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Relics of Battle: War, Memory, and New Museum Theory in Military Museums

Abstract

The anthropology of museums, or museum ethnography, is a useful tool for critically analyzing the representational strategies of museums and their collections. This thesis focuses on the anthropological discussion of military museums and analysis of the material culture of conflict, and specifically on military museums in the United States and in Europe. Using a comparative approach, I look at how "new museology" and "new museum theory" is or is not being implanted in respective military history museum exhibitions, and discuss how personal and collective memory play a role in the construction of the military museum. I also consider how visiting, commemorating, interpreting, and reenacting aspects of military and conflict history in the museum, create narratives inside the museum.

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Megan McCoy

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Advisor: Dr. Christina Kreps

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Title: Relics of Battle: War, Memory, and New Museum Theory in Military Museums

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The anthropology of museums, or museum ethnography, is a useful tool for critically analyzing the representational strategies of museums and their collections. This thesis focuses on the anthropological discussion of military museums and analysis of the material culture of conflict, and specifically on military museums in the United States and in Europe. Using a comparative approach, I look at how “new museology” and “new museum theory” is or is not being implanted in respective military history museum exhibitions, and discuss how personal and collective memory play a role in the construction of the military museum. I also consider how visiting, commemorating, interpreting, and reenacting aspects of military and conflict history in the museum, create narratives inside the museum.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
List of Figures	v
Chapter 1 Introduction and Background.....	1
Introduction	1
The History of the Military Museum	11
Chapter 2 Literature Review	26
New Museum Theory.....	26
Conflict History in Museums	30
Military Museums and Architecture	43
Military Museum Visitors	49
Implementing New Museology in Military Museums	52
New Approaches to Exhibiting Military Collections	55
Chapter 3 Theory and Method	60
Anthropology of and in Museums.....	60
Politics, Economy and Military Museums	63
Museums as Sites of Collective Memory.....	67
Museums as Sites of Ritual Performance.....	72
Research Questions	76
Choosing Museum Field Sites.....	78
Data Collection and Analysis: Exhibits	83
Field Research and Data Collection	87
Scope and Limitations.....	92
Chapter 4 Analysis of the National Museum of the United States Air Force.....	96
Place and Architecture	96
Exhibitions: Order and Layout.....	104
Objects.....	117
Programming	123
Bombing Exhibit	128
Chapter 5 Analysis of the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces)	
.....	135
Place and Architecture	135
Exhibitions: Order and Layout.....	144
Objects.....	155
Programming.....	164

Bombing Exhibit	167
Chapter 6 Conclusion.....	177
Conclusion.....	177
Bibliography	191

List of Figures

Figure 4-1 Tents at entry to event at NMUSAF	100
Figure 4-2 Reenactments at the NMUSAF	100
Figure 4-3 Flight displays at NMUSAF.....	101
Figure 4-4 Entry to Cold War exhibits at NMUSAF	111
Figure 4-5 Warrior Airmen exhibit at NMUSAF	114
Figure 4-6 Bockscar on display at NMUSAF. Nuclear bombs displayed under its wing.	119
Figure 5-1 The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr.	138
Figure 5-7 A bullet from the largest gun ever made during the Nazi era. Libeskind's architecture and windows of light give a unique perspective on the object.	141
Figure 5-2 Display at the MHMoB	144
Figure 5-3 Armor displayed at the MHMoB	145
Figure 5-4 Monument at MHMoB.....	150
Figure 5-6 Fashion items inspired by the military in one of the galleries.	152
Figure 5-5 Mobile shelves in the gallery allow the visitors to create their own exhibits. Visitors act as curators by choosing what items to reveal and conceal in this gallery on war and memory.	153
Figure 5-9 Another display using the odd angles of the museum, and displaying artifacts with unique light displays. The pulls at the bottom of the cases offer additional information and interactives.	156
Figure 5-10 Shrapnel is hung on filaments from the ceiling of the case and bullets are spread out across the base.	161
Figure 5-11 In this display of prostheses and disfigurement the visitor's shadow is cast on to the display and they become "one" with the exhibit, imaging their own limbs replaced with prosthetics. Another example of Tilley's concept of participation creating perceptual intensity.	163
Figure 5-12 Mannequins shown in defense positions.....	168
Figure 5-13 US soldiers undergoing surgery after being hit with IEDs in the Middle East.	169
Figure 5-14 Bombs hung from the ceiling with bomb shelters and an interactive display	171

Chapter 1 Introduction and Background

Introduction

“The future is always uncertain but you must be as optimistic as you can. You and the millions in similar situations have a hard task to perform and a high duty. The destiny of the world lies on you all.” - David Kinley

This quote was taken from a letter from then President David Kinley of the University of Illinois, to James Kinley Stewart, a namesake and son of the president’s friend, as he prepared to be shipped overseas during WWII. Nervous about the impending deployment to the European front, James had written the family friend and mentor for advice. His letter is preserved in a local history museum in Illinois, and serves as a small representation of a much larger collection that illustrates Stewart’s life in small town America in the early 20th century through letters he sent as a young boy to his mother on their travels, until his death in Germany during the Battle of the Bulge. Where Stewart’s letters end, his story picks up again through the voice of his father and mother as they search for answers about his death at the hands of a German sniper. Stewart’s letters before the war show a carefree boy traveling the east coast of the United States with his best friend, searching for work and struggling with other coming of age challenges like girlfriends and school work. His letters grow more serious as he leaves the University,

trains at boot camp, and his time to deploy to the front lines of the war approaches. The most difficult letters to read, however, are the ones from his parents pleading for details on his death from chaplains, officers, and other soldiers who were with Stewart on the front. Dozens of letters highlight their search to find the location of his death, and maps mark his burial plot in a memorial cemetery in Belgium. In a twist of fate, Stewart who was deployed to the Belgian front and marched through to the German front, was killed by German sniper fire on December 11, 1944 at the age of 19. David Kinley, his friend and mentor that had sent him so many words of encouragement, died on December 3, 1944, only a few days earlier from health complications. Stories of war are often fraught with memories of loss and grim artifacts of heritage. Stewart's collection of objects is no exception.

In the local history museum Stewart's life is framed in the context of his family, the local community he grew up in, his time as University of Illinois as a student and his mentor relationship with the president of that university. WWII is framed in the context of the effect it had on the home front, and families like Stewart's who struggled to come to terms with the death of a child who had barely reached adulthood. In a military museum the same collection of items would be framed differently. His combat unit would be listed, his uniform would be shown with medals displayed, a replica of the weapons he used would be presented alongside his military affects, and his death would likely be described in terms of large numbers lost during the Battle of the Bulge and the successful invasion of Germany by the Allied Forces in 1944.

Material culture like the objects in Stewart's collection can give us clues about the culture that created them. His uniform could tell us about the mass production of garments, and the importance of textiles to warfare. His letters and newspaper clippings could give us windows into forms of communication that were vital during conflict. Objects and their owners can send us down the path of thousands of different stories, each one telling a unique tale and illuminating history in a different light. How those objects are presented in the museum, which items are displayed and which aren't, what story curators choose to interpret, how Stewart's artifacts fit in to larger narratives, and the use of language to describe the objects and Stewart's life can also give us insight into the culture of the museum and curators presenting them. Museums, like objects, are cultural artifacts.

Military museums are a particularly complex kind of cultural artifact, enmeshed in patriotic values, commemorative displays, and places of contact between civilian and military. They are ritualistic sites, memorials to the dead and dying and sites of events, which often included mass atrocities. They are also places where the public goes to learn historic "facts." From the inception of the earliest formal military museum, the Imperial War Museum (Cornish 2004), to modern day military museums, curators struggle with how to balance these fluid and sometimes contrary forms of representation. Military museums have complex narratives about nations, identities, and communities enmeshed with the landscape. Military museums feature clashes of scientific and cultural narratives and visual displays of social and economic power on remarkable scales. While scholars

have used historical theories and perspectives to critically analyze battlefields, monuments, and military museums for decades, anthropology has generally ignored these topics perhaps due to the discipline's avoidance of modern industrialized conflict. In recent decades though, military museums and the cultural remains of conflict have become an increasingly of interest to anthropologists and archaeologists as the material culture surrounding war offers a unique array of ethnographic and cultural data (Cornish 2004, Saunders 2004, Winter 2010).

While history, science, and art museums have rapidly adapted their collections and exhibition policies to accommodate the principles of "new museology," for the most part, military museums have rarely applied them. Many military museums embrace traditional forms of exhibition, or what might be called "the old museology," meaning they focus on science and technological advancement using a chronological and heroic narrative (Vergo 1989). Old museology is also concerned with didactic means of interpretation, where the curator possesses the unrivaled authority on subject matter within the museum. In contrast new museology challenges those old ideals. Rather, it focuses on the recontextualization of objects from their original use into museum objects, the democratization of the museum, and on a self-reflexive and self-critical analysis of power in the museum, interpretation, and visitor access and dialogue (Cameron 1971, Vergo 1989, MacDonald 2010).

In the military museum, we see evidence of old museology in displays that are made up of tightly packed cases with little interpretation. There is generally no invitation

to visitors for dialogue or reflection, but a recitation of dates and battles in chronological order. Their educational approach is didactic. Little voice or agency is given to minorities and women, who mostly serve as background to the men who fought the battles. Officers and general's stories are favored over those of the common foot soldier, and battles are explained through the use of quantitative data on warfare and battle strategies.

Museum critics, much like anthropologists, have historically paid little attention to military museums. This is partly due to their complicated nature as a memorial and their role as a site of intensive nation building narratives (Anderson 1983). Many military museums shy away from critical narratives for fear that critiquing a military museum can be seen as critiquing veterans personally or somehow permanently changing or destroying an important site for honoring their sacrifice and bravery or even disrupting public mourning (Linenthal 1996, Saunders 2004).

Due to their representative value and the narratives surrounding soldiers and conflict, military and war museums have often been perceived as sacred sites, in which a sense of pride and nationhood surround grand narratives about military acts of sacrifice, heroism, and national superiority. These elements make military and war museums problematic places for critical reflection and the implementation of new museology, which calls for more complex and nuanced interpretative methods (Vergo 1989, Macdonald 2010).

In the US, military and war museums are frequently located on military bases, and are run by their respective military branches, confounding this issue further as military museums become extensions of the military mission. The Department of Defense funds the operation of the national military museums and employs the workforce. Aerospace companies and other military-industrial complex corporations sponsor exhibitions and programs. In addition to the pressures of managing the national narrative and their authority over it, military museums often struggle with mission statements that feature military doctrine. This makes civilian engagement more complicated as civilians do not always have the ability to understand the coded language of the military community's rituals. This complexity makes creating public participation in critical analysis through engagement difficult. The museums struggle to problematize history, tell the story of their military branches, and bring a balance between the national narrative and public and personal memory.

A number of military museums, or museums that represent military history by way of their collections like the National Air and Space Museum, began to have interpretive crises in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. As new museology firmly rooted itself in other kinds of museums, scholars began to turn their focus on the broader field, seeing technology and military museums as places that could also benefit from the critical approach that new museology had introduced. The public, as well as veterans and their representative bodies, struggled with this new way of seeing and exhibiting in the museum, resulting in several major controversies. While the application of new museum

theory had always been an intensive process that was not without problems, in regards to military collections it had resulted in major conflicts that gained national attention and resulted in heated debates on the congressional floor.

These controversies spurred a new interest in how military museums interpret their collections, and how they frame history, and veterans' roles in it. In the last decade, military museums have become a major topic in the international museum community. Military museums in Europe are adding new exhibitions, altering their interpretations, and in some cases completely renovating the entire museum in order to address military and war history in a more critical light (Van der Pols 2014). This critical examination of museums has extended to scholarly journals and conferences, and the most recent International Council of Museums Conference in 2012, concerning military museums questioned whether or not war even belongs in museums. The conference addressed how war is represented in museums, how museums construct the visitor experience, and "how museums can avoid reducing death to the banal or aesthetic and the transformation of violence into a tourist attraction" (Habsburg-Lothringen 2012, 148). The last point being of acute importance now that visitors from around the world flock to Poland, Germany, and France to view sites of suffering, and attempt to "relive" World War I and World War II in the trenches and concentration camps embedded into the landscape of those nations (Saunders 2004, Winter 2013, Jarecka 2013).

The recent influx of analysis of military museums has brought critical attention to traditional models of interpretation, focusing mainly on didactic, heroic and patriotic

perspectives. This phenomenon of analysis of military museums has principally covered museums in Europe and Australasia (Winter 2013). North American military and war museums have received less attention. This is problematic given that some of the biggest military history and museum controversies of the 20th and 21st century, including the Enola Gay controversy and the Canadian War Museum strategic bombing campaign exhibit controversy, have taken place in Washington D.C. and Ottawa (Van der Pols 2014, 37). These controversies cannot be swept away and seen as errors of the past, as few have been effectively resolved. Even those that have been resolved were the result of acts or threats of government bodies outside of the museum. Museums and museum professionals within the community must be at the center of solving these problems, proactively discussing and workshopping changes to interpretation and exhibition that can avoid the end result of a closed exhibition. To do so they must find the source of these problems, the reason for disconnections with the communities they are representing and the larger issue of public anger. This is not the only challenge military museums face however, as the community and demographic they serve is frequently changing.

Military museums also struggle with how to deal with rapidly changing visitor dynamics. As time passes, significant numbers of veterans become too elderly to visit or participate regularly in the museum, and age-out of visitation (Raths 2012, 174). As the WWII generation of veterans passes on, there are an increasingly smaller number of veterans from Vietnam and post-draft era wars. To remain relevant military museums must attract new demographics of visitors. Military museums are no longer just for

military history enthusiasts or field trips for history classes, but are now sites of tourism and education for average citizens (Hacker and Vining 2013, Raths 2012, Winter 2013). This shifting demographic means that solutions that might have solved the problems of the past, the Enola Gay and the clash with veterans from WWII for example, are not necessarily solutions for engagement with the current demographic. The standby model in these museums of technological innovation, medal adorned uniforms, and glorified battle scenes may no longer be useful or engaging for a public that does not understand military strategy and battlefield techniques as core visitors of veterans once did (Raths 2013). This raises the question of whether or not museums that continue to utilize this model will be relevant or sustainable in the future.

