Lipton, as an even-keeled man who works hard to keep morale up and serve the unit the best he can. His genuineness and dependability, hallmarks of the unit, are contrasted to and reaffirmed by Lt. Dike, an often absent, selfish, and career-minded soldier formed in the mold of the television show *M\*A\*S\*H* character Major Frank Burns. When discussing who could lead the unit, and thinking through possibilities, Wahlberg dismisses one candidate because the "guy has seen too many war movies and yells all the time." Such a statement reaffirms the notion that the television series, and book of history and awe-inspired oral histories conducted by Ambrose, is a more authentic memory than the immediate post-war canon of films that needs to be passed on and respected.

Media representation and propaganda appear again in the episode when Wahlberg's Lipton explains that he saw an article in *Life* magazine about paratroopers being the best, wanted to be the best, and so he signed up to serve with them. Propaganda creates heroes; prosthetic memory enshrines them via a combination of time and accepted authenticity. Even Beidler's *Good War* versus *The Great SNAFU* makes an appearance in the episode as Lt. Speirs heroically runs alone through a German tank occupied courtyard, and back, while a befuddled German army can't believe what it's seeing and react, revealing the sometimes absurdist quality of combat.

The *Good War* appears most strongly in episode nine, titled "Why We Fight." The title is a play on the original US propaganda films made between 1942 and 1945 and thematically is moored to Easy Company finding a Nazi work camp near Landsberg, Germany. The title is also problematized by the veteran interviews and character

behavior within the episode. The now elderly veterans confess they saw many of the Germans as kids just like themselves with many parallels between them, and under different circumstances, might have actually been friends. This is also the first episode that features sex between soldiers and young European women prominently, along with the unit's soldiers (Lt. Speirs) beginning to take items of value and shipping them back home.

Tension toward the mission begins to develop. In the narrative, it is Ron Livingston's Capt. Nixon bemoaning the fact he must write letters to families informing them their sons died when their plane was hit in the air. Nixon asks Winters what he should do. Winters replies, "You tell them they died as heroes," with Nixon countering "Do you still believe that?" Winters replies in the affirmative. In terms of a television production, it is one of the few instances where the officers of the unit show disillusionment toward the entire mission of the book and the series: providing long-delayed awe, thanks, and gratitude to The Greatest Generation.

However, among these moments that do not necessarily fit in with the revered image of The Greatest Generation as an elite band of heroes who placed morality and sacrifice above all other, is the main thrust of the episode: righteous indignation toward the Germans for their role in The Final Solution. This is displayed via PFC David Webster, who goes on an intellectual tirade against defeated German soldiers he passes on a road and holds a German baker at gunpoint when the baker is reluctant to let the unit take all his goods to distribute to the newly found slave worker camp. Capt. Nixon performs the penultimate righteous behavior. Early in the episode, he is caught breaking into a German home looking for alcohol. Inside the home he finds a photograph of an

older German military officer and breaks it. He is found by the home's German wife, who looks at him and his actions with disgust as he quietly leaves. Later, after *The Band of Brothers* finds and temporarily liberates the slave worker camp, the US Army declares martial law and requires all Landsberg residents to go to the camp to clean it up and face the atrocity. Capt. Nixon drives specifically to the camp, walks all the way through it, just to find and stand righteously in front of the same German woman as she struggles among the pile of corpses. Earlier, one of the slave laborers saluted the US soldiers. This, along with the majority of the narrative justifies the title "Why We Fight." While there certainly is an attempt to balance the heroism with individual foibles, the plot nonetheless reaffirms *The Good War* myth as members of Easy Company are the liberators of persecuted Jews, which in the constructed memory is why we went to war in the first place.

The penultimate episode serves as its own repository of memories as moments and scenes from the first nine episodes are shown to support stories. Capt. Nixon and Dick Winters literally look at photographs of themselves from the first episode, remarking how much each has changed due to his participation in war. There continue to be displays of un-heroic actions on the part of the men. As Winters's voiceover says, this happens when there are "weapons, alcohol, and too much time on their hands." When one of the men, nicknamed Shifty, gets to go home, he says to Winters, "Back home, I don't know quite how to explain all this." The implication is, of course, Shifty's experiences as an expert killer. Winter responds, "You were one hell of a soldier, there is nothing more to explain." This line acts as justification and shield for the men, their actions, and the memories of their actions. Most of the episode is situated in beautiful Austria, shot



gorgeously by the episode's cinematographer. The message is that the looted Nazi treasures Easy Company take for themselves confirm the righteousness of the cause and a heaven [Austria] only awaits the righteous.

The theme of brotherhood is twisted a bit at the end when it is reaffirmed not by Winters but by a German counterpart to his surrendering troops. The episode closes with a reunion baseball game just before the war ends, a voiceover informing the audience of each member's fate. This transitions into – the at last – elderly veteran interviews, allowing the audience to match veterans with characters from the narrative. Dick Winters ends it by mentioning his grandchild have asked "Grandpa, were you a hero in the war?" He replies, "No, but I served in a company of heroes."

While I covered Brokaw and his contribution in previous chapters, it is necessary to remind the reader of Brokaw and the popularity of his 1998 thesis. It sets the foundation in 2001 for fearful US citizens, and especially US leadership, to look for powerful, authoritative touchstones from which to derive guidance, purpose, and surety of mission while drawing a direct and uncomplicated parallel between the World War of the 1940s and the War on Terror of the early 2000s.

On September 11, 2001, nineteen al-Qaeda operatives hijacked four US airliners to use them for suicide missions. Two planes crashed into the World Trade Center Twin Towers in New York City, a third plane crashed into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a fourth crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. The symbolic effect of such violence on US soil left much of the populace scared, angry, and looking for answers. In response, President George W. Bush on October 7, 2001, began Operation Enduring Freedom. This war in Afghanistan sought to topple al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden. On March

20, 2003, the US also invaded Iraq in an effort to topple its leader, Saddam Hussein, under the justification that he possessed weapons of mass destruction. The war in Afghanistan lasted thirteen years and the war in Iraq almost nine. These two wars dominated the beginning of the twenty-first century.

This time of war, which began on the heels of celebrating and commemorating World War II, also contained the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day in 2004. This time also saw the peak in popularity of World War II-themed first-person shooter video games, new memorials, and new films about the war during a time of a new “war on terror.”

#### IV. Call of Duty

In the previous chapter, I discussed the first-person shooter video game *Medal of Honor* and its origins as a Spielberg historical educational entertainment product and the limitations of such game types to simulate and challenge certain historical narratives. *Medal of Honor* first appeared in 1999 and subsequently released twelve iterations set during World War II through 2007 on multiple gaming platforms. The development team behind *Medal of Honor: Allied Assault* (2002) – the computer follow-up to the hit 1999 Playstation game *Medal of Honor* – was Infinity Ward. Infinity Ward left Electronic Arts and its *Medal of Honor* for Activision to develop its own World War II first-person shooter called *Call of Duty*. Michael Schiffer, screenwriter of the films *Crimson Tide* (1995) and *The Peacemaker* (1997) helped write *Call of Duty*. And, similar to the original *Medal of Honor*, a military advisor was brought in for *Call of Duty: United Offensive* (Groot, 2008, p. 137).

*Call of Duty* (2003) improved upon the already successful *Medal of Honor* (1999) by focusing on the squad or group experience rather than the individual protagonist. For

example, Jerome de Groot, in his book *Consuming History*, writes that *Medal of Honor* is interested in selling a “historic individuality,” and “existential neoliberal view of the soldier” (2008, p. 134). *Medal of Honor*’s tagline was “Can one man truly make a difference?” while *Call of Duty*’s was “In the war that changed the world, no one fought alone.” This is supported by an animated introductory video that also served as a trailer for the game that highlights the group or brotherhood aspect of World War II as well as the role of multiple nations beyond just the US.

The early 2000s were a time of ever-increasing personal-computer graphics-card wars as manufacturers sought to accommodate the processing requirements of first-person shooter and massively multiplayer game types. At the same time, the seventh generation of home video game consoles (Sony’s Playstation 3 and Microsoft’s Xbox 360) had yet to be released, making this a golden age for the World War II player enthusiast playing on a personal computer. Ultimately, in 2007, the shift from souped-up gaming PC to robust home gaming / entertainment console would begin and the gamer’s fatigue regarding World War II would set in, resulting in both Electronic Arts and Activision shifting their first-person shooter games to contemporary or anticipated war settings. Activision’s *Call of Duty* would release seven titles across all platforms set during World War II from 2003 through 2008.

Multiple games scholars have studied either specific *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* releases or the entire World War II first-person shooter genre as a whole. University of North Carolina faculty member Josh Smicker (2010) moors these game’s potential for historical identification to a particular ideology and historical discourses of honor and valor that “prefigures narratives, images, and subjectivities” (p. 112). De Groot (2008)

notes how the game replicates the verite documentary style used in *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers* along with war film tropes, the game controller's rumble shock function for the beach landing sequence, an attempt at a "messy, loud, and disorientating" experience and "ragged breathing is constantly heard" in the sound design (p. 134). The resulting effect for de Groot is a game more interested in cinematic presentation than the original *Medal of Honor* with a tension between focusing on the individual soldier's story and making that story merely a set of film clichés.