At the same time, many of these military museums are attempting to stay relevant and financially viable by pursuing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) narratives and education. While museums and liberal arts disciplines suffer in the current economic climate, STEM fields continue to flourish. In times of crisis, where focus is on economic survivability, institutions often favor traditional and conservative models. Fears around alienating visitors or even entire demographics abound. Few are willing to risk their careers in the way Martin Harwit, director at the National Air and Space Museum during the Enola Gay controversy, and others did in previous years. But if we accept Winter's statement about "understanding war being the responsibility of the informed citizen" (Winter 2013, 150), then we must ask whether or not military museums perform their part as public service agents, bringing this information to the public in an

engaging and relevant manner, and serving as a permeable contact zone between military and civilian parties. All of these elements are important aspects of new museum theory.

This thesis undertakes a comparative study of military museums in North America and Europe in order to understand if and how new standards and new approaches to museum interpretation were being implemented in these institutions. My research focused on how exhibits did or did not follow new museology philosophies, principles and methods, how displays and interpretation techniques sought to engage the visitor in new or different ways, and how relevant the information and exhibitions were to ongoing decisions the public must engage with as their military acts at home and abroad. My research also explored the question of how military museums are exhibiting their role in society to the public, as well as educating the public on the topic of war history. This thesis critically examines how military museums in the United States and Europe are or are not following similar paths as other museums in serving their publics and providing safe spaces for difficult conversations.

Cameron (1971) stated that for most of history museums had been temples, places where curators had taught from a place of authority, providing didactic interpretation to the public, and the public had come to learn from the experts. He suggested that instead, museums might be able to transition to forums, places where curators and communities worked together to present information, create dialogue with their visitors and the public could come to participate in the exhibits in an active way (Cameron 1971). This second

model also had the potential to keep museums more engaged and relevant to their communities.

If military museums are able to successfully transition from temple to forum in the way that new museology interpretation models call for, there is the potential for new and relevant ways of engaging public participation in the topic of war and military action. With these changes, visitors can see themselves reflected in the displays rather than as third party bystanders (Simon 2010, Hanks 2012), heralding a change in the public's view of their responsibility in these actions. Military museums also have the potential to help military members and families, as well as affected public, deal with the realities of war and its consequences, creating programming that helps soldiers deal with the aftermath of war, including struggles with PTSD and the disconnect between the battlefield and home. Before discussing what military museums might be in the future, it is important we also look at their evolution through history.

The History of the Military Museum

Collections of war materials gained popularity during the colonial period as the size of the armed forces increased with exploration, contact with new communities and wars over colonial territories took place. Armies in the colonial period were owned by royals and noblemen and paid from their coffers. Soldiers fought for the glory of their individual leader rather than for the more abstract principles of nationhood and "good of the nation" morality concepts that feature in modern warfare. After battles, the treasure and loot from plundering foreign lands and crushing other royal enemies were displayed

in the palaces of royalty and the wealthy. The items were intended to illustrate the king's reach as well as the power of his armies. These collections often had no formal home or curation, but were instead part of 'cabinets of curiosities' (Giebelhausen 2011, Rath 2012).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, warehouses of weapons known as armories were sites of military exhibition. Earlier traditions of military weapon exhibits as symbolic displays of power continued (Muchitsch 2013, 9). The armories were a place to highlight heroic sacrifices and glorious battles creating a sort of "hall of fame", showing brave men who had given their all in order to protect king and country (Pieken and Rogg 2012, 163). These displays were almost entirely absent of defeat and critical reflection.

During the late 19th century, as notions of nation, nationalism and democracy took hold throughout the western world museums began to take on a more formal character. In many cases armories were transformed from simple warehouses to formal exhibition spaces. The size of the rooms and conditions were already conducive to properly exhibit the museum objects they once stored for active use. Garrisons of military activity were often home to displays of honor and valor during battle and took on a more formal role as military exhibition space (Pieken and Rogg 2012). New military exhibitions spaces, much like the national museums of the era, provided a place for those in power to define who they were and what they believed in, and became tools to communicate that information to the public (Ames 1992, Anderson 1983, Macdonald 2003).

The industrial revolution and the onset of mechanized warfare changed who participated in the war. The introduction of mass-produced weapons and uniforms meant that war became the work of the “common man” (Szacka 2013). Where previous standing armies required individual wealth in addition to the countries’ wealth, the common man could now be drafted into action. The soldiers’ weapons and clothes were mass produced and affordable. The breadth of the landscape and scope of the human cost of World War I alongside these changes in production and military tactics meant that effects of the war were felt far and wide. These changes led to a renegotiation of the human understanding of war and what it meant for a society. The need for a collective identity to make sense of what had happened and a home for their heroic narrative gave rise to an intense period of memorialization (Szacka 2013). This would eventually lead to what we now know as military and war museums, which would become much larger warehouses of the material culture of the common man (Raths 2012, Pieken and Rogg 2012).

Leaders and citizens throughout Europe were quick to realize that WWI was different from any previous military encounter. The cost in human life and need for the full mobilization of entire societies changed social perspectives on war. Every part of daily life became affected, and few escaped its pervasiveness. In addition, military museum collections were also growing rapidly with the sheer number of weapons and memorabilia being created (Winter 2013, Cornish 2004). Instead of local collections, separated into cities or local municipalities, countries began to develop bigger museums, dedicated to the military history of an entire nation.

The Imperial War Museum in England was created to commemorate war dead, and the lived experience of many who suffered from the horrors of WWI (Malvern 2000, Cornish 2004). It was the first large and all-encompassing museum to be created for the purpose of memorializing a war in its entirety. England was among the countries struggling to cope with its losses during WWI, and as such became concerned with creating some sort of physical memorial and record of the atrocities that were going on in the fields abroad and at home. A place to house all of the physical objects and material culture associated with the war became a necessity, brought on by calls from the citizenry (Malvern 2000). Letters, photographs and weaponry were gathered from the field and from donations by both the military and private sectors. The museum made plans to document every kind of weapon and even every stage of the weapon's technological advancement, choosing a systematic approach to developing the collection (Cornish 2004, 36). The Imperial War Museum at its foundation was using technology and chronology to show the advancement of weaponry, and through it, symbolically, the progression of the war.

The decree for the founding of the Imperial War Museum came before the war was over. King George V was present at the dedication and gave a speech stating:

We cannot say with what eyes posterity will regard this Museum nor what ideas it will arouse in their minds. We hope and pray that as the result of what we have done and suffered they may be able to look back upon war, its instruments and its organization as belonging to a dead past. (Malvern 2000, 181).

The need to memorialize, even in imperfect ways, was a way for the public to cope with this new version of life after war as well as to tell stories about who the armed forces were, what they represented, and how they fit in to larger narratives about nationhood (Savage 2011, Williams 2008). These new military museums established in the 19th and 20th centuries and open to the public, were created at a time when the model for museums was conventionally a place where national identities were defined (Anderson 1983, Duncan 1995, Macdonald 2003). As nations established themselves as separate entities from previous incarnations like empires and kingdoms, they used tools like museums to found their culture, creating secular temples of “sacred” objects pertinent to cultural and national beliefs (Macdonald 2003). Military museums not only participated in this model but perfected it.

While Britain was able to put all of its WWI history into the Imperial War Museum, other parts of Europe, like Germany, were still fragmented post-war and dealing with shifts in governmental leadership and strategies. The museums in those regions were still affected by the changes that WWI produced. In 1923, for example, what is now the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr went from being the Royal Saxon Army Museum to simply the Saxon Army Museum (Pieken and Rogg 2012, 163), having lost its imperial title as Germany made the governmental shift from inherited power to a more democratic governing body. However, it still retained the German state name of “Saxony” as regional differences in German culture still prevailed as an important cultural delineation.

While Europe was the primary location for WWI memorials and museums, the United States also felt the need to recognize pieces of its own contribution. WWI had been the first war that military aviation had played a role, due to the invention of mechanized flight a few years earlier. The same year the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr changed its name a small collection of military objects began accumulating at McCook Field in Dayton, Ohio. As contemporaries realized the historical value of the technology the collection moved to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio, in 1927. The first planes and technological leaps in aviation were kept safe for posterity in buildings at the location, and were added to on occasion as relevant pieces appeared. Originally part of the Army Air Force, these collections would form the basis for the National Museum of the United States Air Force when the Air Force separated from the Army and formed a separate entity (Air Force Museum Foundation: May 2014).

With the end of WWII, military museums grew exponentially in Europe and in the United States. They became a place to celebrate victory and memorialize the sacrifices and loss of life for the Allied Powers in particular. With a war that had an even larger global effect, and saw a rapid growth of technology (in military aviation alone, planes went from canvas and metal to the jet age in just the span of a little more than ten years) military museums again saw an influx of material collecting and memorialization. The U.S. and Britain worked to memorialize a victory over the Axis, and the Germans sought to deal with the horrific reality of the Holocaust, and the new experience of a

country divided by a wall and political ideology. This form of military museum persevered throughout much of the 20th century.

As the end of the 20th century approached and communities had temporal distance from major World Wars, military museums became tourist centers. In the 1980s, military museums saw a professionalization of their staff members and began to see renovations of aging buildings (Hacker and Vining 2013, 58). Significant anniversaries of D Day, Victory in Europe, and Victory in Japan passed, with celebratory memorial events being widespread throughout the U.S. and Europe. Memorialization and commemoration became a vacation activity with tourists traveling to concentration camps in Germany and surrounding countries, and taking tours of WWI and WWII battlefields throughout Europe. Places of historical importance, particularly those linked to The Greatest Generation, those who fought in and lived through World War II, were visited in increasing numbers. This was due in part, to the Greatest Generation being in their twilight years and the need for multi-generational family visits to commemorate their lives.

These locations became important places for tourists to visit in order to witness the past. (Jarecka 2013). Frequently these witnessing rituals also became part of the “never again” movement. This happened at a time when many were quick to memorialize history, particularly atrocities and other forms of difficult and conflicted history (Williams 2008). It was also during this period in the 1990s and early 2000s, when the culture wars and Enola Gay and Canadian War Museum Bombing controversies took

place causing a rupture in the authority military museums had to interpret their collections which will be discussed later in Chapter 2.

The debate as to whether or not museums can be “temples” or “forums” (Cameron 1971) that had happened in the 1970s with museums in general, was reflected in military and war museums throughout Europe in the 1980s and 1990s as they began to apply reflexive and critical approaches to their museum exhibitions (Hacker and Vining 2013). The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden took this approach to a new extreme by completely renovating the museum in a process that took almost a decade and started in the early 2000s. The renovation involved famed architect Daniel Libeskind and cost tens of millions of Euros (Pieken and Rogg 2012). The project was completed in late 2011 and was received by the public with both excitement and trepidation (Frearson N.d., Lake N.d., Lane 2008, and Spiegel 2011).

In 2012, spurred on by new interest and discussions in the field from the innovative approach the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr and other military museums were taking, *The International Council of Museums Committee of Museums of Arms and Military History (ICOMAM)* held a conference entitled “Does War Belong In Museums?” inviting military, arms and war museum curators and staff throughout the world to contribute case studies (Muchitsch 2013). Most of the case studies received were from European contexts. The gathered case studies revealed how military museums and their curators were tackling controversial subjects they had previously avoided and

were often times implementing new approaches to museology that had already long been used in other categories of museums (Raths 2012).

Today, there is increasing literature on the subject of military museums and new museology. There have been museum conferences holding sessions and addressing papers on the subjects of military museums, and topics like “sites of conflict,” “dark tourism,” and “difficult heritage.” This research tackles a variety of subjects within the military and conflict museum field, including issues of representation, memory, and ownership of heritage. Traditional models of exhibiting military history and the material culture of conflict are being challenged and innovative attempts are being made to reorient visitors with military history and make it relevant to new generations.

I undertook this research because military museums’ traditional models are being challenged, and because they have been, until recently, overlooked in the museum anthropology literature and critical analysis of museums even though military museums are one of the most popular kinds of museums in the United States and abroad, often pulling in over a million visitors a year at larger institutions. They often tackle difficult heritage and collective memories that define entire nations (Winter 2013, Saunders 2004, Macdonald 2010). Military museums are often sites of commemoration, a place where the community comes together to remember suffering and sacrifice. They are never far from death, and as such have deeply embedded meaning and rituals attached to them. Despite these rich opportunities for the application of anthropological analysis, literature in the field on modern industrialized warfare has been limited (Saunders 2004) which has

made it unsurprising that military museums have not frequently been under the lens of anthropological analysis either.

Given the important role many military museums play in their communities and for the larger national public, I believe their analysis is crucial to understanding and improving civilian-military dialogue. Moreover, military and war museums have great potential to be relevant institutions actively engaging with community needs and current affairs. The military museums may also become town halls, and safe places where controversial subjects can be discussed with other community members and veterans (Gurian 2006).

I also had personal reasons for undertaking this study because my own life has been deeply enmeshed with veterans and their communities. In writing about her own experiences as an ethnographer in Romania, Diane Freedman describes herself and her experience as a Venn diagram where her roles as widow, dancer, and anthropologist overlap (Freedman 1986, 335). In undertaking this research I found myself at the center of my own Venn diagram, one made up of anthropologist, veteran relative, and museum worker. I will try to outline that further here in hopes of further clarifying my perspective on my research.

I grew up in the shadow of the National Museum of the United States Air Force, one of the field sites used for this project, and less than a quarter mile from the edge of Wright Patterson Air Force Base. This proximity meant the military was a normal part of

life even for civilians. Pilots getting in their flying hours regularly rattled the homes in my neighborhood with passes from the C-3, school friends came and went as their parents were transferred from one base to another, and the museum served as a place for school field trips and watching fireworks on the 4th of July.

This juxtaposition means that the museum and the landscape have cultural meaning within my own life. It is a place where I learned about my cultural heritage as a child, and as I grew older it became a tourist destination for family and friends in town visiting. It is, in fact, a place where we would take my German relatives when they came to visit as it is one of the more impressive and culturally rich opportunities for heritage in Dayton. In turn, when I performed my research in Germany, it was my family who pointed out lesser-known museums like the Flugwerft Museum in Munich as places I might go to understand more about the importance of military history to their local community, and in no small part because the Flugwerft was a U.S. military base during the post-WWII era. This leads me to reflect here on the importance of social relationships to influencing what we see and how we see it, as well as on the importance of military museums as sites of contact between civilian and military lives.

It was my conversations with veterans, my grandfather and my husband among them, from so many different backgrounds and such varied experiences of war that led me to question how we interpret military history in our country. With military members making up such a small percentage of our total population, and even less of them combat veterans, I questioned how the public engaged with the history of war, where they went

to learn about it, and how they experienced it. It has also placed me, as a civilian anthropologist, in the cultural “contact zone” between civilian and military more frequently than an average citizen in the United States.

Further, having already spent some time in museums before undertaking my thesis research, and continuing to work as I researched and wrote, my research was constantly influenced by my own experiences as an interpretive guide and curatorial worker. In my research as I studied the exhibits I spoke from the perspective of a visitor, experiencing the museum as an outsider attempting to make meaning of the embodied experience of walking through the exhibit halls, around the objects, and reading through the interpretation through a phenomenological perspective. However, having written, interpreted, and curated exhibits on the history of war in my professional life, the natural bias of the curatorial mind was often involved in my way of seeing the exhibits.

In my own Venn diagram, of anthropologist, veteran relative, and museum worker I am both insider and outsider in many of these spaces. This positionality is enmeshed with my research inextricably. It is important to acknowledge this here, not only for context on my perspective, but also for that of the visitor, where each individual at the center of their own Venn diagram is influenced by their experiences and social relationships as they encounter museum exhibits.

This study, seeks to problematize military history museum exhibitions, analyze how new museology approaches are being applied, and discuss how the concept of the museum as a temple or forum first presented by Cameron in 1971, applies or not to my cases. This study also addressed the question of whether or not these museums represent memorial museums, and how the complex balance of memorial and museum was negotiated through interpretation and exhibits. I will be using the National Museum of the United States Air Force and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces, Germany) as case studies for comparative analysis in this pursuit, and support my arguments with previous studies on other military museum institutions such as the Imperial War Museum and the Enola Gay controversy at the Smithsonian.

Chapter Two, provides a background of the museums that have experienced difficulty in interpreting problematic heritage stemming from war and conflict; gives an overview of current issues in interpretation and exhibition of military history and the cultural material of war. I also examine, the role architecture can play in the military museum and critical essays discussing attempts by military museums to modernize and restructure their exhibitions with guidance from new museum theory.

In Chapter Three, Theory and Methods, I explain the theoretical frameworks that informed my study; outline my research questions; and explain why I chose my decision to choose the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (the Armed Forces in Germany) and the National Museum of the United States Air Force as my case studies

and fields sites. I also discuss my methods of data collection as well as scope and limitations.

In Chapters Four and Five, Analysis of the National Museum of the United States Air Force and Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr, I use the data I collected in my field research to analyze the National Museum of the United States Air Force and the Military Museum of the Bundeswehr. I have grouped elements of the museums and their analysis into several categories in order to make them more manageable. These categories including: Place and Architecture, Order and Layout, Objects, Text and Narrative, Bombing Exhibits – as an example of a specific exhibition that could be compared more directly, and Programming.

In Chapter Six, I compare more general elements of the museums including using the bombing exhibits as a means of more direct comparison, their mission statements, funding, and other forms of institutional representation that did not neatly fit into the categories outlined in chapters four and five. I outline my conclusions, and reflect on issues of collective memory, ritual performance, and new museum theory in military museums while focusing on the case studies of the National Museum of the United States Air Force and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr.

Before analyzing the case studies and the theories behind them, it is first important to look at the history of the military museum. In particular, addressing how military museums were established, who was memorialized in military museums, and

how they have evolved over time. We will also look at some past controversies in military museums, to see how the history of this genre of museum has effected the way curators and stakeholders approach military museums today.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

New Museum Theory

The 1970s brought about major change in the museum profession: several innovative texts questioned the social role of the museum and by the mid-1980s the movement had been defined by French theorists as “new museology.” As a critical and central component of change in the last several decades in museums, new museum theory served as the theoretical basis for this thesis. It provided the groundwork for the subject of museum politics and ideologies by questioning the role of the museum and its interaction with the community. It requires a critical look at museums’ collections, public engagement, and representation in their exhibitions to define how the museum operates (Cameron 1971, Macdonald 2003, Vergo 1989).

The emergence of the concept and term “new museology” is often attributed to Peter Vergo’s 1989 edited volume, but the movement actually began much earlier in the 1960s by a group of French museum professionals and theorists (Davis 2008). Vergo describes the new museology as a “critical discourse on the social and political role of the museum.” Vergo stated that new museology in its simplest form is “the state of widespread dissatisfaction with the ‘old’ museology, both within and outside the museum profession...what is wrong with the ‘old’ museology is that it is too concerned about

museum methods, and too little about the purpose of museums” (Vergo 1989, 2). The purpose of museums, according to new museology is to be relevant and useful to their communities, and to serve society and its development. Society and its development have shaped museums and in turn society has been shaped by its museums. Therefore, the needs of the communities and the understanding of the contents of the museum are of central concern in new museology (Vergo 1989). This is important in military museums where the museum serves as a contact zone between the military and the general public, as nearly two thirds of visitors have never served in the military (Air Force Museum Foundation 2014). Visitors need to have military codes, language, and traditions communicated to them in a way they can relate to and understand.

New museum theory posits that the museum must serve its public in order to be useful but later theorists posited that it must also use its “source communities” for the information on interpretation rather than just representatives of the culture (Brown and Peers 2003). Source communities are the communities from which the objects are gathered. In recent years, these communities have become increasingly involved in the way museums are interpreting those objects and how they frame exhibits (Brown and Peers 2003, 1). The importance of representing source communities first became an issue when Native Americans and other aboriginal groups were being represented in museums through their use of material culture in exhibits, without regard or interpretation by Native Americans or aboriginal groups. These representations lacked context for the life of the object before its entry into museums, and interpretation was often provided without

consultation with the original creators and owners of the material culture. This was problematic, as it avoided a thorough understanding of object, culture, and the people, and it created a one-dimensional perspective that was rarely inclusive and frequently disrespectful of native and aboriginal culture.

New museum theory describes the necessity of democratizing the museum, and making exhibits accessible not only to new visitors, but to all visitors. This movement has been described as part of decolonizing the museum, and Marstine summarizes it by stating that:

Theorists call for the transformation of the museum from a site of worship and awe to one of discourse and critical reflection that is committed to examining unsettling histories with sensitivity to all parties, they look to a museum that is transparent in its decision making and willing to share power. (Marstine 2008, 5).

Vergo pointed out that in the past exhibit departments focused too heavily on the physical aspects of the exhibit without enough attention to the consumers of the exhibit (Vergo 1989). This is often the case with military museums which place the majority of emphasis on large machines like planes and tanks with little context or interpretation. Vergo cited the importance of exploring ways beyond simple text to communicate with the visitor on the subject of the exhibit, as a new element in creating museums with new museological principles (Vergo 1989). Increasingly, museums make new attempts at engaging visitors with different kinds of media and interactives, from videos to artifacts that visitors can touch, to live programming within the exhibition.

New Museology critiqued representation in museums. As Sharon Macdonald summarized “It entailed particular attention to the questions of representation- that is, to how meanings come to be inscribed and by whom, and how some come to be regarded as ‘right’ or taken as given” (Macdonald 2010, 25). This critique forced museums to look inwardly at how they exercised their authorities over ‘facts’ and how they assumed the voices of those whose culture and history was represented in the museum, as well as how they presented narratives regarded as being “the” history of a particular time or people. This “reflexivity” led museums to view their exhibitions and collections as “cultural products,” and allowed them to be analyzed under the lens of the political and social contexts through which they were created (Macdonald 2010, 25). This questioning was seen by some as “unnecessary political correctness” (Macdonald 2010, 26), which was one of the reasons so many museums and exhibitions were at the center of culture wars during this era. The debate pitted those who felt they should still have authority, against the growing need to involve wider audiences in the narrative. These frictions often occur in the military museum, between veterans and historians who apply critical analysis to aspects of the war, military enthusiasts who value the “innate” value of a military object versus curators who want to contextualize the object historically and culturally with interpretation, and between those who serve in the military and those who question the military’s authority (Linenthal 1996, Macdonald 2003).

Conflict History in Museums

While new museum theory revolutionized the way museums around the world operated by democratizing access and interpretation, there were sectors that remained unchanged or that struggled to make these changes. These problematic attempts to address new museum theory in the museum were a significant part of the “Culture Wars” of the 1990s. The *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum and the *West as American Art* exhibit at the Smithsonian, puzzled the public, created private and public rifts and came into direct collision with collective public memories, as institutions attempted to reframe visitor’s approaches to African and American history through the exhibits. Many were denounced as revisionism and in the case of the *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibit, outright offensive. Most military museums, war museums, and museums that contained large collections related to war (such as the National Air and Space Museum) were typically able to avoid these problems until the Enola Gay Controversy in the early 1990s. While there were museum controversies before and after the controversy at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in 1994, the contested history of the Enola Gay B-29 Bomber served as the poster child for the difficult nature of interpreting conflict history in museums, and the wider problem of how to explain the history of Americans at war.

In 1994, the Enola Gay conflict was a clash among veterans and their supporters in congress and Smithsonian historians and staff that ran the museum. Veterans interested in seeing the plane displayed had made inquiries and requests of the National Air and

Space Museum, prompting them to put plans in motion for a new exhibit. Rather than simply implementing the usual celebratory World War II narrative, the museum chose to ask critical questions about the need for and the effects of the nuclear bombs used on Japan. In an effort to design the exhibition in line with the new ideals of museology and military history, the curators endeavored to put the plane and the atomic bomb in historical context while also addressing the cultural and social issues behind the nuclear bombings of Japan. As Kohn points out:

Well before the museum began mounting an exhibition, even before it began the expensive restoration of the aircraft, the Hiroshima bomber had already come to symbolize both conflicting perspectives on American war making – emphasizing either innovative technological achievement or the mass death of enemy civilians – and, more widely, positive and negative judgments on the American past (1996, 145).

While the Smithsonian hoped to move beyond the technological representation of the object, and place it in the historical context of the era (Linenthal 1996, 20) they faced mass opposition.

Director Martin Harwit hoped to involve stakeholders and veterans in the process of developing the exhibition in order to create an exhibit that had multivocality. After Harwit shared his ideas for the exhibition with the Air Force Association (AFA), however, both the AFA and the media at large began quickly latching on to phrases within the script that were deemed inappropriate or counter to the traditional accepted narrative of Americans in the “Good War”. The script not only violated their personal

beliefs about World War II but also threatened their authority and clout in the wider political sphere. The interpretation Harwit and curators at the Air and Space Museum presented ruptured the American collective memory about World War II as the “good war”, and the social agreement veterans had felt they made by sacrificing their lives for what they perceived as the greater good, and the sovereignty of the United States.

Ultimately, the nationalistic and celebratory metanarrative that military museums and the Smithsonian were expected to produce appeared in the National Air and Space Museum (Linenthal 1996). Opponents to the exhibit felt the U.S. was “being portrayed as spiteful” and the media began to launch a campaign against the Smithsonian that would prove to be unwinnable (Dubin 2000).

The controversy moved beyond the AFA and the media quickly, however, becoming part of the larger “Culture Wars” of the 1990s. The public view reflected the pre-new museum theory views of the National Air and Space Museum, seeing it as a sanctified temple and an authority on American pride and nationalism. Sections of the public felt that the National Air and Space Museum was too eagerly embracing “the worst elements of America’s academic culture” who were concerned with shaming the country rather than celebrating its greatness, practicing “historic revisionism” in the process (Post 2013, 2). The Smithsonian was seen by the public as a largely celebratory museum that told the tale of America as the hero of World War II (Crane 1997, Post 2013). Questioning whether a “good war” was “justly waged” through exhibiting an

iconic piece of American material culture was seen as questioning the American historical narrative at its core (Young 1996, 206). As Young asserts:

...the Smithsonian is 'our most important national museum' prominently situated on the Mall, as much a Washington Monument as the Washington monument itself, and its Air and Space division is explicitly dedicated to the celebration of American military technology. It was only when views that challenged the heroic national narrative appeared in such a sanctified public space that there was plenty of response, mostly in the form of outrage (1996, 206).

This points out not only the importance of the aircraft and the narrative, but also the emphasis on the social importance of the wider landscape of where the exhibition was taking place.

The Smithsonian's dependence on government money was particularly evident during the Enola Gay controversy. As the culture war surrounding the bomber swept through Congress, threats to the Smithsonian's funding echoed through the halls. Dick Arney, who was the House majority leader in 1995 during the controversy, was

...an outspoken critic of the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1990 he paternalistically compared artists/beneficiaries of government funding to his own college-aged daughter, declaring that both: should respect his decree 'He who pays the bills, sets the standards. (Dubin 2001, 205).

Furthermore, the AFA, who played a central role in the way the Enola Gay would be exhibited, “had tight links to the aerospace industry and this too revealed a political and budgetary agenda” (Sherry 1996, 113).

These sentiments resounded throughout Congress. Attacks from the public and the media crumbled the Smithsonian’s defenses. The exhibit was canceled. Martin Harwit resigned in an effort to keep government and aerospace money at the Smithsonian and calm public fears about the Smithsonian’s direction. As many military museums depend on government funding and politically minded corporations to keep their doors open to the public, this event was noted by many who worked in the field as an important reminder of the risks of launching potentially unpopular exhibits (Linenthal 1996).

However, demands for the display of the Enola Gay at the museum continued, and it made a temporary debut in the National Air and Space Museum’s main gallery. It was displayed with little context, and only the forward portion of the plane was completely repaired and put on display. Criticism came in droves. Air Force historian Richard Hallion dismissed the new exhibit as a “beer can with a label.” Historian Kai Bird considered it a “historical cleansing of the museum”, and a cartoon in the Boston Globe pictured an empty museum with an official announcing “We’re returning to our original mission as the air and space museum” (Boyer 1996, 116). Many veterans were unhappy with seeing the plane severed in half for display, seeing symbolism and an almost religious desecration of what they considered a sacred memorial object representing the end of a long just war (Boyer 1996, Linenthal 1996). The plane was

eventually moved to the Udvar-Hazy portion of the museum off of the National Mall, and completely reassembled. The tiny label it was afforded gave a limited history of its past, and its context in history both in and out of the museum.

This return to less complex discussion of the end of WWII, the nuclear era and the silencing of other voices, memories and interpretations of history, represented the problematic nature of implementing new museum theory in celebratory national museums like the Smithsonian, especially in regards to objects that represented victory or human sacrifice. The Enola Gay was pushed out of the national spotlight, off of American's front lawn, the national mall, and hidden away in a place that the nation could attempt to forget in order to focus instead on the celebratory narratives that the Smithsonian continues to represent (Post 2013).