James Campbell's contribution to the book *Playing the Past* (2008) explains that World War II-themed first person shooters were popular because they create a "nostalgia for the Second World War as the last ludic war" (p. 185). Meaning World War II seemed like the last war to have "rules," including easily identifiable opponents, easily marked disputed territories, demarcated battlefronts, and some sort of conventions after declaring war. The overall effect for Campbell is the "combatants face each other as equals in a controlled environment ... a kind of pugilism with submachine guns" (2010, p. 185). Whereas de Groot sees *Call of Duty* as borrowing the cinematic style of Spielberg, Campbell borrows Bolter and Grusin's (2000) term "remediated nostalgia" or "the tendency of new media to incorporate the forms of older media – to present themselves as 'refashioned and improved versions of other media'" (2008, p. 186). Campbell falls within Beidler's (1998) camp, seeing "the games represent the recent movies, which represent the earlier movies, which putatively represent the war itself" (2010, p. 187).

*Call of Duty*'s (2003) menu continues the expected atmosphere of World War II with a tabletop holding a soldier's helmet, K-ration, knife, bag, and gun. These are both the authentic soldier's tools as well as the symbols an audience expects to see, that

together say “World War II.” Those expectations and building of atmosphere continues when selecting the difficulty level of play as the game provides four options dressed in quasi-military lingo: Greenhorn, Regular, Hardened, and Veteran (the most difficult). Overall, *Call of Duty* possesses less of a narrative than its predecessor *Medal of Honor*.

When beginning a game, the load screen is another table top with a knife, a piece of paper, a photograph of a base, and a photograph of two soldiers standing together like a snapshot of two buddies. On top of this sits an open journal upon which handwritten script explains the context of the mission or level you’re about to embark on. The simulated handwritten script adds a note of authenticity while also embodying the simulated experience with human beings. In addition, this form of writing invokes a diary or memory that itself is a traditional mechanism for archiving and conveying memory.

The initial tutorial mission – where a player learns how to play the game using their controller – is based at Camp Toccoa, Georgia, on August 10, 1942. This was a real US Army paratrooper training camp during World War II and was featured prominently in the first episode of *Band of Brothers* (2001). Here in the tutorial you immediately begin being addressed by the boot camp instructor and other computer-controlled recruits, reinforcing the group experience of brotherhood among soldiers. This training level teaches the player the difference between weapons available, reinforcing the technological fetishism. Quotes are displayed during level transitions. For example Hemingway’s “Every man’s life ends the same way. It is only the details of how he lived and how he died that distinguish one man from another” is used after the tutorial level. After the first mission, you see Patton’s quote “It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God that such men lived.” This is an expected line in

the theme of individual heroism and sacrifice as it is when the game uses the same Shakespearean quote Stephen E. Ambrose used to title his book *Band of Brothers*. When loading missions, the game uses a standard and expected set of maps, objectives, and voiceover explaining the mission.

The group scenario versus the single protagonist or lone wolf in a first-person shooter is not insignificant. Today, it is practically a default setting to be able to play with friends who are physically far apart, each controlling a character and communicating through some sort of headset. The group or duo experience is very popular, fun, and satisfying. Yet, even here back in 2003 in *Call of Duty* playing alone with computer-controlled squad members, was nonetheless powerful and added to the simulation of a World War II mission.

On its surface, we can crudely say *Medal of Honor* (1999) was a simulation of *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and *Call of Duty* (2003) was a simulation of *Band of Brothers* (2001). Many players and critics have written as much online when discussing the games. Yet, what is more significant is the ability to construct a transferential space for historical and mnemonic experiences; experiences whose power is elevated when experienced with another – whether it is a human or computer controlled. Yes, the first-person shooter format is relatively limited as a genre and simulation. Nonetheless, the intense moments of action and violence conveyed through visual simulation and emotionally attuned musical scores and sound effects are rather effective in creating a satisfying experience delivered via accomplishing goals. The experience of working together to achieve an objective, while not necessarily conveying an individual memory or historical fact, delivers a feeling of tunnel-vision togetherness and bonding that

reinforces the message of Ambrose and the melting pot ethos of the post-war canon of films. Another game mechanic in *Call of Duty* (2003) that supports this message is that if you accidentally shoot one of your own squad, the level ends and you will need to start over with the message “Friendly Fire Will Not be Tolerated!” on the screen. In a sense, the memory of an honorable, brave, and heroic troop of men is literally programmed into the simulated representation.

Another example of this visual discourse is a load screen from the 2005 World War II first-person shooter video game sequel, *Call of Duty 2*. Typically within these games, the following elements exist: main menu (set options, start a game), cut scenes (animations or live action scenes that provide plot or set the mood), load screens (usually static images to look at while the game level loads and is ready for play), and the actual game play levels (in which you have control and make choices). World War II first-person shooters use each of these elements to create an immersive simulation for players.

In this example, I’m focusing again on a single load screen. These screens show a simulated tabletop upon which lies an open coffee cup stained-notebook with two imperfect black and white photographs sitting on the bottom right page. The tabletop the book sits upon is also covered by a map. Surrounding the open notebook are various items, including a wristwatch with its band folded, a rifle to the right side of the map, and corners of other documents helping to set the location (for example a cover with a likeness of Lenin for the Stalingrad mission).

On the two notebook pages is simulated handwriting providing date, time, location, and temperature details along with a brief description of the mission ahead for the player. For example, the screen before the Stalingrad mission states:

December 8, 1942, 1445 hrs Stalingrad Snowing -28c We've stopped at a supply dump to restock on ammunition and supplies, before moving on to support our comrades at the railyard. The station house at Railroad Station No. 1 is currently under German control. Lt. Volsky says it has changed hands twelve times in the past six hours. The safest way to reach the trainyard is the pipeline – as long as the Germans don't know we're in there, of course. Pvt. Vasili I. Koslov 13<sup>th</sup> Guards Rifle Division.

Here the contents of the message are only crucial for the internal logic of the game. They provide the player both an ambiance for the time and subtle hints regarding both the plot and strategy of the level. I'm more concerned with its aesthetics. If this screen were absent, the same information could be conveyed and the player could still successfully play an abbreviated simulation of this World War II mission. However, without it, the player may experience or perceive a break or gap in the immersive simulated experience.

The choice to display the content in the load screen as simulated handwriting as opposed to a simulated manual typewritten memo from military command to the soldier places the emphasis on the individual human being's experience, with a touch of agency. The simulated scrawl is not perfect penmanship but is very legible nonetheless. Beyond the practicalities of needing legible type to convey information to the game player, it also supports the concept of the game's protagonist as an avatar for the player. Even his penmanship is "average Joe."

This focus on the individual is somewhat inherent within the format of a first-person shooter. In addition, the first successful World War II first-person shooter, *Medal of Honor* (1999) was mildly criticized for its emphasis on "one man" within the macro scale of the war. This criticism was addressed in the first *Call of Duty* (2003). This game focused on soldiers as parts of larger groups, including squads and various national



armies, and this focus was extended in *Call of Duty 2* (2005). That being said, a journal in a soldier's own handwriting is an object of personal memory and archive, and writing journals or letters – or receiving mail from home – has often been the basis of media depictions of soldiers, as in the TV series *M\*A\*S\*H* (1972-1983) which built entire episodes around the activity.

The result in the load screen is not merely the establishment of ambiance for the game level to come but a window into the embodiment of the soldiering experience via the intimate behavior of journaling. An experiential behavior supported by the other common markers – worn pages, faded photographs (another window into personal memory) and coffee-cup stains on the pages. If it is not merely establishing ambiance, it is also not merely conveying information. Other load screens typically provide statistics on weapons or enemies or details about locations, and such techniques could have been used here in standard typeface, but the producers made a different choice.

Additionally, the aesthetic of maps on tables surrounded by instruments is not new, it has been used before on box art for video games (*Hearts of Iron II*, 2005; *Hearts of Iron III*, 2009). In these examples however, medals and bullets are laid upon the map to symbolize the respective nations, not individuals. Individuals are at best implied but really absent in these *Hearts of Iron* representations.

It should be noted, however, that some may interpret the *Call of Duty 2* load screen as a representation alien to players in 2005. Wristwatches, physical maps, handwriting – all were technologies most people rarely used day-to-day in the 2000s, when digital interfaces were preferred. From this perspective, the load screen works less as a vessel for the affixing of prosthetic soldiering memories and more as a quaint,

archaic, museum-like simulation of objects and configurations with no real bearing on the contemporary player. Nonetheless, absence of additional historical reference materials for the player, these images may, in fact, act as a sort of memory for the player about what the war was, what it meant, and how it was engaged with. Or perhaps this occurs because it works in conjunction with other representations of World War II remembrance (this game uses branded archival footage from the Military Channel for cut scenes). Digital representations of World War II in the early twenty-first century were paralleled by physical symbols of remembrance and additional cinematic representations.

## V. Mid-Period Monuments and Films

Construction of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., began on September 4, 2001 (“Friends of the National World War II Memorial, Washington DC - About the Memorial,” 2016, para. 2), and it was opened to the public on April 29, 2004, and dedicated the following month, May 29<sup>th</sup>. The memorial’s official webpage lists as its purpose to “honor the 16 million who served in the armed forces of the US, the more than 400,000 who died, and all who supported the war effort from home ... a monument to the spirit, sacrifice, and commitment of the American people” (2016, para. 1). The American Battle Monuments Commission won design approval for the monument on September 21, 2000, and while worried for a short stretch about accumulating enough money to actually build it, ultimately amassed more than \$194 million for its construction (Mills, 2009, p. 163).

Historian Douglas Brinkley, author of *The Boys of Pointe du Hoc*, among other books, and successor to Stephen E. Ambrose at the Eisenhower Center at the University of New Orleans, wrote the memorial’s accompanying keepsake book, *The World War II*

*Memorial: A Grateful Nation Remembers* (2005). The infrastructure for a successful fund-raising campaign began in 1997 when US Senator and World War II veteran Bob Dole of Kansas agreed to become national chairman for the monument's fundraising. In addition, Federal Express CEO Fred Smith, a Vietnam veteran who took great pride in the fact that his father and uncles were World War II veterans, signed on as co-chairman to help raise corporate money (Mills, 2009, p. 165). The third component of their strategy was to recruit a public spokesperson. The original intention was to pull from The Greatest Generation and discussions began with David Brinkley and Walter Cronkite. However, with the success of *Saving Private Ryan*, the film suddenly made actor Tom Hanks "the ideal cross-generational representative" (Mills, 2009, p. 166). Hanks immediately and enthusiastically signed on to his new role. The three largest contributors to the fund were Wal-Mart at just about \$15 million, the VFW at just over \$6 million, and the American Legion at just over \$4.5 millions (Mills, 2009, p. 169). Over the past eight years, the memorial has averaged a little over four million visitors annually (statista.com).

In 2006, veteran actor-turned-director Clint Eastwood directed the film *Flags of Our Fathers*, an adaptation of the 2000 book of the same name written by James Bradley and Ron Powers. Bradley is the son of Navy corpsman John Bradley, one of the six servicemen planting the flag at Iwo Jima in photographer Joe Rosenthal's famous image from February 23, 1945. Son James Bradley, in an interview with C-SPAN from 2000 while promoting the book, stated he did not intend to be an author but rather was searching for his father, who had passed away in 1994. He seemed to have a burning to desire to know who his dad was on that day back in 1945 since his father was always hesitant to discuss it. He just went looking to speak with people who knew the day or his

father, but once he collected these stories, he felt “it was my duty to write them down” (Lamb, 2000, 3:08 minute mark). Bradley needed journalist Ron Powers to help him write the book, which was released on May 2, 2000.

Bradley’s perspective on the book closely mirrors Brokaw’s mission in worshipping the heroes of The Greatest Generation. One subtle difference is that Bradley constantly reminds the audience that the men in his book were actually boys and describes their mission as “These boys and other boys like them went out and made sure that it came to the conclusion that their mothers would like” (Lamb, 2000, 1:05 minute mark). He uses Ira Hayes, a Pima Native American and US Marine who helped raise the flag, survived the war, but ultimately died young in 1955, Bradley says he wishes people wouldn’t remember him as “an alcoholic Indian” but rather “here was an honorable warrior” (Lamb, 2000, 8:30 minute mark). Bradley’s constraining racist perspective on Native Americans aside, Ira Hayes in Eastwood’s film version is a guilt-riddled veteran who actively tries to elude the fame that comes with being a flag-raiser, and this combined with racism of the times, and trauma of battle, lead him into a spiral of alcoholism. Bradley’s description of the man in 2000 is “Yes, he drank a little too much. I wish the public would get off his back for having a drink and take a look at -- at a guy who engendered respect from everybody who knew him” (Lamb, 2000, 8:30 minute mark). Bradley posits it was more the trauma of losing 223 men on the beach rather than the fame of the Iwo Jima photograph that drove Hayes overboard. Ultimately, when asked what he learned about his father, John Bradley, by writing the book, James Bradley replies he learned about “the boy--the 21-year-old boy running through bullets to save lives” (Lamb, 2000, 26:08 minute mark).

Clint Eastwood, born in 1930, is just slightly too young to have participated in World War II. His acting debut came in 1955 with a tiny role in the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* sequel *Revenge of the Creature*. Eastwood, unlike Reagan or Spielberg, never seemed to define his career by pulling on World War II and dragging it back for contemporary audiences. If there was one genre he did go back to again and again, it was the Western, popular when he was a young man and the source of one of his first successes, starring as Rowdy Yates from 1959 through 1965 on the television series *Rawhide*. Eastwood's Hollywood version of war participation included a minor role in *Away All Boats* (1956), a supporting role in a World War I film *Lafayette Escadrille* (1958), World War II action film *Where Eagles Dare* (1968), World War II comedy-action film *Kelly's Heroes* (1970), Cold War airplane thriller *Firefox* (1982), playing a Korean War veteran who teaches values in *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986), portraying another Korean War vet in *Gran Torino* (2008), and directing a film about Iraq War veteran Chris Kyle in *American Sniper* (2014). For *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006), Eastwood also shot a companion film released two months later titled *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006).

Eastwood's goal was to tell the story of Iwo Jima, and instances of good and evil from both army's perspectives. The latter film was warmly received in Japan, where it earned most of its box office receipts. Eastwood, not old enough to quite be a part of the World War II generation, yet too old to be a son of it, brings his individualistic and moderate-to-slightly conservative political viewpoint to the memory of World War II. This perspective, based on his biography, is a different offering than the Ambrose, Spielberg, and Brokaw version. His emphasis on the Pacific battle rather than the European theater, also helps to set his narrative apart. Another filmmaker also presented a more varied

perspective on the war, but nonetheless provides support for the idea of the “Greatest Generation.”

Documentary filmmaker Ken Burns took a less traditional take on World War II producing a seven-part series *The War* (2007), the story of how the war affected four US towns. Displaying his expected level of professionalism and ability to make the most static and unmediated portions of history dynamic and interesting, Burns (born 1953) did a better job than other children of The Greatest Generation of including a variety of voices in the story. He was criticized, however, for his lack of emphasis on the contributions of Hispanics and Native Americans. Some reviewers, such as Alessandra Stanley from *The New York Times*, also felt the story was too insular to the American experience for a tale about a world war, especially in context of the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Beverly Gage, reviewing for Slate.com, described the fourteen-hour film as “often revelatory ... also manipulative, nostalgic, and nationalistic ... rousing and meaningful and not technically inaccurate, but not exactly the whole truth” (Gage, 2007, para. 2) leading her to conclude that Burns undermined the myth of The Good War, yet nonetheless “happily affirms the popular image of a selfless and unsurpassed ‘Greatest Generation’” (Gage, 2007, para. 11).

There were other developments on the World War II memory front during the first decade of the 2000s. The years of 2006 and 2007 were tense as now the Reagan, Ambrose, Brokaw, and Spielberg memory of World War II had become legitimated via box office receipts, institutionalized via museums and memorials, and drawn upon for guidance during the contemporary wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. World War II veteran Edward Wood Jr. makes the connection between both wars when he wrote in 2006: “the

story told in the mainline media explains why it was so easy for America to accept the idea of a ‘war on terror,’ Our policies of preemption, our war with Iraq are rooted in a war now sixty years past” (p. 86). One of the cottage industries that sprung up after the success of Ambrose’s work, was for some of the Band of Brothers to publish memoirs. Dick Winters did, and his book includes letters from people inspired by his World War II experiences, including people who went through the trauma of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### America: The Story of Us

*America: The Story of Us* (2010) was The History Channel’s twelve-part miniseries produced by Jane Root, former president of Discovery Networks USA and controller for BBC Two. The series spans the history of the United States and uses an entire episode to cover World War II. The choice of aesthetic for the episode was to mimic cinematic rather documentary techniques, leaning heavily on shaky camera work, CGI, quick zoom-ins, and *Saving Private Ryan*’s faded color palette. The series opening theme draws heavily upon the American myth, and The Good War myth. The opening narration is “We are pioneers and trailblazers, we fight for freedom. We transform our dreams into the truth. Our struggles will become a nation.” The second and third sentiments are most significant for my argument. “We fight for freedom” can refer to the nation’s revolutionary origins and purposely connects directly to the reasons for participating in World War II. The third sentiment, “We transform our dreams into the truth,” on its surface speaks to our “can do spirit” but underneath reveals a different kind of truth: that often what we desire to be true we equate to being true or present as truth, in the way that Reagan or Brokaw’s version of World War II was attempted to be burned in as accurate memory.

This type of homogenizing myth, as seen in Brokaw's work, is perpetuated during the episode. Transitioning from the economic plight of The Great Depression to the economic buildup due to the war, the voice-over reads "But with war comes purpose and determination." Through the producer's choice of talking heads to employ, the war is presented as a test for personal growth and moral character. For example, former *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams says "Sometimes it takes a terrific challenge and a horrific threat to the Republic to discover how good you can be," with every bit of gravitas he can muster, reinforcing the war as a rite of passage narrative.