The Enola Gay highlighted a significant problem that many military museums have; at the core of a discussion over any object of war you have a clash of narratives and memories, both personal and collective. The artifact becomes a symbolic representation of the people who participated in the war and the community that belongs to the nation that waged it. One of the most significant mistakes the Smithsonian made was not taking into account the importance of memory in the museum and in history. The collective memory of the Enola Gay was of a plane that dropped the bomb that Truman said ended the war and saved millions of lives. It was "truth" that the American people had accepted and lived with for 50 years (Crane 1997, 59-60). As Crane puts it:

The issue of American culpability in both cases would play a part in any historically responsible exhibit, and yet the suggestion of moral fault-finding would be an intolerable accusation to an America public which perceived itself to be ‘the good guys (Crane 1997, 61).

For the Smithsonian to attempt to reframe that context under a historical lens, with an eye towards criticism of the loss of life and the beginning of the Cold War, was to misjudge the symbolic importance of the Enola Gay to the American collective memory, and ultimately the heroic metanarrative America has about WWII. These memories were reinforced for five decades in popular culture, through films, music, and books. Even for those who had no direct memory of the event, many had assimilated memories from previous generations and through pop culture and educational outlets.

Even beyond the larger narrative about what it means to be American, by questioning the morality and justification for dropping the bombs the Smithsonian’s exhibit also created a rupture between the collective and personal memories individuals have about soldiers (Crane 1997, 59). It forced them to ask questions about the morality of carrying out the orders of the dropping of the atomic bomb, and made veterans confront questions they had no interest in approaching fifty years later after having been sure for the vast majority of their lives that they had done the right thing (Crane 1997, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013).

In 2007, a very similar controversy arose at the Canadian War Museum, surrounding the exhibition *The Allied Bomber Offensive*. This was not the first controversy at the museum, and nor the first in Canada, after the controversy in the 1980s

over the *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum. Canada, like the United States and Australia, faced its own struggles to interpret history in exhibits in national museums over issues like nationalism and colonialism. In the late 1990s, veterans lobbied against the addition of a Holocaust exhibit in the Canadian War Museum on the basis that it was “outside the Museum’s mandate because the Holocaust was not part of the history of Canadians at war” (Dean 2009, 2). The veteran lobby was successful in keeping the Holocaust exhibit out, and the victory set the stage for veteran lobbying power over museum exhibit decisions.

In 2007, the Canadian War Museum set out to interpret the history of the Allied Bombing Campaign, which was a strategic bombing campaign that involved the deaths of 10,000 Canadian airmen and 600,000 German civilians. Much like with *Enola Gay*, veterans were consulted throughout the process, but were still unhappy with the final text of the exhibit (Dean 2009). The final panel of the exhibit, entitled “Enduring Controversy” discussed the moral and ethical dilemma of the bombing campaign and questioned the effectiveness of the strategy, making it a hot button issue for veteran lobbyists (Dean 2009, 4). The museum called in four notable historians to survey the exhibit. Two of the historians felt the exhibit was largely positive and balanced but noted some objections to the final panel while the remaining historians felt the exhibition was completely balanced (Dean 2009, 5). Canadian veterans, unhappy with this appraisal, took their case to the media and the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs of the Standing

Senate Committee on National Security and Defense, mirroring the events of the Enola Gay controversy.

Like Martin Harwit at the National Air and Space Museum, the Canadian War Museum's director, Joe Guerts, resigned. The Senate forced the Canadian War Museum to make changes to its interpretation, stripping controversial interpretation questioning the decision to bomb civilians (Van der Pols 2014). The Canadian War Museum, much like the Smithsonian, challenged preconceived public understandings of WWII with its new exhibit. The interpretation came directly into conflict with heroic and patriotic collective memories held by the public and veterans. Historian Davis Dean commented on the controversy stating that "This museum is not only a forum; it is a temple. It is a historical museum, but also a 'palace of memory'" (Van der Pols 2014, 36). This further highlighted the need to resolve a critical issue in military museums; whether or not the war museum was to be memory or education, temple or forum. Criticizing the American metanarrative about World War II as the "good war" was too daunting of a task for the Smithsonian, an institution who had the funding, clout, public support, and a generally celebratory narrative (Post 2013,2). For museums with less public support and less financially stable ground under their feet, taking a risk in criticizing national narratives was too much to take on. Keeping veterans and the public happy and attendance numbers up often outweighs more philosophical discussions in the minds of museum boards whose desire to keep the museum open and financially stable is an understandable goal (Winter 2013).

Nevertheless, changes were happening both in the museum field as new museum theory became more common place and in the field of military history as attitudes towards the study had been changing incrementally for several decades. According to Raths after the 1960s military history began to change rapidly, when:

...practitioners created new names like 'New Military History' or 'Modern Military History' to distance themselves from earlier, classical military history. New methods, ideas and tools were adopted from many neighboring fields like social history, cultural history, gender history, oral history and the history of the mentalities. These additions turned military history in an often very critical, eventually post-modern sub-field of academic history (2012, 2).

Martin and Vining agree with Raths' sentiments, and state that those changes began to carry over to military museums in the 1980s. American and Canadian Museums were not the only military museums to struggle with their complicated history during the 1990s and 2000s. The Dutch met with veteran disapproval when a musician played anti-war songs at an exhibition opening at The Army Museum, as well as with the interpretation of police actions taken in the Dutch East Indies post- WWII. They were again met with sentiments that anti-war songs and questioning of Dutch East Indies police behavior was revisionary and overly critical (Van der Pols 2014). The Germans also struggled with how to interpret the site of the Nazi Rally Grounds, which Sharon Macdonald explains in her book *Difficult Heritage* (Macdonald 2008). Attempting to critically reflect on violent pasts was often seen as unnecessarily dredging up painful pasts and allowing difficult and unresolved feelings to surface in the collective memory of the public in

places where that same public sought to find self-affirming and patriotic narratives. As van der Pols asserts, the crux of the friction for these institutions lies in the fact that military history museums and collections “had gradually become professional organizations with a dual task: acting as both a museum and a memorial. Museums traditionally are ‘schools of the nation’ which have to unite society around a shared culture or a shared past (the ‘canon’)” (2014). Macdonald further outlines this institutional role of museum as nation builder, by stating that museums are also often forms of “image management” for the nation state (Macdonald 2008) a role outlined by prescribed sets of functions, while collective and individual memory is often more personal and transitory.

The Imperial War Museum in London and its branches including the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, The Imperial War Museum Duxford in Cambridgeshire, the Churchill War Rooms in London and the HMS Belfast in London, have been the subject of war museum case studies for the last thirty years. This is in part because of the size, breadth and variety of their locations, collections and interpretation. Where the Imperial War Museum North is a representative example of new museology at work in military museums, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) in London still stands as an example of early 20th century military museum interpretation. IWM London is making progress however, implementing measures in new exhibits that explore new aspects of military history and attempt to modify traditional approaches. For example, the IWM London has been lauded for its modernization and execution of a Holocaust exhibit,

which highlights the “personal nature of the objects” and humanizes the Holocaust victims (Hanks 2012, Winter 2013). But it has also been criticized for its “clichéd” Hollywood-like display of the *Blitz* and the *Trench Experience* exhibitions (Winter 2013). In the early 2000s, it was still considered primarily the site of “traditional commemorative displays” (Whitmarsh 2001, 6). While some sections of the museum attempt to apply new museum theory to their exhibit development and narratives, other parts of the IWM remain largely untouched, serving as historical relics of the traditional military museum model.

Critics take note of the new interpretation at the IWM in recent years, with exhibitions like *In Remembrance* (Winter 2013, 161) cited as efforts to modernize the museum. Revising the entirety of the museum, however, is a work in progress with the public divided about which form, old or new, it prefers to encounter. These criticisms highlight the fact that some museums go too far in trying to reframe and reconstruct their approaches to military history, constructing exhibits that distract and dismember the history of war into something kitsch and commercial rather than offering new methods to engage visitors in thoughtful critical analysis (Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013).

The Imperial War Museum North in Manchester has received numerous criticisms, particularly directed at its architecture. The museum was designed by the well-renowned architect, Daniel Libeskind. The IWM North has been defined as ostentatious and over as well as under planned in its execution. Concerns have also been voiced over the suitability of the structure of the building for the objects within, echoing criticisms

made about other Libeskind buildings (Greenberg 2008, Hanks 2012). Daniel Libeskind's architecture has been used as a method to symbolically recreate and redefine military museums and museums that commemorate or engage with traumatic pasts like the Jewish Museum in Berlin, the Imperial War Museum in Manchester, and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden. However, it may be time to revisit whether this method is valid as new or groundbreaking. Instead it may be a new traditional model in which all military museums take a similar form of architectural disruption in an attempt to remain relevant.

In contrast to the previous examples, museums primarily concerned with the history of World War I tend to fair better in the eyes of critics. Whitmarsh wrote a favorable review of the In Flanders Field Museum in Ypres, Belgium, noting that it treated soldiers as individuals and focused on the "everyday necessities of life" that were crucial to life during the war for soldiers and civilians alike (2001, 13). Winter also holds up the Historical Museum of the Great War-Peronne in France, despite visitor complaints, as another important example of the new methods of interpretation. The Museum features artifacts displayed horizontally on the ground at visitors' feet, rather than in the traditional manner of vertically in walled cases (Winter 2013, 160). This approach forces visitors to view and reflect on the personal objects of the soldiers as they might have been see during the war, either below ground level in the trenches or on the ground in death. This approach to displaying objects restructures the visitors contact with the object allowing them to view the object outside of the elements they typically expect

when visiting a war museum. Winter notes that these kinds of “stylistic displays” counter the “voyeuristic dangers of representing war as thrilling” (2013, 160-161).

Approaches that break with traditional models of military history exhibitions create a subtle but effective rupture with nationalistic and heroic motifs, showing the death and sacrifice caused by war through other lenses – those that are bleaker and harsh, conjuring emotions that are more akin to sadness and regret rather than awe and admiration. In Europe, military museums are able to use the historical memory of WWI and the narrative of the communal suffering of the continent in order to create a new metanarrative of unity. They are able to do this without taking away the dignity of the soldiers. Instead of dishonoring the dead, they give them more presence, more words and more interpretation, when they previously had only been uniforms and medals that were otherwise silent. Determining how to approach exhibitions from new angles is not always easy, as museums must consider how their containers, or buildings, will allow for it, what budgets they have available, and what their visitors might think.

Military Museums and Architecture

Museum architecture is an integral part of the overall visitor experience as well as a marker for the museum’s place in the city and the community. The museum’s structure becomes part of the larger narrative that the museum presents to the visitor (MacLeod 2013). It becomes the largest artifact in the museum’s collection, outwardly and

aesthetically expressing narratives that the visitor can expect to find inside the museum (see also Arnold-de Simine 2013, 49). From the location where a museum is placed within the city, to the surrounding grounds, to the physical structure of the building, key signals and communications occur. For example, at the Jewish Museum in Berlin, broken and seemingly haphazardly shaped hallways and exhibits invoke the embodied experience of confusion and horror that the Jewish population felt. The Nuremburg Rally Ground Museum attempted a similarly disorienting architecture with tall glass elevators and glass walkways that make visitors feel disoriented and uncomfortable (Macdonald 2008). The glass floors and elevators give a sense of vertigo and the lack of safety that metal and wood floors do. It reminds visitors of their tenuous position several stories above the ground floor, and makes their every movement visible to others in the museum, taking away the sense of privacy that we might otherwise feel behind solid walls. The Bilbao Museum, perhaps the most famous example of museums changing the physical and social landscape of a city, employed a unique architectural look and innovative exhibits to reinvigorate interest and tourism in the city.

Museum buildings more and more have become jewels for display in a city's repertoire of cultural and intellectual offerings. Architecture has been used to change the landscape of the city, changing public perceptions and creating community centers where the public can gather. The buildings have revitalized cities and the use of star architects in this manner became commonplace. Star architects have designed museums use a variety of techniques to make museum architecture a talking point, gathering place, and

symbolic or reflective of the landscape or culture. Museum designers use elements that mimic the surrounding elements or terrain, as with the Milwaukee Art Museum whose shape is meant to mimic the ships on the lake the museum sits beside or the Denver Art Museum whose peaked architecture imitates the outline of the mountains against the sky. Other museums stand out completely from their surrounding landscape, creating a rupture with the traditional and the expected, such as the Akron Art Museum. The National Museum of Art in Osaka, Japan for example, utilizes steel beams and protrusions create a stark difference between the museum and the architectural language of the rest of the city. This separation creates a sense of importance around the museum, emphasizing its uniqueness and drawing visitor and local attention to it as a statement piece for the city.

Museums with unique architecture have been built to draw tourists and visitors into cities or areas of cities that otherwise find themselves barren of foreign visitors. The often cited Bilbao case, whose creation in an otherwise derelict industrial city, brought in a major influx of visitors, and reinvigorated the city culturally and economically became the model for other museums and cities, lending its name to the trend the “Bilbao Effect”. Economic interests have served as a major factor in decisions made by cities and museums to invest in new wings, branches and refurbishments. These new additions are popular and draw in competitions between major architects and firms. Some argue that these architectural interests have gone too far, serving economic interests more than museum missions, at times even ignoring the basic function of the museum (MacLeod 2013, 32). MacLeod considers that “Museums are often built, and their architecture

utilized for economic purposes rather than community led developments” and this can become problematic when museums get drawn into “economic elites... struggles for power” (MacLeod 2013, 28).

Some argue that the architecture of the building and the surrounding landscape can influence and inform museum visitors and even those who do not visit, giving those who have no interest in the collections a chance to experience the message on the outside (Greenberg 2008, 195). Disagreements over museum architecture frequently erupt with some seeing the modern designs and enlightened takes on the larger purpose of the museum, while others find them garish and distracting.

Cities, museum boards, and architects make attempts to renovate the museum and to change how we see museums. Disorienting and unexpected artistic takes on architectural design disrupt the traditional methods of the past. Particularly, it upsets past notions in line with older Western museum styles of creating Neo-Classical Roman and Greek architecture as a means of communicating authority (Cameron 1971, Conn 2010). These new approaches represent changes in how museums create their interpretation from the outside in, using space as a means to renegotiate visitor expectations and visitor relationships with the art and artifacts inside the museum.