The war as a unifying experience is also expressed indirectly when the program attempts to convey the African-American experience. The experts for this segment include Gen. Colin Powell, Reverend Al Sharpton, and Rutgers professor Dr. Annette Gordon-Reed, who explain the military's segregation during wartime. Similar to how the program covered the experience of women drafted into manufacturing jobs, the Army is portrayed as a site for future progress in the civil rights movement. The episode profiles a young African-American soldier, chronicling his experience protecting other soldiers during D-Day while being tethered to a large balloon. The episode offers no further detail about whether assignments such as these were random, voluntary, or unequally assigned to African-American units. The program re-enacts the experience in a *Saving Private Ryan* style. The audience learns this soldier walked onto the beach, slowed down by the large balloon. It was shot down and he freed himself from its tether, and ducked for cover with only his pistol. The situation is described as "hell," where there "was no segregation." While obviously this is correct, it was hell for everyone, and the violence did not discriminate. It nonetheless seems like a mighty harsh road for this soldier to



travel in order to reach a space with such a lack of inequality. The effect is to reinforce a memory of war as a unifying force where sensory immersion of chaos somehow rectifies any racial inequality present, while also making a direct connection to the civil rights battle twenty years later, even though some of The Greatest Generation were made uneasy by much of the civil rights battles fought during that time. The HBO series *The Pacific*, also released the same year, did a much better job dealing with the complexities of race and war, informed in part, by a post-Vietnam war sensibility.

## VI. The Pacific

A follow-up to HBO's *Band of Brothers* (2001), the ten-episode miniseries *The Pacific* (March, 2010) was the third World War II themed collaboration between Tom Hanks and Stephen Spielberg and their respective production companies, Playtone and Dreamworks. Additionally, continuity also existed regarding distributors (HBO, Warner Home Video), and producers (Gene Kelly, Gary Goetzman, Tony To, Spielberg, Hanks). Bruce C. McKenna, who wrote three episodes of *Band of Brothers* (2001), was the principal writer and producer for *The Pacific*. Hugh Ambrose (1966-2015), son of author Stephen E. Ambrose (1936-2002), worked with his father on the book *The Pacific* until his father's death. Hugh finished the book and it was released as a companion piece to the 2010 miniseries. Hugh also served as a consultant for the television series. The series follows three Marines – John Basilone, Robert Leckie, and Eugene Sledge – of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division fighting in the Pacific theater during World War II. The younger Ambrose's tie-in book focused on only two of the three Marines but added additional characters to provide a scope wider than what the ten episodes could allow for. Leckie and Sledge had

both written memoirs, and Basilone's story had been well documented in the media. All three became cornerstone source material for the scripts (Genzlinger, 2010, para. 11).

The episodes immediately situate themselves in continuity with the aesthetic of *Band of Brothers*, beginning with the personal reminiscences of veterans, continuing through the shaky, cinema verite style camera-work and fast-paced action that has influenced the aesthetic of many post-*Saving Private Ryan* World War II media productions. This even includes the white typeface underscored by a red line on a black background for each episode's title card. This specific visual restraint of the aesthetic helps establish the work as a prestigious one, on par with a documentary.

The difference between the *Band of Brothers* miniseries and *The Pacific* is introduced by the use of a Tom Hanks voiceover that utilizes copious amounts of black-and-white and color Army and newsreel film footage from the war in the Pacific. This voiceover film footage is edited together with veterans talking in front of black backgrounds. Similar to the interviews in *Band of Brothers*, these interviews connect thematically to each episode. For example, they speak about how everybody was scared (episodes six and eight), the terrible nightmarish horror show they fought within (episodes four through six), and how they adhered to the motto "pray and hold on" (episode 2) and tried to stay alive (episode one). The idea of fighting an enemy who refused to surrender (episode seven) combined with bloody battles that seemed to have been forgotten (Peleliu, episode 8), leave the now elderly veterans to remember getting to a point where they didn't give a damn (episode four). Reaching this level within a nonstop killing field left many veterans struggling to adjust back to civilian life because they were changed and aged by war (episode ten).

The most significant veteran interview occurs in the last and tenth episode. Here we see a widow and daughter of a soldier sitting side-by-side for the interview. The daughter recalls as a child hearing her father in the middle of the night screaming and having nightmares and her mother having to wake him and calm him down. In a separate single interview, his widow says he had a strong will but the trauma lasted his entire life. Here we see a glimpse of potentiality for Hirsch's (2008) postmemory within the family, while also seeing the potentiality for prosthetic memory specifically for PTSD within this episode. Since it is the last episode, the series uses the same "what happened to each soldier" segment as *Band of Brothers*, but with an update. We see a still image of the actor with a text explaining his war death or post-war fate, followed by a still image of the soldier during the war. The effect is similar to Landsberg's noting of actor and survivor coming together at the end of *Schindler's List* (1993), albeit here it is only images. This effect is strengthened for the last few "what happened" segments when the actor and young soldier images are followed by still images from the elderly veteran interviews. The overall effect is to connect the contemporary generation of actors to the memories of the soldiers. Both now embody them.

Otherwise, the overall effect of the Hanks voiceover newsreel plus the veteran interviews framing device is actually, perhaps unintentionally, to distance *The Pacific* from *Band of Brothers*. I mention this distinction because the overall effect is more of a history lesson rather than transference of memory. This is constructed from Hanks' voiceover that feels like a documentary, the liberal use of red, black, and white maps during the intros and throughout episodes to situate the audience to the geography, the lack of personal quotes or additional information as end title cards, and the use of film

footage, which, at times, makes this feel more a continuation of the original wartime propaganda than as a site of memory.

In this way, *The Pacific* feels a bit like an odd bird; a hybrid that is more brutal than *Band of Brothers* yet somehow feels more like a traditional post-war “canonical” (Beidler, 1998) war film than *Band of Brothers*. We see this in action sequences, and we see this in the number of commanders yelling, such as on the ship in episode one, a behavior associated with unreal war movies in *Band of Brothers*. This could be due to the nine-year distance between the two series, the paucity of surviving veterans, and the experience of key crew members in making such a series. While *The Pacific* retained much of the brothers-in-arms motif of *Band of Brothers* and *Saving Private Ryan*, there was more of a focus on the costs and sacrifices of the individual Marines assigned there. This theme is shown primarily through the psychological effects of combat. Predominantly, this theme plays out in two ways. First was the cost of an individual action, even if that action was an expression of battle fatigue, on the unit or group. We see this with soldiers fighting one another, the tension between the Army and Marines, and theft of supplies, all in episode two. The skipper in episode six stating, “I have to believe it is worth it because the cause is just” and telling the character Sledge in episode seven regarding the trauma and the killing, “You can’t dwell on it.” We see Sledge accidentally kill another soldier in episode seven. Episode four also shows broken men wounded in the hospital and a soldier in the field strip completely naked then put a gun in his mouth and pull the trigger. A soldier suffering from PTSD sits counting Japanese who are not there. We see Basilone back in the US selling war bonds, flashing back to terror while at the driving range. Sledge, in the final episode, has multiple episodes of PTSD

and actively articulates why he and not others survived. In a nod to memory, his friend and fellow veteran replies, “Get up everyday and keep moving forward. Eventually you’ll start to forget a few things, at least for awhile.”

The second theme was the loss of the individual’s humanity and estimation of the worth of human life lost over the course of the Pacific campaign. Both of these manifestations formed key elements surrounding Sledge’s experience. A Marine strangles a Japanese man in episode four and grins. Soldier character Snafu uses a knife to cut gold teeth out of a dead Japanese soldier in episode five. Episode seven depicts use of a flamethrower and brutal shooting to draw Japanese soldiers out of their hiding spots. Episode seven also shows the demoralizing effect of the men losing their skipper, the breaking of the oldest and most dependable of the unit, and Sledge’s inability to interact with “civilized” support personnel back at base camp. The apogee of this inhumanity arrives in episode nine as Sledge wants to adopt Snafu’s gold-teeth-cutting-out habits, articulates he just wants to kill every Japanese on the island, and contemplates killing or letting a Japanese baby die after experiencing a booby-trapped mother holding and trying to save her own infant.

*The New York Times* reviewer Neil Genzlinger saw this violent, troubled retelling as an attempt to instill the Vietnam narrative of late 1970s films into the World War II story. The ages of principal creative personnel on the film – including McKenna, Tim Van Patten, and Graham Yost – combined with the context of a post-9/11 world and ongoing fatigue with war, attest to that interpretation. The use of suicide bombers in episode nine, combined with the plethora of color footage, certainly evokes a nightly newscast about Vietnam during the 1960s. The context for this film series is the template

set by *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers*, the success of first-person shooters for younger audiences and fans of the battle sequences, the Vietnam experience, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

A central theme of *The Pacific* is the brutality of war and the destruction and depravity endured by US Marines during the island-hopping campaigns. While some of the recognizable themes and motifs (e.g. comradeship in arms, harsh ironies of war) from *Band of Brothers* and other World War II productions remain staples, *The Pacific* dwells much more on the misery of combat, the drudgery of digging foxholes in thick mud, the soldiers' constant fears of being victims of sniper attacks, or friendly fire, and the inevitable combat fatigue and psychosis.

Another theme that comes out in the introduction of the episode is the high number of civilian casualties incurred during the Okinawa campaign. Hanks, as narrator, states that not only did Okinawa have the highest number of casualties in all of the campaigns of the Pacific, but that "hundreds of thousands of Okinawan civilians were wounded or killed; caught in the crossfire of battle." The words are emphasized by onscreen images of a shivering, mud-caked Okinawan child. The entire episode heightens the drama by adding Okinawa civilians to the mix. Dramatically, it is one dying woman, caught in the war, who serves as the narrative device to allow Sledge to walk back from the edge of inhumanity as he cradles her as she dies, allowing himself to care for someone besides his fellow soldier for the first time in a long time. At the end of episode nine, the atomic bomb is mentioned casually, and most likely quite accurately, given what little the men actually would have known in the field. However, since the series acts as a brutally detailed representation and justification for why the bomb was dropped, the

scant mention across such a long series is nonetheless striking. Video games, feature films, and television series certainly can make an impact within the landscape of popular culture. However, museums can lend an institutional authority to a particular subject that these other media sometimes can not. The following section covers my observations within museums covering the subject of World War II.

## VII. WWII & NYC

The *WWII & NYC* exhibit at the New York Historical Society, running from October 5, 2012, to May 27, 2013, relied upon certain World War II iconography to publicize itself. The exhibition displayed over four hundred objects including artifacts, paintings, maps, models, photographs, posters, film, and radio. The Historical Society provided most items, but thirty-five institutions and individuals loaned items for the exhibit. The *WWII & NYC* exhibit goals that state: “*WWII & NYC* is an account of how New York and its metropolitan region contributed to victory” (*WWII & NYC* website). One of its many sponsors was The Military Channel. Along with visiting the museum exhibit multiple times, I also interviewed the museum’s curator and current vice president of history exhibitions, Dr. Marci Reaven. The exhibit was originally Columbia historian and former New York Historical Society President Dr. Kenneth Jackson’s idea. The goal for the exhibit, according to Reaven, was to display the artifacts before the first-person participants in World War II died.

An exhibit’s website is, for many patrons, their first glimpse into an exhibit’s content, focus, and aesthetics, the site for this exhibit made three topics salient through its front-page animated banner. The first is the question “What was NYC like during

WWII?” over top of Thomas Hart Benton’s painting *Embarkation – Prelude to Death* (1942). The second was *Entertaining the Troops* placed over top of a photo of Phyllis Jeanne Creore and sailor sitting at a table inside the Stage Door Canteen. The third image in the animated banner asked potential patrons to “Share Your Memories” over the famous Alfred Eisenstaedt *V-J Day in Times Square* photograph of a sailor kissing a nurse. The overall effect of these choices was to focus on imagined city excitement during wartime, revisit the past glories of youth (i.e. “I was just an average guy, but I got to socialize with beautiful stars”), and offer an invitation to participate in the afterglow of victory (“share your memories of when we won”). Reaven remarked that she and museum staff did not draw inspiration from any one particular book or film or previous exhibit. However, a salient goal for this New York City-centric exhibit was to foreground the role of the port as a point of embarkation and make it come alive for patrons.

The museum used the now, famous “sailor kissing nurse” photo as backdrop for its lamppost banners advertising the exhibit around the city, which both highlighted the historical connection between the war and the city and provided expected imagery to potential audiences. Visitors ascending the outside steps toward the entrance of the museum, on Central Park West, were greeted by a large photographic cutout of General Dwight D. Eisenhower taken from a December 28, 1944 Associated Press photograph of Eisenhower sitting in a Jeep somewhere in France before he was to deliver a Christmas message to allied forces. The overall effect is one of relaxed strength as Eisenhower vibrantly sits leaning in the Jeep, one hand casually but confidently on the steering wheel – just as a reliable grandfather might. The cutout, however, transformed him into an exhibit object. Eisenhower whose skin was portrayed in black and white looked old and



comfortable, but the selective coloring of his uniform suggested both vibrancy and strength. The combination of these two images (sailor kissing nurse and Ike in Jeep) were frozen moments commemorating victory, familiar and inviting offerings for museum patrons.

Unlike the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, the lobby did not serve as a transitional space for patrons to enter this world of war. There were mannequins dressed in period uniforms next to propaganda posters behind glass along the back wall, but the overall effect was traditional museum display. The uniforms chosen include: a blue Navy dungaree uniform, Army infantry field uniform, Army nursing corps dress uniform, and a Merchant Marine officer's dress uniform. These uniforms, like the Joe Rosenthal Iwo Jima photograph, are iconic representations of that time, literally the fabric of memory. The lobby also included a small scale sculpture of the famous Marine Corps War Memorial based upon the original *Raising the Flag at Iwo Jima* photograph by Rosenthal. The sculpture was under glass and gives the impression of “important museum piece” in its staging, calling back to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998) question “what does it mean to show? Reaven mentioned that curators had to account for what kinds of memory, knowledge, and concerns visitors would come to the exhibit with, as one part of a curator’s job is to manage patron expectations.

“You try to think ahead about what people might have experienced or know about the war. You want to have exhibits that make them feel as though they've come to the right place. So their reaction is ‘Yeah, they know what I'm talking about, they know what I remember,’ or you may want to challenge their expectations” was offered by curator Reaven. For example, Reaven mentioned rationing and civil defense as an example of the

home front experience that had it been excluded, would have disappointed many patrons. Another example would be to exclude entirely The Holocaust due to the number of New Yorkers who lost extended family at the time combined with the city's large Jewish population. In addition, Reaven felt strongly the exhibit had to bring the sights and the sounds of the battle into the exhibit, even though New York City is not where the war took place. It was important to attempt to convey that sense of horror of war. This was accomplished by including a film created by a New Yorker, signal Corps cameraman, Francis Lee that had not been screened previously.

The exhibit which began on the left of the lobby, was divided into these sections: Introduction: Worldwide Aggression; Section 1: NY Before Pearl Harbor, 1933-1941; Section 2: The New York Home Front, 1942-1945; Section 3: Going to War, 1942-1945; and Section 4: Victory and Loss, 1945. In this space the patron was presented with a representation of a small home radio console sitting on top of a small wooden table against a wall whose wallpaper is constructed of various black and white images with a year. The radio and space is situated in 1938, and played a CBS radio broadcast announcing Hitler's march into Austria. On the lower shelf of the radio table was a newspaper with headline. The wallpaper's pattern was composed of key dates from the war with images. Hanging on the wall was a map showing key dates and areas from the war. A plate affixed nearby stated *WORLDWIDE AGGRESSION*. The overall effect was one of familiarity and comfort, evoking identity moored within the home. The session also underlined the partial understanding of the war possessed by those who experienced it via the mass media of newspapers and radio.

Beyond this space, yet still in the first section of the exhibit, the patron was faced with the multitude of opinions that existed prior to Pearl Harbor. Designed as five columns within a single display, these opinions were represented at the top by five messages in white font on black background: *Smash the Axis*, *Support the Axis*, *Stamp out Racism*, *Stay Neutral*, and *Save the Victims*. This first element helped set up the issue of identities by taking the patron to the first of alternative or contrary narratives. It acted as a way to both establish a “strong” NYC identity while also allotting space for anti-war voices from the time. It began with a title card that read “*NY before Pearl Harbor 33-41*” and explained “Official neutrality did not mean Americans were impartial or lacked opinions. Many New Yorkers cared deeply and made their feelings known.” Reaven mentioned a conscious effort to want to convey that there was not widespread agreement about the war and it was not a foregone conclusion we would be a part of the allies. Also on display were two “medals for dishonor” sculpted by David Smith as part of a series of fifteen he created between the years 1937-40. These were cast out of metal and resembled a round medal or medallion sports or military figures would wear around their neck. This theme of counter-narrative continued by highlighting the anti-Japanese rhetoric pervasive throughout the city during the time. Large racially tinged rallies were held at Madison Square Garden and well attended. The exhibit also mentions the racial discrimination also prevalent within defense employment at the time. In addition, Reaven mentioned wanting to include the paradox between the “war against Nazis oppression” placed against the “war for civil rights” at home. Reaven didn’t think patrons were expecting to see so much about civil rights in the exhibit, but for her and her staff, it was important to make salient

women's role during the war, including participation in the WAVES, and emphasize that the war touched everybody, not just white men who fought.

Major wartime projects within NYC are also included. A relatively large piece was devoted to the Manhattan Project's Cyclotron – a particle accelerator used in developing the atomic bomb. This focus, along with information about the port as both an industrial and manpower story helped create the uniquely New York City story.

One of the takeaways from the exhibit was a supposed desire on the part of curators to present a more nuanced understanding of who participated in the war by portraying a multi-cultural home front and war front. One of the more striking artifacts was a photograph from the war's end taken by Navy photographer's mate Austin Hansen. Typically, this position was closed to African-Americans, but Hansen snapped a photo in Times Square when victory was declared capturing two African-American veterans and three African-American women holding signs declaring WAR OVER. It is a gorgeous black-and-white photograph, yet with an everyman quality, that exists in dozens of other World War II photos. Yet, I'd wager most people, like me, had never seen it before. The exhibit's focus on victory was based upon the unique innovations that only a city as unique as NY could provide. Just as there was presentation of a variety of war participants, the variety of opinions leading up to the war was also made salient.