Memorials also use space, structure and landscape to communicate and set visitor expectations and help form the relationship between the memorial and the memory the memorial represents. While they were once seen as “pure” representations, memorials

are now seen as complicated representations of the past where the community remembers and reshapes those memories in the present. When Vietnam veterans won their right to a memorial on the D.C. memorialscape, a young college student from Ohio, Maya Lin, presented the winning architectural design. Breaking with the heroic and stereotypical memorial tropes of the day, the Vietnam memorial was a critical reflection on the way that Vietnam veterans had been treated during and after the war. The altered landscape, and the absence of what was considering traditionally heroic landscape, the columns and grandness of the WWII memorial in D.C., for example, renegotiated the relationship between the public and the memorial landscape. Consequently, this renegotiated the relationship between the public and the Vietnam Memorial, allowing the war to be both something to be remembered with dignity but also something that could and should be viewed with critical lens towards the history that brought it about. This change in memorialization, a paradox where the memorial could both remember the veteran and criticize the war, spurred even more thinking about change in military memorialization.

Military museums are not immune to this debate about the critical analysis of war in a place where veterans are remembered and memorialized. More than one celebrated architect has lent a designing hand in the process of reinterpreting and reshaping the structure of the museum. Architects and museums have often come under fire for these new architectural interpretations. Where Maya Lin caused a new era of memorial building, rupturing with the past and creating a new paradigm of critically reflective memorials, other architects building upon her inspiration have repeated this rupturing

process so often that it became the “new normal” or new traditional rather than revolutionary. Libeskind designed both the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, as well as the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr, and Raymond Moriyama designed the Canadian War Museum. These architects have shaped the buildings to represent elements of conflict and war. At the Imperial War Museum North, the building is broken up into separate “shards” representing the elements of earth, air and water, the environments in which battles took place through the branches of army, air force, and navy. Libeskind used them to symbolize Paul Valery’s concept of “order and disorder” (Hanks 2012, 27). This comes into contrast with Moriyama’s grass-covered building, with its symbolic “war to peace” walk (Greenberg 2008), at the Canadian War Museum where the intention is more philosophical than literal. These aesthetic and architectural interventions also run the risk of losing their effectiveness when the public has no context or interpretation, and sees the architecture more as architectural blight or disruption, rather than a theoretical and philosophical talking piece.

Many other military museums have not had the star architect treatment, however, and were placed in older buildings that had previous economic and practical uses and were modified in order to accommodate museums. The flagship of the Imperial War Museum collection in London is housed in what was at one time London’s Bedlam, originally the Bethlehem Memorial Hospital – once an asylum. The In Flanders Field museum is a reconstructed medieval commercial cloth hall, and the Military History

Museum of the Bundeswehr, though transformed by the recent Libeskind addition, is an old armory building.

The building is the foundational element to the construction of military exhibits, and ultimately, the visitor experience (Arnold-de Simone 2013, Cameron 1971, Macdonald 2008, MacLeod 2013). Whatever the container, old or new, the architecture of the military museum, plays an essential role in exhibiting artifacts and ultimately in the visitor's experience. The older stately buildings that recall the neoclassical secular museum temples of the 18th and 19th century recall traditional social codes and rules of visiting museums, where chronology, order and facts dominate the visitor experience. Whereas the newer museums, with their jagged lines and their uneven walls and floors, can disorient the visitor making them uncomfortable and disoriented as they experience the museum. They encounter new experiences and are prepared through the architecture to experience new models of museum engagement, expecting an alternative narrative as the architecture provides an alternative container for it.

Military Museum Visitors

While traditionally the core visitors of military museums are often white males of military age, many of them with a military background, over time “the visitorship of the museums became more and more civilian” (Raths 2012, 3). In Europe, this new increase in civilian visitors with little experience in military history or practice happened between 1969 and 2011. It was during this period that many of the larger European countries such as Germany, Britain and France, abandoned compulsory military service (Raths 2012). In

order to connect with their new audience, military museums had to change tactics in the way they interpret history, display artifacts and educate the public. This was not simply a European problem. In countries like Canada “which have large immigrant populations from all over the globe, the detailed histories recounted in the exhibitions of national war museums are alien to growing segments of the population” (Greenberg 2008, 183). As a result, military museums sought ways to engage these new visitors and remain relevant to their communities. This meant that curators looked to their front lines, interpretation and exhibitions, to make those initial changes.

Changes in exhibition were driven by this change in the demographics as well as by the ongoing professionalization of the museum field. Universities and museums as well as the public questioned traditional military museum practices in Europe and curators turned a critical eye towards their interpretation of war and military collections. Different museums chose different solutions to this new challenge. For example, the Imperial War Museum in Britain left old sections of the exhibition that were popular with traditionalists, and added new sections that were modernized and critical allowing the visitor to experience both forms of interpretation, and creating areas where both kinds of visitors could feel comfortable (Raths 2012).

Before it's possible to make visitors comfortable and engaged with military history it is necessary to analyze visitor motivations for military sites. Jarecka studied those motivations and saw that the most compelling were: “the feeling that a given place is unique,” “the opportunity to touch history,” “they get the chance to commemorate,”

“has the chance to create one’s own history of the site,” and finally “the hedonism associated with consumption” (Jarecka 2013, 157). These motivations which revolve around authenticity and the importance of performance of the past as a link to historical events and to experiencing that history today are critical to the analysis of memorials and military museums. The museum building and the collections create a memorialized landscape in which the visitor can travel back and engage with that history, embody those experiences, and insert the historical and collective memory into their own personal memories.

New visitors brought personal and collective memories of war, patriotic values, and a variety of motives stemming from personal identities and perspectives. These new visitors presented a challenge for military museums in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Curators began utilizing ideas proposed by new museum theorists, architectural interventions, and fresh exhibit and interpretive techniques in order to engage with these visitors and establish relationships with the wider community. They sought to improve the military and civilian relationship as well, sometimes with success and other times with harsh critique. These new approaches to exhibiting military history were used extensively in the Imperial War Museum: Manchester, and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr. Where some museums implemented these in small measures, changing an exhibit or an education program to engage with new theories and visitors, other museums, like the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr opted instead for a complete overhaul to the architecture, collections, and exhibits. Museums

experienced a variety of public reaction and limited to resounding success with these new approaches. Regardless of the result, implementing new museology and critical reflection in military museums became a painstaking process that involved the measuring and weighing of theory, stakeholders, and other critical factors such as time and money.

Implementing New Museology in Military Museums

Born of war armories and memorials erected by hereditary rulers, earlier military museums often lacked critical reflection (Pieken and Rogg 2012). They remained insulated from new museology and other changes in museum practice due in part to their core visitors, which were often military enthusiasts and veterans. Public expectations of celebratory and patriotic narratives and collective memories also drove interpretation that was more traditional. Even as new museology took hold in other museums, military museums were seen as complicated spaces that were both museum and memorials, and often curators deferred to the memorial concept rather than attempting to negotiate the difficult ground of contextualizing and interpreting events and individuals that were remembered in that space. In many cases this was manifest by providing little to no interpretation or utilizing technological and chronological narratives in order to avoid social and cultural concepts entirely (Hacker and Vining 2013). New museum theory often required institutions to face difficult realities like outdated exhibitions, marginalized voices, and giving up authority in order to create dialogue with their communities. Merging these concepts with difficult heritage, painful collective memories

of loss, and the authoritative narrative of the military proved complicated at best and disastrous at worst.

The wars of the 20th century tore apart the fabric of Europe. This resulted in painful memories that many people struggled to come to terms with. Many wanted to find ways to memorialize those historic events as they gained temporal space from them, in order to put them to rest and also so that they could also be free to forget (Raths 2012). As Assmann and others assert, remembering and forgetting are mutually dependent (2011). In order to deal with past traumas, the ability to move on and resume normal life often involves rituals of remembering and forgetting. The authority to tell the story of the history of conflicts in military and war museums were seen as belonging to generals and military historians rather than as the heritage or concern of the general public. As Raths states:

With growing temporal distance to the wars that created them, these collections of military technology were more and more considered as ‘military museums’ by the public. As a consequence, two characteristics were firmly attributed to military museums by the public: Firstly, military museums were considered as inherently positive and therefore uncritical in their views on the military and therefore seen as active boosters of military and national tradition building. Secondly, military technology, trophies, tactics and the decisions of great men on battlefields were considered to be the natural topics of a military museum (2012, 2).

The idea that military museums can freeze time and meaning for the future as memorials do is faulty because it not only assumes that memorials are objectively pure,

but that museums and memorials are not fluid in meaning and representation, changing with time, distance and memory (Macdonald 2003). In fact, military museums are often imbued with many of the same narratives that memorials are and represent the mindset, collective memory, and cultural identities of their time and place in history (Saunders 2004). Memorials and military museums are products of their time period, the cultural, political and collective narratives of an era, that change as their exhibits, curators, and visitors change. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s the temporal proximity of World War II defined the exhibitions of military museums as places of remembrance and forgetting. The later 20th century saw additional changes through the tension of the Vietnam War, new academic approaches within military history, and temporal space from the “good war,” WWII. The military history field became more self-critical and engaged with new areas of study that had been previously ignored by the discipline, including new attention to aspects of social, cultural and gender issues (Raths 2012, 3) in the context of military museums.

This reflexivity spurred new attitudes towards collections and exhibitions by curators, but also museum educators (Macdonald 2011, Vergo 1989). Problems began to arise, however, as they attempted to implement these new approaches. They could no longer simply state facts about weaponry and the battlefield, but instead would need to allow the visitor to question the history and the objects they were viewing (Raths 2012). This would require giving up a certain amount of authority, which was difficult for a museum honoring an institution with authority at the base of its existence. As a result,

many military and war history museums stalled in their implementation of these new ideals.

Some military museums broke off from these old forms of interpretation, however, such as the Imperial War Museums, to begin setting examples that other military museums could follow (Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013). The military museums that began implementing these changes and received critical and international attention for doing so, were primarily located within Europe. The earliest examples of these case studies featured European museums almost exclusively with a focus on English and Belgian museums (Cornish 2004, Saunders 2004, Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013). Military museums in the United States received little attention, and were generally silent on the subject of implementing new museum theory principles in their exhibitions. This dichotomy led to questions of why and how these changes were taking place in one region of the Western World and not the other.

New Approaches to Exhibiting Military Collections

The Imperial War Museum North in Manchester and the Military History Museum in Dresden, alternatively chose to revolutionize their entire approach to display and interpretation, with new exhibitions that could be described as both “avant-garde playgrounds” and revolutionary new approaches (Pieken and Rogg 2012, Raths 2012). Both museums hired architect Daniel Libeskind to transform their appearances, bringing

in the architecture of the building as one of the largest pieces of exhibition. His reputation for defining the space where traumas are remembered and confronted through architecture was critical in their choice. Libeskind would be the architect that many museums used to raise their profile and a key interpretive force for others that were struggling with a way to present difficult history with new approaches. He was brought in to help break with past narratives on the subject. The curators and exhibit planners broke with the traditional chronological approach in many of their exhibitions, choosing instead to interpret themes of experiences (Pieken and Rogg 2012) in order to reorient the visitor's experience with war. The tight hallways and disorienting spaces created by the slanting walls sought to give the visitor the experience of the disorientation of war.

Winter notes though that exhibitions that attempt to recreate certain experiences of war or bring the visitor into the past must be handled carefully. While it can provoke intense feelings and critical thought, it can also pretend to give the visitor an experience that is impossible to achieve in a museum: the first person experience of war (Winter 2013). Winter also warns against exhibitions that are designed with voyeuristic tendencies in mind, as they are often sought out by those who seek the thrill of war and combat (Winter 2013, 161). This criticism is something that many military museums that seek to implement new museum principles, inviting community participation and engagement with the past struggle to accomplish successfully (for further discussion see Chapter 3).

Other less emotionally stirring changes in military exhibition have happened as well. Military museums have moved towards the use of fewer and smaller objects (Pieken and Rogg 2012, Raths 2012), a change that may seem inconsequential, but has a rather widespread effect on interpretation. With fewer objects on display the visitor's experience changes in several ways: they are no longer overwhelmed by sheer numbers. They are able to spend more time with and read more about each object, and the museum begins to look less like an armory or weapons storage facility and more like a museum. Smaller objects, however, may not have the same "shock and awe" value of larger weapons and vehicles such as tanks and planes that can overwhelm the visitor. Smaller objects may become more relevant to the visitor still because they may be objects that are or can be used in daily life. Furthermore, smaller objects require smaller display cases allowing the visitor to actually approach and study the object rather than standing behind miles of velvet rope (Pieken and Rogg 2012, Raths 2012, Winter 2013). It humanizes the exhibition, taking it from gigantic metal structures to a consumable level. According to Winter and Raths, the shrinking of the military museum and de-emphasis on technology results in the opening up of the museum to a wider demographic, including those without prior military knowledge (2013 and 2012). This change takes the museum from a temple, a place where only a few hold the specialized knowledge capable of understanding and discerning the "truth," to a forum where knowledge is accessible to all, and visitors have a say in the understanding and interpretation of war and military conflict.

New approaches are subtle ways of engaging the visitor and democratizing the museum, opening its doors to new visitors and community without tackling the dramatic shifts in narratives that could result in collision courses with public memories. These were safer ways of engaging with new museum theory in the military museum. This practice paved middle ground, and set military museums closer to the implementation of new museology principles. This was particularly the case with museums like the Imperial War Museum.

However, many military museums did not opt to make these changes and instead stuck to traditional models. Even those that did engage with the superficial aspects of changing their museum to make it more welcoming to new demographics, overemphasized high tech displays of the experience of war or focused heavily on one aspect rather than taking a holistic approach. For example, many military museums rely heavily on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) programming to engage school groups coming in their doors and offer educational opportunities beyond chronological history lessons. However, STEM narratives careful sidestep more difficult conversations about soldiers, state agency and the consequences of war. This is not surprising as STEM is a popular method of education today, with some schools switching over to it entirely. STEM narratives allow the machines of war, planes and tanks, to be viewed through the heroic lens of overcoming the world around us through scientific method and principles. It is important then to revisit military museums, their exhibits, and their curators as products of their cultures. Viewing military museums through

anthropological theory will allow us to see them through a new lens that allow us to not only reflect critically on war, but on the military museum as well. With these theories and methods, I aim to break down and critically analyze the metanarratives of patriotism and exceptionalism that may serve as barriers to the military museum being engaged with new museology and with new visitors.