Imperial War Museum (IWM) North

The Imperial War Museum North (IWM North)'s architecture was designed by Daniel Libeskind and is based on a globe shattered by conflict into three pieces or shards in order to challenge our view on conflict. This Manchester, UK, museum's hope is that it will encourage viewers to challenge their view of war (Boxer, 2002, p. 5). Entrance

begins with artist Gerry Judah's 2010 modern sculpture piece *The Crusader* exploring "the violence of conflict against a perceived righteousness of purpose." In the Main Exhibition Space hangs an imposing late-twentieth century jet, the Harrier (1971-1983), against an olive green wall. The introductory plaque explains the museum's beginning in 1917 collecting "thousands of stories about people's experiences during war and conflict," from World War I to present day. The museum was also founded to "ensure future generations understood the causes and most importantly the consequences, of the First World War" (Boxer, 2002, p. 4). It desires to chronicle "the impact of war at all levels," to help patrons better understand why wars occur and what type of legacy wars leave for future generations. So, from the beginning, the tone of this museum, at least to me, feels quite different from that of the New Orleans National World War II Museum. That difference extends beyond merely a focus on one war versus the totality of war and conflict. Rather, it is the difference in focus between a soldier and his brotherhood established in battle versus how war affects everyone. Also, while neither museum replicates or displays "bodies" per se, the Imperial War Museum North possesses at least a somberness, if not complete sadness, associated with its artifacts, that the National World War II Museum's focus on great individual fear and sacrifice never quite matches.

One interesting element of the IWM North's first section is the placard that says "The Timeline." One of the clearest examples of constructing a grand master narrative, this timeline, which sets up the organization of the museum, has five sections: 1914-1918 First World War; 1919-1939 Between the wars; 1939-1945 Second World War; 1946-1990 Cold War; and 1990 – Present day. We see two salient takeaways from this timeline. First, it recognizes that war, or the desire for war, has been a consistent reality

for the world from 1914 to today. Second, and perhaps more important, choosing this frame, defines war as the default scenario, and any time before war or peace, as just a pause between moments of open war. The quote from Marshal Foch of the French army on June 28, 1919, “This is not peace. It is an armistice for twenty years” is used at the beginning of the 1919-1939: Between the wars segment. This is problematic because it builds the state of war into a history and a tradition-even if beginning from the best of intentions. Additionally, in the museum’s accompanying book, the museum’s Director-General, Diane Lee, writes “Today, few believe we are likely to eliminate war in the foreseeable future.” Obviously, this allows little room for alternative possibilities.

The World War I exhibit is extensive and begins by noting the number of civilian deaths outweigh the soldier loss and that “the scale of suffering affect people’s view of war forever.” It includes the expected imagery and tools of the war experience, with more updated interactive techniques of museum display, including what a trench actually smelled like and feely gloves where patrons attempt to feel out which creature might be inhabiting the trench next to them. However it is the section near the end of the World War I exhibit that is most interesting. Titled *Experience of War*, this tall, dimly lit room in white and glass is composed of file cabinets stacked almost to the ceiling with black-and-white photographs illuminated on select fronts and bottoms of file cabinet drawers. The room’s purpose is to display a small selection of the museum’s collection of personal stories in order to “show some of the many ways in which people have experienced war since 1914.” Also within this room are the stories of prisoners of war, with a focus on the “hardship and frustration” endured because the “experience was particularly severe.” In

addition, internees or civilians imprisoned without trial due to suspicion are also provided space.

The museum plays a projected film titled *The Big Picture Show* on all the walls of the main exhibit space to convey a story of war. The hope for the film series is to expose issues at the heart of war. The film *The War at Home*, which I experienced, attempts to tell the story of the people of Manchester during World War II through emotionally powerful and sometimes funny personal memories. Projected upon all walls, and thus surrounding the patrons, it has a powerful effect of immersion as various imagery including black-and-white photos and color cartoon illustrations are projected to convey the story. This contemporary exhibit is, in my opinion, a rudimentary effort for the future experiential space of memory, where via sensory immersion, patrons can be enveloped in sight and sound to help burn in a particular memory of conflict.

The section 1939-1945 The Second World War is framed by information on the total number of lives lost, including those “in their homes,” and ends with the statement “the impact of this war is total.” This section of the exhibit follows a linear, temporal path, going from battle to battle, displaying objects and images to illustrate the story. The slightly larger sub-section on the Holocaust is a pretty traditionally staged museum space, with objects behind glass for patrons to look at. However, the everyday images of the victims, their photo identification cards, and an empty torn striped labor camp jacket speaks to the bodies that are no longer there and adds a subtle power to the exhibit. Staring into the reflective glass at this jacket, it is not too difficult for a patron to see themselves inhabiting this clothing, this horror. This feeling in the space of facing death is continued by Edith Birkin’s 1980 acrylic work *The Death Cart* about the Lodz Ghetto,

as two inhabitants in the bottom right corner stare at the audience, representatives of the living dead.

In a wonderful sub-section of the IWM North exhibit, labeled 3 – *Impressions of War* the museum has designed a Roy Lichtensteinesque comic book version of the typical living room and asked patrons via a sign hanging over the fireplace “What Shapes Our Impressions of War?” The room, with a 1980s-style television sitting in front of two oversized cartoon panel living room chairs plays a loop of old footage of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during the Falklands conflict. The space answers its own question by focusing on three answers: propaganda, the “never ending” war, and war toys.

The space displays numerous media artifacts to show as examples of propaganda from both the Allies and the Axis. A large text box explains that World War II “has been the source of endless fascination to people.” It mentions the numerous television shows, films, and books produced and, specifically, the film *Saving Private Ryan*. It mentions people purchasing items for the purpose of nostalgia and says that all of these creations “continue to mould and shape our impressions of that war.” A final large text box on war toys mentions books and comic books that have reinforced stereotypes while glorifying the Allies’ actions and succinctly mentions that through model ships, toy tanks and guns, “generations of children have ‘re-fought’ the Second World War.”

Toward the end of the exhibit is the section titled *Silo 6 Legacy of War: What happens when the guns stop firing?* The section explains that war’s effects last generations and leave physical and mental scars for lifetimes. Four oversized, illuminated signs framed as either tags or dog tags, have quotes from individuals affected by war. The first, from a World War I survivor best encapsulates the sentiment: “people think they



were fighting for something that's going to be an uplift and it's going to make everything better. It doesn't. War never makes anything better." The most positive of the four is a somewhat reticent reflection on Phillip Williams' time as a soldier during the Falklands conflict: "I don't really regret being a soldier ... I see it as almost a bonus in the way it opened my eyes to a lot of things."

The early twenty-first century brought a new context to World War II remembrance in the form of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and active wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq. We a continuation of the late-1990s style of remembrance just prior to September 11, in the form of the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers* (2001). We also see support for this continued perspective through the success of the video games *Medal of Honor* (1999) and *Call of Duty* (2003). However, as citizens tired of the new wars, and other creators such as Clint Eastwood offered alternative perspectives, we began to see a slight fatigue for the late-1990s version of World War II. The first-person shooters changed their settings to other wars, and *The Pacific* (2010) had more of a Vietnam consciousness than its predecessor. All the while, history as a subject matter for tele-visual productions probably has never been more popular. Our desire to look back to times as "new" places to situate narratives seems to ever be increasing. At the same time, our desire to predict and "control" the future seems equally as tantalizing.

## ***Chapter 7: Conclusion***

“If Ambrose is the gruff, avuncular voice of academic authority ... Brokaw is his journalistic skill.” (Confessore, 2001, p. 24)

World War II created as much propaganda footage as it did tanks, knives, and guns. Soon after the war, this propaganda was drawn upon to create filmed narratives that continued similar themes of victory. So, when looking at this vast archive, this post-war canon, it seems as though remembering World War II has never really waned. Taking into consideration these facts, what then is unique or significant about the 1990s engagement with World War II in the US, represented by creators Stephen E. Ambrose, Tom Brokaw, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks, and begun by Reagan in the 1980s, which has been the focus of my present dissertation?

Readers may be tempted to conclude that this 1990s engagement is merely continued propaganda, originated by the US government in partnership with Hollywood film studios, only now re-disseminated by the children of the World War II generation who consumed it at the cinema and on their televisions. People may believe we as Americans really didn't learn the lessons of propaganda during World War I, and now seventy-two years after the conflict that helped define most of the latter twentieth-century in our image, we continue to willingly consume, replicate, and believe the myth of The Good War as an example of our exceptionalism. My perspective, which I've attempted to support via this dissertation, is that propaganda as the only answer seventy-two years later is both too simple and too easy.

My dissertation has attempted to make a differentiation between first-hand experienced propaganda, and second-hand experienced collective memory in order to

differentiate these two concepts and reveal the power of memory transferred. For the purposes of my argument, a twenty-year-old man in 1942 looking at an Army recruiting poster and a twenty-year-old man in 1999 reading Brokaw's book or watching Spielberg's film are qualitatively different. Remember, political scientist and communication theorist Harold Lasswell defined propaganda as the control of public opinion by significant symbols via stories, reports, and images. The man in 1942 who reacts to the recruiting poster and its significant symbols is possibly motivated by pride, a desire to belong, or fear, that is based within an unknown future. He can also draw upon his experiences and memories from his twenty years of life to exercise his agency to interpret. I believe this interaction is "first-hand," and the '40s youth will decide how this new information, the war, fits into his existing framework.