Chapter 3 Theory and Method

Anthropology of and in Museums

During the mid-1980s, changes began happening in the museum field and in anthropology: scholars introduced the idea that the museum could become a field site for ethnographic research. This was the result of the post-colonial critique of anthropology, where anthropologists began seeing themselves as complicit in the establishment of colonial power and at times even contributing to it through the gathering of information and the subjugation of peoples (Asad 1973, Kreps 2003, 4). It manifested perhaps most visibly in museums where cultural material was brought back from travels throughout the world, ordered, cataloged, and placed behind glass for public viewing. The practice was not only problematic, but frequently representational of the collecting institution's culture as much or more than the culture being presented in "glass boxes" (Ames 1992). As anthropologists turned the gaze to themselves they began to see the concept of museum as a cultural construct and a material representative of Western culture, and thus useful as a field site for ethnographic research (Kreps 2003, 4). Scholars called on anthropologists to use this new framework and to apply anthropological theory to museums, analyzing them with a critical and reflexive lens, the same way that they would any other culture or cultural artifact.

In this application of anthropological theory, museums were deconstructed as artifacts of imperialism (Ames 1992). They were seen as houses where the reigning social class and national narrative took history and other cultures, processed them through their own social lenses, formed them into exhibitions and presented them to the public. Museums did this in ways that Ames described as cannibalistic and capitalistic in nature (Ames 1992, 20) serving the aims of what were typically the higher socio-economic classes, and presenting a national narrative that was in accordance with their visions and goals.

The postcolonial critique of museums informed the anthropology of museums in its critique of the institutional structures and historical processes of the collection of cultural material (Kreps 2003, 4). As indigenous populations were empowered to present their views, museums quickly recognized problems with representation in exhibitions and the museum in general. Stories about cultures were being told from the perspective of the colonizers, rather than from the original culture. This often led to errors in interpretation, misconceptions, and outright abuses (Ames 1992, Simpson 2001).

For military museums this was particularly the case, as they were born out of royal armories, and managed by military elites in the context of nationalism and statehood. They were the temple through which military leaders could communicate their prowess, supremacy and victory over other nations. Museums were often extensions of or intertwined with their countries' armed forces and were one of the first lines for contact with other cultures. In many cases it was the military that gathered the collection of

cultural material from those on the other side of the battlefield or the homelands of the countries they fought in. Whether formally or informally, the taking of souvenirs through force or purchase is a long running tradition that continues to exist. As militaries spread through other countries and brought loot home, the items went into cabinets for private and eventually public display (Simpson 2001, Tawadros 1990).

Unlike other kinds of museums which have for the most part strained to get away from these narratives in an attempt to become more sensitive to the representation of others, military museums still frequently interpret other people's culture and motives unapologetically, giving little to no voice to those they represent. The United States for example often has displays of Japanese and German planes, bombs, knives and guns in WWII military museums. They are frequently considered "war booty", items taken from surrendering or deceased enemy soldiers and brought back as trophies, creating at the very least a complicated and sometimes brutal context for the artifacts. Often there are items that are civilian as well: pieces of propaganda, art and kitsch brought back from the home front, and oral histories of how the people in those lands interacted with them. These pieces, much like the collections of the colonial era, are divorced of their cultural context and presented as relics of a bygone era, rather than as contextual items with a place in their own political, social and cultural history. Many of these items are accompanied by narratives of aggression or misbehavior that forced the military to intervene, as patriarchal colonists might have, and by association, relieving the collector of any guilt for having taken the objects from prisoners or war or deceased combatants.

While today such behaviors are illegal for American soldiers to take part in, the weapons of Vietnamese soldiers and Germany helmets continue to sit on the shelves of military museum displays. The narratives associated with them continue to persist, especially in the United States where as a “superpower”, the country is expected to steward, guide, and discipline countries around the world they deem out of sync with American cultural, economic and governmental norms.

These traditional narratives that favor celebratory patriotic narratives and focus on American exceptionalism can be difficult to overturn. Many members of the public enjoy seeing items that have been brought back from the frontlines, and there is a certain thrilling and triumphant voyeurism in viewing a Nazi flag that has been removed from an S.S. officer’s possession. Visitors could be upset with their removal, seeing it as a present day criticism of veterans who took the items in the past. As we saw with the Enola Gay and other controversies, upsetting museum stakeholders can create financial hardship and even threaten the existence of the museum entirely.

Politics, Economy and Military Museums

In new museology, issues of political economy and economic concerns were tackled in the museum. This has inspired anthropologists to study how economics and politics influence museum approaches, for example, on how different stakeholders outside of the museum such as corporate sponsors determine, directly or indirectly, narratives in museums. It is important to consider how much museums much rely on increasing visitor numbers in order to stay open and operate. The need for museums to be

sites of social engagement and entertainment, in order to be economically viable became a key point of discussion. It begged broader questions of how museums could fund themselves, and how this funding would affect their “curatorial autonomy” when they were subjected to the ‘ideology of consumerism’ (Ames 1992, 28-30). Analyzing how the museum could serve both the capitalist needs of the institution by creating exhibitions that would sell tickets and serve to engage corporate sponsorship, while at the same time avoid alienating or exploiting the classes whose material culture and history was exhibited in the museum, was a critical point of discussion in new museology and the anthropology of museums (Ames 1992, 29). As armed forces were often funded through departments of defense, so were their museums, but issues of corporate sponsorship and the need to entertain audiences and maintain visitor numbers to justify their existence were just as critical to them as they were to other kinds of museums.

Often military museums are a part of the government and military bodies, subject to many of the same funding sources and boundaries as other government entities. They must regularly justify their existence to the broader public, and in an era where entertainment and reaffirmation of the success of the country is important, military museums are often found to be relying on exhibits that entertain, awe, and confirm national narratives that are positive and patriotic (Post 2013, Winter 2013). This as Winter puts it, calls on military museums to make “Choices of appropriate symbols and representative objects, arrayed in such a manner as to avoid controversy especially

among veterans, to hold the public's attention and to invite sufficient numbers of visitors to come so that bills can be paid" (2013, 23).

In many military museums additional financial support comes in the form of sponsorship by local and national corporations with philanthropic budgets. These corporate sponsorships often come in the form of corporations involved in the military industrial complex, a nebulous network of corporations that make up the research and development block of scientific and technological advancements for the military. They are often responsible for producing the tech, weapons, and armor that the military uses in order to accomplish its missions. This makes the corporations military adjacent, and understandably invested in the narratives that are being told about the military to the public.

In the case of military museums, the stakeholders are typically the general public and members of the military. However, the insertion of corporations from the military industrial complex into the operations of the museum complicate many of the narratives. This creates complicated layers of enmeshed relationships that are not always laid bare to the public through interpretation, exhibitions and programming. This can make transparency difficult to achieve, an element Shelton notes as important to new museological trends (2011, 77). In a culture that is already untrusting of the military industrial complex and its motives politically and economically, this has the potential to create problematic relationships and interpretation in an otherwise public museum. They

also run the risk of alienating communities or failing to engage with them in an effort to gain funding rather than engage in dialogue and the democratization of the museum.

Museums in the 18th and 19th centuries were institutions nations used as guardians and caretakers of the national heritage, going so far as to define and explicitly curate the national narrative within the museum walls. Benedict Anderson, in his well-known book “Imagined Communities,” considered how museums were one of the technologies nations used to promote a sense of community and nationalism cited their use as a critical tool for the imagined community of the nation-state. A place where stories, objects, and information about what the nation was, is, and planned to be in the future could be gathered and formed into a coherent whole, that the public could readily access (Anderson 1983). A museum became an important artifact of the culture it existed within, where the public could go to perform rituals and engage with collective memories of who they were as a community. Handler, emphasized this by stating that museums were crucial to having a national identity (1988). As Macdonald summarized “Museums, already established as sites for bringing together of significant ‘culture objects’, were readily appropriated as ‘national’ expressions of identity, and of the linked idea of ‘having a history’ – the collective equivalent of personal memory” (2003). This was particularly so with military museums, where the narrative is manifest in nationalist pride, heroism, and the representation of the military as the will of the nation at home and abroad. Military museums provide an ethnographic case study apt for insight into the

heart of a country's metanarratives, collective memory, and culture seen through material culture and exhibition.

Museums as Sites of Collective Memory

Museums are sites where collective memory is constructed and given a physical presence in museums. In recent years, memory, particularly the idea of collective memory, has become crucially important to the study of the history of war. It has not only been important in terms of theory and analysis, but also in terms of the "memory boom" going on throughout the Western World, and particularly in the United States where a number of memorials have been erected around the importance of remembering (Williams 2008, Winter 2013). Military museums have become part of the memory boom as well, with new museums opening in the 20th century as military bases closed due to government cutbacks in the 1980s and 1990s as well as all branches of the military working towards erecting their own museums in the United States. In Europe, small and large museums have opened or were renovated in order to engage with and renegotiate European and national collective memories about WWI and WWII. Collective memory is a critical element in military museums, as one of the central parts of most military museum's missions are the act of memorialization. Before analyzing collective memory's role in museums though, it is important to understand collective memory as a concept.

The idea of collective memory was first posited by Maurice Halbwachs in the early 20th century and based on the scholarship of Emile Durkheim (Halbwachs 1992, Winter 2010.). Collective memory is the idea that memory could be something that

belonged to more than one individual; that it could become something that a group or community remembered, and that these memories could influence the way people viewed their history (Halbwachs 1992). Halbwachs warned that the collective memory was an important framework for society, and that a lack of it could “induce changes in personal memory and even forgetting” (Assmann 2010, 36). In addition to being an important framework, Halbwachs also tells us that memory “is culturally formed and mediated, and therefore shares the characteristics of other cultural constructs” (Arnold-de Simine 2013, 21).

Pierre Nora built on these ideas of collective memory, while theorizing that memory and history were separate entities, going so far as to say they were in “fundamental opposition”, because memory was a living entity that constantly evolves, while history is an element of the past that is “imperfect and reconstructed” (Nora 1989, 8). Nora is not alone in analyzing this relationship between memory and history. While there are historians on either side of the debate, the vast majority of scholars can at least agree that the introduction of the importance of memory has complicated the field of history. If history is supposed to be a recounting of events and facts, then memory, which is subjective, creates problems. Chris Lorenz states that it is a given that “the claim of academic history to be ‘objective’ is damaged beyond repair, the ideal of ‘resurrecting the past’ must be abandoned for a systematic reflection on the representation forms of history” (Lorenz 2010, 70). Lorenz also cites that this movement has been in place, similar to the movement in museums towards a new museology, since the 1970s because

multiculturalism, culture wars and identity politics had come to the forefront (Lorenz 2010, 69). History is scholarly analysis, subject to the biases and memories of the scholars that record the events and “facts”. It is less fact and more a remembering, a written record of the collective memory; one that is both affected by the telling of those who experienced it, and further complicated by those who analyze and interpret it. Halbwachs also pointed out that there is no clear dividing line between individual memory and collective memory, but rather an interplay between the two, where collective memory is based on a multitude of individual memories brought together, and individual memory is formed and shaped by collective memories of the group (Arnold-de Simone 2013, 20, Halbwachs 1992).

Jay Winter, one of the most prolific writers on the subject of war history and memory, has presented collective memory as a performance (2010). He posits that it is a potential way of reconciling these problems within the field, emphasizing that “respecting the multiplicity of ways in which the past is performed” can create a better military museum and introduce democratizing principles into the museum. According to Winter, memory performed is a key element of collective memory, because

...performance of memory is both a mnemonic device and a way in which individual memories are relived, revived, and refashioned. Through performance, we move from the individual to the group to the individual, thereby reconfirming the insights of Maurice Halbwachs eighty years ago on the social framework of remembrance (2010, 11).

Even though Winter agrees that memory creates complications for the field of history as it has traditionally presented itself, he disagrees with the concept that “history and memory are set in isolation” (Winter 2010, 12). According to Winter, history and memory play an inseparable role, combing and feeding off of one another in a loop that helps us know and understand our past. He puts it most plainly when he states that “History is memory seen through and criticized with the aid of documents of many kinds – written, aural, and visual. Memory is history seen through affect” (Winter 2010, 12). This is an important point, as these social memories produced by conflict and shared past histories are also the very things that can drive entire groups of people to go to war in the first place. If we are to understand the cultural reasons that drive people to go to war, to memorialize it and to stage reenactments of that past whether literally or through exhibitions, we must also understand collective and individual memory.

Military museums, which produce those written, auditory, and visual documents for public consumption, play a role in the performance of the collective memory of war. Curators insert their own judgements, biases, and narratives into their exhibits. Whether overtly or subtly this occurs through what and whom they choose to display, how they choose to display it, and the audience that they target. Since museums are seen as by the public by and large as authorities on history, they play a critical role in instructing their audiences about how to remember the past.

Aleida Assmann makes arguments similar to Winter, stating that the growing importance of memory and memorializing in Western culture and its problematic effect

on historical discourse means the “loss of the historian’s singular and unrivalled authority” (Assmann 2010, 39). Assmann also emphasizes that individual and collective memories give “legitimate access to the past in the mediated democratic society, is to acknowledge the multiple and diverse impact of the past, and in particular a traumatic past, on its citizens” (Assmann 2010, 39). Military museums, as exhibitors of traumatic pasts, must acknowledge the multiple and diverse impacts of war, and the ways it affects soldiers and citizens, in different, but equally profound ways. If they want visitors to truly learn the “horrors of war” and to understand the reasons behind “never forget” and “never again” they must be given the opportunity to view these differing individual and collective memories in the museum. For example, these sorts of approaches might have softened discussions about the Enola Gay as an object with histories in addition to the celebratory narratives that were held in the collective memory of the United States public and veterans.

Assmann does note, however, that we must be careful not to let the idea of collective memory slip into the same faults as ideology by becoming a justification for any and all kinds of claims to past history. Collective memory must be carefully examined when its framework supports the “restaging of the past according to marketing strategies or the demands of specific groups” (Assmann 2010, 39). Further, we cannot allow memory collective or individual to escape the evaluation for ethical or discriminatory practices. Assmann insists that we must establish criteria that allow us to distinguish between memories that allow us to bring people together, to work towards

“furthering intergroup relations and have a therapeutic and ethical value” and those that promote segregation and violence (Assmann 2010, 39). This point is particularly important for military museums because some groups may want to defend and promote war crimes as just or ethical, or even deny them altogether. This has been an issue for military museums in Germany in particular where far right groups want to seize on Nazi ideology and the Holocaust in order to promote their political aims.

Museums as Sites of Ritual Performance

According to Cameron in his often cited work “Museums: Temples or Forums?”, in the 18th and 19th century museums were places where society presented ideas about who and what it was, and what it would be and to communicate that information to the public, so they could understand the nation (Cameron 1971, 17). Or as Bouquet put it when summarizing others in the field, “Another influential conceptualization of the museum is as a post-Enlightenment secular ritual site: a place where a nation can be imagined and narrated using collection pieces through architectural space” (Bouquet 2012). Museums become sites of meaning-making and through this process museums become cultural artifacts. In their critiques theorists focused on history and art museums, but military museums can also be seen through this lens, perhaps even more so due to the overt narratives of nationalism.

Carol Duncan outlined the comparisons between “secular” museums and “religious” temples, citing that both surrounded beliefs, rituals, and stories about who, why, and how people are, past and present (Duncan 1995, 8). This is particularly true with military museums, which typically have a tone of authority, a narrative that defines the history of the nation from its inception – as armed forces are generally born at the same time as the state. The military museum constructs and represents beliefs about people, but it also goes beyond. Military museums have dates of commemoration and celebration, dates of the beginning of battles, the end of battles, the death of great military minds and generals. They organize ritual celebrations that involve dramatic, religious-like displays or order and magic. In the US, commemorations of Veterans Day often feature important members of the military community, moments of silent contemplation, the ritual lighting of candles or torches, and processions. They reenact sacrifices, and have symbolic representations of sacrifice such as the poppies at the National World War I Museum or the bricks of memory at the National World War II Museum in the United States.

These forms of commemoration are part of what Connerton refers to as habit-memory. Habit-memory is a means of cultural transmission from one generation to another, and indoctrinates new individuals into the larger culture and community by having them repeat rituals (Connerton 1989). This form of memory is embodied (Noy: 95). By symbolically reenacting important dates and battles, or by using ceremonies that have participants re-enact similar behaviors at each event, the participants replicate

historic performances. In performing those same acts over and over again, the individuals are inscribed with collective memories that are produced by socially constructed rituals (Connerton 1989). These same theories apply to the museum. As Noy posits, “Museum goers and commemoration doers are engaged in acquiring and performing sets of skills that are social and that pertain to commemoration and the doing of national identity” (Noy 2015, 96) When the visitor comes to the museum, they know what to expect. They know how to walk through exhibits, participate in inter-actives and how to read the interpretation. Often times they return on multiple occasions to visit and revisit the exhibits, bringing friends and family with them in order to share in the experience and participate in the ritual of visitation. In military museums, this is also the case. Many times children and grandchildren visit with older parents who have lived memories of war or wartime. They use the museum as site in which to reenact historic memories, and indoctrinate new generations into larger national and cultural metanarratives through these “successful and convincing performance of social codes” (Connerton 1989, 35). Veterans in particular participate in these rituals, revisiting war memorabilia, using the museum as a representative pilgrimage site for battlefields that are far off, a place where they can commune with other veterans, as well as a place they can teach new generations about the war.

This is why many military museums enlist veterans as tour guides. Duncan points out:

Those who are best prepared to perform its ritual – those who are most able to respond to its various cues – are also those whose identities (social, sexual, racial, etc.) the museum ritual most fully confirms. It is precisely for this reason that museums and museum practices can become objects of fierce struggle and impassioned debate. (Duncan 1995: 8).

Military museums employ veterans for this task because they have insider knowledge on the experience of war. Veterans represent the living memory of war, as well as the living representation and symbolism of the heroic soldier metanarrative that many military museums implement in their interpretation. As such, they are experts and can lead visitors through the military museum, giving visitors a central point for their ritualistic reenactments. By accompanying a soldier through the military museum, the visitors are more authentically able to reconstruct and reenact the past through the exhibits. The exhibits come to life as the veteran explains them and connects with his own individual memory.

Politics, economy, collective memory and ritual performance all play critical roles in how new museology is implanted in military museums. They give insight into how memory is formed through social relationships, and how it is learned and passed down from generation to generation. Understanding the politics and economic factors behind military museum operations, specifically how they have influenced exhibits and public opinions in the past can give insight into how introducing new practice into the museum might face barriers today. Understanding the complex relationships between these elements was the basis of developing research questions.

Research Questions

My research seeks to explore the following questions: How are military museums reacting to changes in museum theory and practice, specifically in regard to new museology approaches to exhibition and interpretation? Are military museums temples or forums? Memorials or museums? How do rituals within military museums define or support metanarratives? How does memorialization and public commemoration in the military museum affect the interpretation?

My goal was to analyze military museums through the anthropological lenses outlined above, addressing the symbolic nature of exhibitions, the consumption and performance of collective memory, and the ritualistic processes through which they become culturally significant. I also planned to analyze how my case studies fit or did not reflect the ideas and principles of new museum theory, and how they attempted or did not attempt to achieve status as memorial and museum. I intended to analyze how anthropological approaches restructure or reorient the visitors experience with the military history paradigm. I was also interested in how these new renovations in exhibits and architecture, and approaches are potentially re-energizing interest in military museums, and how they engage their communities in dialogue about conflict and other military related issues. I planned to investigate if these military museums have changed their missions and their approaches to interpreting their military history, and how breaking with or changing prior symbolisms of nationalism, patriotism, and heroism have altered the way they display narratives in the museum through exhibition.

In order to investigate these research questions, I chose the case of the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, (U.S.A) and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden(Germany). I chose one European case and one American case to study the potential differences in representation and approaches to the role of the military museum in the national metanarrative. I chose two countries that have some of the largest military industrial complexes in the world, have been consistently involved in military conflicts through the last several centuries; played central roles in both World Wars I and II as well as current conflicts in the Middle East; and have the economic and political capital to have amassed large military museum collections. Countries that are large, wealthy and have formidable if not “superpower” armed forces were key as a representative example because they are in extraordinary positions of power where they are frequently capable of defining their history with an authoritative narrative. Focusing on museums with an extensive collection built over a period of time was important as well because this would theoretically support the countries’ claims for authority over the narrative. These national museums possessed a greater number of resources in terms of the number of objects and funding. Theoretically these additional resources would allow them to direct narratives as they saw fit, whereas a smaller institution might simply struggle to keep its doors open and attract visitors (Raths 2012 and Winter 2013). In addition, the Western World controls a number of larger cultural and scientific areas that impact museum paradigms when developing and creating exhibitions.

I wanted to analyze how the concepts of temple and forum, memorial and museum played out in these large national museums, particularly in regards to the way traditional military museum models of nationalism, and heroism were presented. Were national museums capable of disentangling their narratives from 19th and early 20th century nation building narratives like the ones Anderson and Macdonald cited as essential to their early existence? I sought to investigate if it was possible to discuss military heritage without colliding with collective memories in the way the Enola Gay and Canadian War Museum exhibits had in the 1990s, and if the new approaches, those that were subtler in terms of artifact choices and presentation played a role in renegotiating the role of the military museum in the national narrative.

Choosing Museum Field Sites

Based on my preliminary literature review and my experience as a visitor, I was intrigued with how it appeared that European military museums had been engaging with new museum theory in their exhibition practices in a way that U.S. museums had not. Several case studies presented in the literature from the Imperial War Museum down to much smaller and local museums had shown that military museums in Europe were renegotiating their relationships with war, collective memory and public. In contrast there was very little literature on North American museums participating in the same sorts of renovations and new interpretations. In addition to this, evidence in the literature outlined the different views of the army and national metanarratives in these countries and their

relationships with how military history was presented. Comparing European and US military museums appeared to be a good opportunity to further illustrate the differences in museum building and creation, and investigate whether metanarratives, new museum theory and exhibition practices were similar or different in Europe and in the United States. In order to achieve this comparison, I sought a museum in Europe that was engaging with new museology principles and new paradigms in the museum field.

In the fall of 2011, the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (MHMB) in Dresden launched a grand reopening that garnered international attention for its “ground breaking” new approach to war and military history. The museum represented a case study where new museology approaches to the military museum and the execution of those theories through their architecture, exhibits, interpretation and programming had been implemented with early positive reviews. The museum wanted “to tell the history of war – of all wars – from an entirely new perspective” which Gorch Pieken, the curator of the museum, knew would “trigger a heated debated” (Spiegel 2011, 1). The Military History Museum’s approaches were radical and proposed to tell the story of war through two forms of interpretation: the traditional chronological approach, which marched visitors through hundreds of years of German (and by extension European) history, and a new thematic topical approach, which reoriented the visitor through discussions of topics involving war and the military that transcended time such as War and Memory and War and Suffering (Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr 2015). The traditional chronology set in the old neo-classical portion of the building, while the thematic

exhibitions were set in a new wing built by Libeskind. This new wing is a “shard” wedged through the middle of the neo-classical façade, made of metal bars and extending upwards and outwards from the original building, a symbolic representation of the German military’s difficult heritage.

The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr is owned, funded, and managed by the Department of Defense. It is also the largest military museum in the country, and sees an average of one million visitors a year. The museum is the site of reunions, memorials, and celebratory military functions and has represented the state or country’s military exhibitions for more than one hundred years. The mission statement of the museum is to share the history of the German military with the public. The museum was also set off the beaten path, away from hubs like Berlin or Munich, cities that are considered the political, social, and museum capitals of the country. Dresden had the unique role of having changed political hands through shifts in German government and in the loss of sovereignty many times over the 120 years of the existence of the museum, and saw some of the heaviest damage from opposing forces during WWII. Dresden also, became part of the GDR, and then reunited Germany during the post-war year. This separation in Dresden’s history is a vital part of the museum through exhibits on what life in the GDR is like, and also important in retelling the story of Germany as a country divided by WWII and the Cold War.

The United States does not have a single national military history museum as Germany does, but divides up its interpretation through the different branches of the

armed forces. The National Museum of the United States Air Force, like the museum in Dresden was not in the capital of the country. The National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF), was the closest comparison to the MHM Bundeswehr as it sees an average of one million visitors a year and is not located in a political or cultural capital but instead, in Dayton, Ohio. Additionally, the museum has the longest history of any of the national military museums in the United States, established in 1923. While still shy of the century plus history of the MHM Bundeswehr, it is the closest representation the United States offers. Due to its long history and extensive collection, the museum has also evolved over time and features several new additions including an ongoing expansion.

The original building of the museum where the exhibits are now housed was built in 1971. A second hangar shaped addition was added on to the first in 1988 doubling the museum's size. In 2003, a third hangar and a silo for storing missiles were added increasing the exhibition space to over one million square feet (Air Force Museum Foundation 2012). The current gallery that is in the process of being built will add over 224,000 square feet of exhibition space (Air Force Museum Foundation 2012).

Despite having a number of similarities, the two museums do have a several major differences. While the NMUSAF has a mission statement that includes the museum as part of an active war fighting mission, the MHMB does not. The MHMB frames the investigation into the social and cultural causes of violence in contrast to the NMUSAF that stresses science, engineering, technology and math concepts throughout.

In addition to these philosophical differences the museums also had physical ones. The National Museum of the United States Air Force is on the active Wright Patterson Air Force Base, whereas the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr is located in a relatively quiet section of the city of Dresden but in close quarters to a military school. This proximity to an active base meant there were issues of access, and was a factor not only as a problem more largely, but a problem to this study in particular, which I will discuss in my scope and limitations section.

The architecture of the two buildings is also dissimilar. The MHM has the neoclassical and modern hybrid architecture, while the NMUSAF consists primarily of a series of interlinked hangars and an above ground silo structure. The NMUSAF's architecture is due in part to the nature of its collection, which features objects that are at times in excess of 140 feet in width or 100 feet in height.

These field sites, though radically different in some ways, were largely similar in the ways that were important to this study: ownership by their respective militaries, scope of topics covered; location within the broader national context, funding from their respective country's department of defense, and frequently being updated and renovated, with both having recent and extensive renovations to their structure and exhibits. In the next section I go into further detail regarding how I compared the institutions and what means of analysis I used.

Data Collection and Analysis: Exhibits

With my initial survey of case studies in military, war, and conflict museums I was able to understand the broader scope of problems that military museums encountered and attempted to solve, as well as the limitations due to funding and political and cultural discord. In order to compare the interpretation of military history in the United States with that in Europe it was important to examine a case study that analyzed the most public facing aspect of the museum: the exhibit.

Anthony Alan Shelton discussed anthropology in museums, and how practices and narratives in exhibits were evolving as a result of new museology and participating in dialogue with their source communities and their audiences. He stated that:

The new museum is intended to instigate a new pedagogy, to close the space between the everyday lived world and museum activities, to conflate academic learning with popular expression, and empower communities to be part of new dialogical relationships, which would acknowledge both scientific and subjective facets of culture. (2011, 75).

He pointed out that the changes in practice were often happening as a result of independent need for revision and analysis within the museum and community. I reformulated or adapted Shelton's list of the ways new museology practices and narratives are manifested in exhibitions (Shelton 2011, 77-78) to create an outline for my analysis of the military history museums, and to frame questions about whether or not new museology was being implemented in military museums like the National Museum

of the United States Air Force and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr exhibitions. These questions were important as a logical way of seeing tangible evidence of new museology implemented in the museum:

- Are there comparative thematic approaches to interpreting military and conflict history? Do we see only the traditional chronological approach? Do we see other attempts to change the approach to military history?
- Is reflexivity present in exhibition narratives? Do we see the military museums being critical of their own participation in conflicts and wars? Is there a reflexive approach to the consequences of violence?
- Has transparency been used in the assembling of collections and the creation of exhibitions? Is there information about where the collections were obtained and who donated them? Do we have information on the studies and field work that provided the historical context? Do we know who is funding the exhibitions? This is particularly important in regards to the military industrial complex and department of defense budgets that often pay for parts or all of collections, exhibitions, and programming within the museum. Were wider questions about the military industrial complex and political alliances asked in the exhibition narrative?
- Are exhibitions didactic, dialogical or some combination? Do they allow the visitor to participate in the history of the military and conflicts through collective and individual memories? Do they serve more as temples or forums?

- Are artistic or other outside interventions occurring that expand upon material, or problematize issues within the museum or the thematic material occurring within the museum? Do they invite outsiders in to help contextualize and memorialize the events and people that were involved in wars? Do they invite outside commentary or opinions?
- Are the interpretations plural or multi-vocal? Were source communities like front line soldiers, those not necessarily lauded as unique or heroic, shown or given voice in the exhibit? Were non-combatants and civilians affected by the war given voice? Was the community visibly participating in any way in the narratives on display? Do these interpretations or approaches democratize the museum and show signs of new museum theory in practice?
- Do museums confront political subjects and contextualize and problematize participation in war or do they attempt to remain apolitical and serve as a marker for the event or people that participated in the war, the war a memorial would?