I believe our other hypothetical twenty-year old, living in 1999, interacts with World War II in a "second-hand" fashion. The war arrives to him not wrapped in fear about an uncertain future but rather with the authority of tradition, the authenticity of familial and human empathy and emotion, often connected to issues of nationalism. The war arrives somewhat pre-configured, signified by a trauma the original war generation lived through. The original context for such trauma, a period of intense reflection on The Holocaust, was a necessary and moral cause by its survivors to cope in the everyday by expressing their memories of horror and keep alive the larger societal lesson of such genocide. We see these attempts conceptualized through Hirsch's postmemories (inherited, internalized memories) and Landsberg's prosthetic memories (privately-felt public memories), both of which I feel are important conceptual tools to understand the attempts at the transference of mediated memory.

However, during the 1990s, this lens of trauma shifted its focus from the non-combatants and victims of a worldwide conflict and onto the soldiers' experience, particularly in the US. It is true that the stories of – war is hell, war can be senseless, and war can be wasteful (especially from the soldier's perspective) – was conveyed by media prior to the 1990s, most readily by Phillip Beidler's (1998) term "The Great SNAFU." The difference in media messages of the 1990s, I feel, is the result of a few significant elements. My perspective is that Reagan chose to adapt the emotionality often associated with The Holocaust to the combat experiences of US soldiers during World War II. The children of the World War II generation, such as Brokaw and Spielberg embraced this emotionality as they remembered their fathers' actions - initially focusing solely on the Western European theater of war but eventually also the Pacific. I feel this is most efficiently explained by applying Landsberg's concept of the children affixing prosthetic memories to themselves from their parents' combat traumas. Again, Landsberg's original intention is for her concept of prosthetic memory to be a useful tool for both understanding and healing. My choice to adapt and utilize her concept takes her idea into a darker territory of helping to explain an excess of narrowly focused memory for sentimental, well-intentioned but ultimately misguided, and political reasons.

Second, politicians such as Ronald Reagan possessed a combination of belief in the era of World War II, a campaigning skill-set that relied upon an imagined past to construct a desired future, a preference for feelings over facts, and an occupational background that prized simplistic narratives of heroes and villains. My position is that Reagan helped transition the empathy from 1970s Holocaust survivor and Vietnam soldier PTSD narratives back onto the combat experiences of World War II soldiers with

new emphasis. I have proposed throughout this dissertation that in 1984, Reagan's well-intentioned but nonetheless theatrical strategies synced with news anchor Tom Brokaw's mid-life re-evaluation of his parents' generation as he and his network, NBC, readily helped build and support Reagan's paean to "The Boys of Pointe du Hoc." Yes, news and entertainment media in previous eras certainly consciously acted to support World War II memory, such as when *Reader's Digest* provided money and research support for and the featured sections of Cornelius Ryan's book *The Longest Day* (1959). So, readers of this dissertation might be tempted to respond that Reagan/Brokaw in 1984 was merely a replication of the type of propaganda or marketing we previously experienced during Digest/Ryan in 1959. However, again, my belief is that it is a matter of both time and proximity to the experience in 1959. Readers and audiences then were only fourteen years removed from the end of the World War II versus forty years from D-Day in 1984. So while *Reader's Digest* certainly funded and promoted Ryan's literary efforts, those efforts as part of a late 1950s media ecosystem are, I contend, fundamentally different from the media commemorations of World War II in the 1990s. The 1990s began a cacophony of World War II programs across various networks and across various network's individual holdings (e.g. NBC, A&E, and The History Channel).

Third, oral histories increasingly became the foundation for new texts devoted to remembering the war. This is a bit of a return to what occurred with soldiers following World War I initially, and what was subsumed somewhat by institutional propaganda after World War II. These oral histories were utilized by both venerating (Ambrose), critical (Terkel), and fawningly nostalgic authors (Brokaw). To be fair, even Studs Terkel's book contained veterans who were cited "not wanting to fail your buddies"

(1984, p. 5) as a reason for fighting. Using oral histories itself was not new, but I hold that the perceived emotional authenticity set against the ticking time bomb of old age, within a context of increasing diversity in the US, made the thoughts and memories of elderly, mostly Caucasian male soldiers from another time now perceived as a precious commodity in some quarters. The more obvious parallel, I feel, is that prosthetic memory or “privately felt public memories” are easier and more believable to construct if the public memory is increasingly based upon individualized, personal trauma. It is easier for audiences to make at least a vicarious connection if not an intensely personal one moored in internalizing the memory. This was of course the default setting, the given if you will, when discussing the events known as The Holocaust. With other aspects of the war we needed to construct prosthetic memories so that the lessons of that hell were not allowed to be forgotten. Rather than just propaganda, or even knowing that statistically many suffered from PTSD, what occurred, I propose, was to record the personal trauma, connect it to the combat-soldier experience, and encourage the second-hand audience to memorize and incorporate it into themselves. This dissertation argues the effect was augmented by symbols of nationalism, heroism, and emotions of pride and guilt.

Fourth, in many ways filmmaker Steven Spielberg acted as the necessary bridge between prosthetic memory utilized in Holocaust remembrance in the 1990s and prosthetic memory’s use in the narrowly focused US combat soldier experience. Spielberg built his reputation, in part, by setting many of his films within, and paying tribute to, Hollywood’s Golden Age of the late 1930s and early 1940s. He combined this track record with a personal coming to terms with his own Judaism to create *Schindler’s List* (1993). This dissertation proposes that Spielberg’s talent, experience, and work ethic

combined to allow him to play the role of dutiful Jewish son addressing the trauma, an approved and trusted filmmaker guiding a serious and complex subject, and a high-profile celebrity within the arts who could lend his reputation to cultural projects such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. As Landsberg notes, examples of prosthetic memory transference occur within his film.

Spielberg then finished the other side of this bridge, if you will, by creating *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), a film I propose that takes many of the memory strategies used in *Schindler's List* (1993) and applies them to the US combat soldier. Spielberg brought with him a reputation as a trusted curator for The Holocaust trauma to be a caretaker of the soldiers' experiences. In addition to the bookend scenes involving elderly Pvt. Ryan discussed in this dissertation, this film also added the transmission of memory via technological innovations and craftsmanship. Basinger (1998) makes a credible argument that immediate post-war films were interpreted as real or gritty by then contemporary audiences and thus diminishing the "new reality" *Saving Private Ryan* was so lauded for. That being said, *Saving Private Ryan* provided the sensory immersion of shaky Steadicam, gory battle wounds, and a very large surround sound soundtrack containing screams, gunfire, and explosions supposedly as closer to real, or an experienced memory, than previous efforts. This technological effect of immersing the audience within a particular moment is continued on a somewhat smaller scale within first-person shooter video games. This computer technology-based sensory immersion was not available prior to the 1990s, and its ability to simulate atmospheres and situate the audience/player within them, I believe, helped to construct a new transference space for prosthetic memory.

Fifth, the trauma created by the September 11, 2001, attacks provided new currency for the engagement with World War II and the transference of memories that began during the 1990s. We saw old symbols, old propaganda, and old myths trotted out and used to wrap the War on Terror within a means of continued mission and justification. *Time* magazine applied its May 7, 1945 cover image of Adolf Hitler with an “X” over his face for their April 21, 2003 Saddam Hussein and May 20, 2011 Osama bin Laden issues. Veneration of, and guilt felt toward The Greatest Generation, left many post-9/11 Americans to ask “How did they get through World War II?” and what lessons are applicable to our current terror? The salience of multiple World War II traumatic memories provided easily accessible and validated memories and narratives, some 9/11 survivors and witnesses could look to, learn from, take in, and modify as needed. It was also a significant time as fewer World War II surviving soldiers were around for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, and as the young twenty-first century continued, the US quickly tired of the contemporary dual wars abroad and so those with a taste for the war imaginary looked toward the future rather than the past both in reality and in video game simulations.

#### Future Thoughts on Memory

Looking ahead, we can envision the tension between “privately felt public memories” that successfully transmit the emotion of memory versus memory fading into history as participants pass on, and that history itself obfuscated or pruned selectively, leaving little behind. The former, successfully attached prosthetic memories, ideally seemed relatively straight-forward to comprehend. It is a future populace helping to avoid future traumas by successfully carrying others’ and leading with empathetic intentions.



Conversely, it is a populace who is unnecessarily focused on the trauma of a select few, whose traumas, while meaningful, are nonetheless a smaller lesson against the richer curricula that only a World War containing atomic weapons can teach.

The other possibility is an increased commercialization of history and memory. The word *increased* is important since we know that as early as the fiftieth anniversary of the US Revolutionary War, an abundance of commemorative souvenirs and ephemera were being sold. This continued into the twentieth century as we began to commercialize our remembrance of World War II. Michael C.C. Adams (1994) noted an advertisement for a replica John Wayne pistol that is promoted as allowing vicarious witnessing: “from *Sands of Iwo Jima* to *The Green Berets* to *The Longest Day*, he captured our essence. Our Strength. Our values” (pp. 14-15). Adams (1994) offers another example in a common advertisement from the 1990s: “‘Recapture the glory,’ urges the Franklin Mint: ‘Bring the full power and glory of the American spirit into your home’ by buying a bronze miniature of the Iwo Jima memorial” (p. 2). For Adams, brand consumption and the fetishization of memorabilia acts as a quest for a usable past and the era of the Greatest Generation provides fertile utility. It is remembrance through consumption. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it seems to me reasonable to envision an increasingly *experiential branding* perspective on history and memory, I and media historian Andrew J. Salvati (2011) have previously written about and termed *BrandWW2*. *BrandWW2*, brought to you by Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hanks, is the logical conclusion for the logic of capitalism known to monopolize, drown out competitors, and trade in representation rather than materiality. Our industrial base has matured and nestled into an economy

more receptive to its immaterial labor<sup>40</sup>, creation of symbols, and construction of narratives. This repertoire of commemorative behaviors parallels the social relations formed around brands and the meaning-making from which brands derive their value (Arvidsson, 2005).

We can begin by connecting this to Jay Winter's observation that there have been periods of intense interest in the subject of memory that started with trauma of World War I, through the age of the witness after World War II, and into current times marked by identity politics. Beginning from an interest in remembering, and combining it with the recent trends in branding occurring around an experience, the rise in sophistication in virtual reality, and our smart-phone behavior of recording a data trail for almost all our behaviors, I propose a role for experiential branding as an intersection point between consuming audiences, memory, and history.

We could also conceive a potentiality that as participants pass on and prosthetic memory is not transferred, that only the most popular or most repeated forms of memory and history about World War II come to be retained by a majority in the collective awareness. Essentially, only those representations that sold or resold well, will be retained. So, fifty years from now, one might ask about World War II, and be directed toward the trusted "brand" of Ambrose, Brokaw, Spielberg, and Hanks. Furthermore, as these future exhibits or texts inevitably become increasingly interactive, it will be you and your meaningful social network who have an experience while consuming the brand of memory, which you ultimately record, replicate, or share, giving increased value to its

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<sup>40</sup> Immaterial labor is "labor that produces the informational and cultural content of the commodity" (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 133).

version of history and possibly due to the active experience, retain it in your own memory. The overall effect is a doubling of, or meta experience of history and memory.

Some implications of a public continually buying a branded version of history is that it might provide an authority that is then looked to as an unquestioned policy choice and benchmark for excellence in, and justification for, military engagement as a first option. It becomes a mythologized template upon which the decision whether to begin a new war is justified. A common refrain would be that the stakes were “even higher in World War II, yet we did it, we won – so we can do it again.” Acceptance of this brand would be particularly difficult on the young men and women who serve in the armed forces. It would justify military-intervention as a first option while also constructing never-attainable mythical heroic roles for those who serve. The result is an almost guaranteed engagement in war, with ground participants chasing a set of conduct, character, and accomplishments that are mostly mythologized. I propose they might find some very dirty realities while looking to be heroes.

I also believe the scale at which a successful brand occupies public consciousness squeezes out spaces for critical thinking and alternative histories about the conflict and diminishes their authenticity via this marginalization. Some audiences would not realize the entirety of the US was not pro-war before the start of World War II. At the same time a narrative of brotherhood achieved through war is repeated often. The sentiment is stated with some variation as “we fought for each other out there, we were brothers.” The implied warning of the hell of being placed inside a war not of your own design and seeking any way of camaraderie and survival is often lost in this utterance. Rather, it is

often interpreted as a positive communal rite of passage or bonding moment of grace under fire. One example are the still popular first-person shooter video games.

In its worst iterations today, commercials for the popular *Call of Duty* franchise set in near-future conflicts, this hellish war experience is presented as fraternal commiserating by celebrities in the style of the 2009 film *The Hangover*, in which a group of middle-class American male friends bond over a shared weekend of Las Vegas mild-debauchery. Moving away from this extreme example, war is often looked upon merely as a proper rite of passage for self-actualization with a justness and clarity of purpose that is attractive to subsequent generations whose identities or social contexts may be in flux.

When broken down its essential themes, this dissertation can be engaged with at the level of issues of authority, issues of mnemonic power, war as a proper rite of passage, and an attempt to control the past. Future research could examine attempts to control the future that would be built upon three supporting columns: digital cultures scholar Dr. Patrick Crogan's (2011) study of the U.S. military technoscientific legacy constructing an anticipatory mindset predicated on prediction and control; sociologist Dr. Eviatar Zerubavel's (1999) concept of *pre-ruins* that could be used to potentially configure the future by installing labels, systems of thought, rationales or future justifications determined by previous actors holding power to constrain current individual agents, and *The New York Times* journalist Jeffrey Rosen's (2010) concept that the Web means the end of forgetting.

We see glimmers of this type of thought poking through now and again. For example, historian Philip Beidler (1998) shares that historian Michael Kammen once

“wryly” noted that some small town mayor does seem to always come up with a new slogan that “progress being a tradition.” (p. 170). I also witnessed London’s historical tourist areas in 2013 putting up large banners around construction areas proclaiming “getting ready to remember!” Even Seattle post-punk rock band *The Intelligence* contributed in 2015 by titling its album *Vintage Future*.

We can add two more items to the combination of Crogan’s insight that the military, in desiring to anticipate so that it could counter Cold War missile attacks, created an anticipatory mindset, a tendency, as per E. Zerubavel, to design objects explicitly for memory, and Rosen’s point that our information infrastructure is designed against forgetting. First, our information search engines are designed, through the use of cookies and surveilling behavior, to adapt, learn, and provide more efficient customizable results to us. Our potential to stumble onto “new” or “alternative” information is increasingly limited. Second, commercial strategies always desire a proven sellers and more often replicates previous successes than invite risk through newer forms, concepts, and ideas. When we add up these five perspectives, the sum result is an intentional strategy to mould the future and eliminate risk. But unlike Crogan’s military history, these intentions bleed into cultural aspects of our society. Engaging with temporal considerations this way could be a fruitful extension of the issues and consequences of memory this current dissertation covers.

## Conclusion

Shifting back to this present dissertation so that I might conclude, what are some of the consequences of a prosthetic memory built from a narrow focus on US soldiers

primarily in the Western European Theater and more recently extended to their experience in the Pacific during a mythologized Good War? Historian Howard Zinn in 1998 revealed the common stumbling block to his question when he asked “Yes, getting rid of fascism was a good cause. Yet does that unquestionably make it a good war?” (p. 139). These stumbling blocks and questions tend to be minimized or obscured by the mass popularity of what Brokaw has offered. For example, historian Kenneth Rose (2008) notes that Brokaw successfully entered “The Greatest Generation” into the national vernacular, going so far as to call the phrase a branded item (pp. 2-3). Zinn’s question of the ends justifying the means, Rose’s observation about the powerful embrace of Brokaw’s version of World War II helps to set up the ultimate consequence as articulated by World War II veteran and author Edward W. Wood who wrote “The story a generation elects to tell about the war of its fathers may determine the nature of the war that it and its children fight” (2006, p. 86). Wood’s book outlines the myths that are often contained within the story of The Good War. One such myth, that of the solitary victor, leads Wood to comment “Believing that we won World War II largely on our own leads us to the certainty that we can ‘go it alone’ in our foreign relations” (2006, p. 140). These three authors’ insights help lead me, and you the reader, to the ultimate consequence: a “privately held public memory” of soldier-superheroes who survived a hellish trauma due to their exceptionalism, integrity, and sense of brotherhood narrows the potential lessons one can learn from a *world* conflict that included a systematic genocide of an entire people and a new technology capable of wiping out two entire cities almost instantly, ultimately resulting in over *fifty million* deaths. Simply put, we cannot be exceptional super-human heroes who also embody perfect citizen-soldiers existing in perfectly

preserved times of ideal societies. Even if it had been true, we can not reach that place, that situation. To construct such a mythological, romanticized reason for success is not to write an accessible curriculum for future generations to study and master, but rather creates a reductive ideal that ignores or marginalizes more inclusive lessons for a world populace needed to heal from a world war.

Furthermore, the memory or story of an average eighteen-year-old thrust onto a battlefield of death does have merit both for individual human empathy, and as a lesson in the brutality of human conflict. However, neither is truly given the depth and complexity of expression the surface version of their individual trauma allows for in the version of World War II almost consistently presented to the US public from 1984 through 2010 by its creators Ronald Reagan, Stephen E. Ambrose, Tom Brokaw, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks. It remains to be seen how recent World War II releases not covered in this dissertation fare, including *The Monuments Men* (2014), *Saints and Soldiers: The Void* (2014), *Walking with the Enemy* (2014), *Unbroken* (2014), *Fury* (2014), and *USS Indianapolis: Men of Courage* (2016), but by titles alone, it seems that, unfortunately, we could say to Presidential Medal of Freedom award winner, Tom Brokaw, “mission accomplished.”

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