While Shelton was discussing anthropology museums rather than military museums, the same principles still apply, as military museums at their heart are representing communities and are cultural constructs developed not only by their curators and stakeholders, but by the wider community as they engage with the museum.

If we accept, as Ames and others point out, that the museum is a cultural artifact that represents the history and culture of a particular time and place then we can see how

exhibits are manifestations of the way the military sees itself and wants to be seen by the community. As Shelton points out “Museums are a microcosm of the wider society” (Shelton 2011, 75). Military museums and the exhibits within them provide insight into wider issues with the military, conflict, and international relations in their respective countries. Military museums often have narratives of nationhood and empowerment at the core of their institution and mission statement, so we can look to them for clues about larger narratives about their roles in the international community as well (Macdonald 2003).

In this study, I was especially concerned with how didactic and dialogical approaches and narratives were represented in museums through visual, aural, and written communication. I used this as a measure of investigating whether the museum used a temple framework (didactic) or a forum framework (dialogical). To do this, I broke down Shelton’s question about didactic and dialogical interpretation to analyze the exhibits further. The questions I included were:

- Were narratives top down and authoritative, or grassroots and democratic? Where did the narratives draw authority from in their citations?
- Did they rely on chronological interpretation or provide an alternative? Did the exhibit rely on progression of scientific goals or advancement of technology in order to develop the narrative?
- Was the exhibit interactive? Did it provide inter-actives for visitors to participate in? Did it ask questions? Solicit feedback and input from visitors?

- Were authoritative narratives expressed in subtle ways through the layout of the exhibit, the use of exhibition props or by lack of inclusion?
- When objects were used to further the narrative of the exhibit, were the stories machine based or human based? Was there a balance between objects that were scientific and technological and those that were cultural and social?

These questions served the framework for investigating and analyzing how new museology was or was not being implemented in military museums and the relationship between the museums and the national narratives of Germany and the United States.

Field Research and Data Collection

Research into the application of new museum theory and anthropological theories in military museums is recent, and the point of this thesis was to define broadly how the United States and Europe are participating in those trends. I utilized the concept of the museum exhibit as cultural artifact and narrative, to critically analyze how metanarratives were influencing military exhibition, the role of collective and personal memory in the interpretation of military history, and the construction of the cultural artifact, the museum, through the ritual performance of the past as visitors walk through exhibitions. Key areas of analysis were location and architecture as well as order and layout, objects, and text and narrative. Programming, funding, and social media also played a role as these aspects are enmeshed as part of the creation and experience of the military museum.

In order to conduct this research, I participated in field research at the museums. For the Museum of Military History in Dresden, this meant two days of successive seven

hour observational visits in October 2012. For the National Museum of the United States Air Force this meant four separate observational visits that were roughly three hours each, as well as a guided tour of the older part of the museum in April 2014, and two special events: Family Day in April 2014, and the Centennial World War I event in September 2014. In addition to these main museums, I also visited a variety of other types of military and war museums in the United States and Germany in order to better contextualize my understanding of these examples. In Germany this included visits to the Documentation Zentrum in Nuremberg featured in the Macdonald's book *Difficult Heritage*, and the Flugwerft Schleissheim in Munich, an air force oriented museum situated on a now defunct military base used by both Germany and the United States. In the United States this involved visits to the Wings over the Rockies Air and Space Museum and Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum, both located on now defunct military bases and privately funded. I also visited the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, which while nationally designated, is not located within a military base landscape and is predominantly privately funded. I collected data by recording text entries in the interpretation in the museums, taking photographs of displays, and taking publicly led tours of the museum.

Architecture and location were the initial part of the comparison between the two museum field sites. Military museums, even those that discuss the same period of conflict – WWI for example, have radically different approaches to containing those exhibitions, everything from containing them in older remodeled buildings to spending tens of

millions dollars constructing them from scratch. Architecture and location are key issues in the anthropology of museums as they can tell us a great deal about the intentions of the curators, the habits of the visitors, and the relevance of the museum to the city and country where they are located. This can give us clues to larger metanarratives and missions that might be driving museum interpretation. This meant noting where the museums were located in their respective countries and cities, how easily accessible they were to the public, and what other buildings or landscapes made up their surroundings. This was important in discussing issues of accessibility, as well as cultural constructs. For architecture this meant comparing the styles of architecture used in the building, noting how many there were, the influence the architects have in the field, how the architecture framed the visitor experience as well as the exhibitions, and what the general public reaction was to the architecture, if any.

The design and structure of the exhibits was of key importance, and required noting the overarching themes the material was presented through and how individual exhibits and their components were organized. Components included objects but also props and frameworks for the exhibits, such as mannequins, lights, sounds, technology or other devices implemented to expound on the central object or display case. These elements can focus visitor attention, enhance attributes of narrative, and change the way a visitor sees an object, and were therefore relevant to how objects were displayed.

The most important feature of the exhibit was the objects. My data collection included the general size and placement of the objects, as well as the categorization of the

object. This would help to later analyze the objects as to whether they were official or unofficial representations of military culture: the difference between military uniforms, formal wear dictated and regulated by the institution of the military that are identical, and good luck charms, items brought into battle by individuals that vary widely and are imbued with personal meaning and memories. Noting the size and placement of the objects also key in analyzing the architecture and design of the building and exhibits.

The amount of text and physical space dedicated to each topic or individual person were indicators of importance and value. The text was another key factor in the exhibit survey since it was the most direct and overt way the museum expressed its narrative. The length of text, vocabulary, reading comprehension level, technical knowledge necessary, and the language of the text were all important elements of analysis for researching the role of text in the larger narrative of the institution. Language is symbolic, and can give insight into larger metanarratives and cues to issues of cultural discourse. Perhaps even more importantly, language is one of the most transparent ways to recognize the implementation of didactic forms of instruction or the establishment of more dialogical engagement with the audience. I theorized these delineations would be a key way of discerning whether the museum was implementing new museum theory and engaging with collective and personal memories in new ways.

The site studies were relegated to short time periods due to the distance between them. In order to keep up with the ongoing changes and programming at both museums, I also relied on their presence on their websites as well as social media outlets such as

Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. These forms of digital media not only offered additional access points and views, but were also curated by the museum in a similar way to the text and exhibits in the museum. They can give additional insight into the museum's image management and institutional narrative, as they are the online representations of the institutions. Since I chose not to conduct surveys or interviews to limit the scope of the thesis, these outlets were key to gaining additional information on those topics.

Digital media allowed me to include cursory studies and insights into other museums as well. This gave me the opportunity for comparative examples that were not part of the central study such as The Imperial War Museum: London and Imperial War Museum: Manchester, which are also in the process of updating their exhibits and architecture as a part of this new movement to modernize military history museums, and featured in literature survey case studies. Digital media can also provide additional context to exhibitions and curator intentions. Social media for museums often typically include behind the scenes access and "insider" viewpoints. Photographs from exhibition developments, openings, and regular programming were often posted on Facebook or Twitter pages. I kept a log of this information, noting particular posts and photos in the same way I had done with my survey of the exhibits at the central case study museums.

This online presence also allowed "behind the scene" looks into decisions made by curators and historians at the museums, as well as exhibition installations and

timelines. It also presented the opportunity to keep up with public programming and engagements at the museum that might otherwise not be widely publicized.

By analyzing their exhibits, I hoped to gain further insight as to how these museums execute their missions, how metanarratives play a role in military museums, and how visitor access and experience can change the ways in which these exhibits are consumed by the public.

Scope and Limitations

The study is limited in its scope in that it focuses primarily on two museum case studies. Though thorough studies were performed with extensive photography and notation done at each site, they represent only a few moments in time at a limited number of museums. Museums are living entities that change exhibits, staff, and programming at regular intervals. However, case studies must be limited snapshots in order to be able to capture a limited amount of data that may be analyzed and discussed in thesis form.

While this case study features only two museums to represent each country, it was supported by other case studies and literature that explored other military museums in those respective country. Museum interpretations vary widely depending on local culture and interactions with the military, but using a national museum for each country, ones that were run by their respective militaries allowed for a neutralization of some of the local and regional variation within their respective countries. It also was the primary

place that it was likely narratives about nationalism and patriotism would be most evident, foregoing local pride for extensive engagement with national narratives.

While both are national museums and are centers to tell the larger national military story, they are limited in their scope, size, and location. Even a national museum can only spend so much time on each aspect of its history, making choices to leave out or include certain parts as the respective narrator chooses to edit the storyline for interest and space. They are also limited by their collections, and this is particularly so for the National Museum of the United States Air Force as it represents, though large, only one branch of the United States military. Likewise, Germany represents only one European country, and has a complicated history being the perpetrator of two wars in the 20th century, and divided politically for the following 40 years.

I also relied on a number of other case studies in the field for context, which included museums in Canada, England, France, Belgium, and elsewhere in the United States and Germany in order to attempt to balance the study and provide for other examples, but did so without visiting them or doing extended research. These case studies accounted for differences in culture and political attitudes throughout Germany and Europe, as well as micro differences in culture and political attitudes throughout the United States. For example, the Flugwerft Museum in Munich, Germany, was on a defunct airbase and had a primarily STEM and technological focus. The National World War II Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, focused in on one particular war, differing in its mission and interpretation from museums like NMUSAF and the MHMB. The

National World War II Museum also placed more emphasis on cultural depth in its interpretation, for example it was originally founded as the D-Day Museum because the landing crafts used during the invasion were constructed in New Orleans. These case studies and visits to museums outside of the primary case studies gave greater depth to my research and more context to Germany and the United States scope of museums. They also illustrated the wide variety of approaches to military history by different curators and mission goals.

These case studies also incorporated not only smaller museums, but museums with a narrower focus such as World War I or specific battlefields. These other examples provided background for the larger museums, contextualizing them as national museums with national narratives and revealing the national museums for their wide scope and breadth. Where the smaller museums were able to tackle nuanced issues of location and smaller communities, the national museums had to engage with hundreds of years of military history across an entire nation, and frequently across an entire globe. This meant they had to cover those topics with broad strokes, and remain sensitive to metanarratives that an entire national public was invested in. The smaller museums gave examples of how hyper-focused interpretation could change the curatorial approach to a topic or how access to funding and means to expand could change the way objects were exhibited or the amount of technological intervention, in terms of movies, buttons and high-tech museum design, changed the visitor experience. The case studies presented differences between professional staff and volunteer staff approaches to interpretation, and on a

larger scale the difference between government and defense funded interpretation, and private institution interpretation.

The theories and methods discussed in this chapter provided the background for the investigation the National Museum of the United States Air Force and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr. The research questions and the data collection methods provided the framework for gathering information to further analyze the relationship between those museums, their metanarratives and their visitors. Other case studies provided context for my own study of these two museums. In the next two chapters, I revisit the museums and analyze the exhibits.

Chapter 4 Analysis of the National Museum of the United States Air Force

Place and Architecture

The National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) is located behind gates that divide high fences topped with barbed wire on Wright Patterson Air Force Base. The base is currently an active military base and head of Materiel Command for the Air Force. To the right of the main gate leading into the museum there are three signs: the first states the “Museum Hours” and holidays. The second is a marker noting the museum as a location on the “Aviation Trail,” and the third is the standard strongly worded warning about the military installation, stating that it is unlawful to enter without permission of the base commander and all people and property that enter are subject to search. For many visitors this strongly worded warning is just a footnote to their visit to the museum, but for others it is startling reminder of where they are. To enter the museum, visitors must pass through metal detectors and subject themselves to bag checks. Much like the layer of security that the fences and gate play on the outside of the building, the metal detectors and soldiers on the inside of the building constitute an additional barrier to access. As of May 2015 and the raising of Force Protection Condition to Bravo, fully armed guards are also stationed at this check point. This check creates several different scenarios at once. The visitor is immediately reminded that they

are not in a public space, but rather on an active military base where access is a privilege and can be denied. Individuals unfamiliar with active base procedures or a military presence can find the metal detectors and armed guards intimidating and off-putting. It creates not only a physical barrier to entry, but a mental and emotional barrier as well (Hacker and Vining 2013, Winter 2013).

In addition, this high alert and armed presence has caused incidents in the past. For example, in April 2014, a family headed back from a trip to Chicago through Dayton, to Columbus, Ohio stopped at the museum as part of their vacation entertainment. The family was pulled over as they left the base by several military and local police officers after a phone call reported that the children were looking at license plates and “casing” the parking lot. The officers drew their guns and pointed them at the family inside of the car. While at gunpoint, officers demanded everyone exit the vehicle and kneel in front of it (Davis 2014). This incident illustrates the high level of security on the base, and demonstrates issues of access that can be created when a military museum for the public is located on an active base that typically prohibits civilian access. Stories like this one affect not only the family visiting, but potential visitors that may hear of such incidents and be deterred from visiting the museum. These incidents are in direct contrast to new museum models and attempts to democratize and increase access to museums (Macdonald 2010, Simon 2010).

Ironically, just inside the gate and beyond the barbed wire and fencing is a sign welcoming the visitor to The National Museum of the United States Air Force. The sign

also notifies visitors of the current terror threat level. These signs illustrate the contradictory location of the museum. On the one hand, it is a military base that typically heavily restricts public access due to the sensitive nature of research and activity, but on the other hand it is a national museum funded by the tax-paying public and encourages public visitation and tourism. The duality of its identity is at times problematic.

The sign also notes the importance of the museum as part of the Aviation Trail, a series of important aviation sites in and around the Dayton Area, anchored by the National Aviation Heritage Area (NAHA). NAHA is a national non-profit Heritage Area designated by Congress to oversee the aviation heritage of the United States in partnership with the National Park Service. The National Museum of the United States Air Force is a part of this larger association of national aviation heritage, and the heritage designation plays a critical role in visitorship and its institutional narrative. NAHA defines its vision for the Alliance as “(making) the Dayton region the recognized global center of aviation heritage and premier destination for aviation heritage tourism, sustaining the legacy of the Wright Brothers” (National Aviation Heritage Area 2015). The story of the Wright Brothers plays a critical role in the United States’ national narrative as the first inventors to be able to claim sustained flight. In the museum they are discussed extensively, and their importance is reinforced by the fact that the base, a university, and a number of businesses and institutions in the Dayton area carry their name.

The Wright Brothers play an important role in the national metanarrative of technological greatness and supremacy. The designation of the Heritage Area and the NMUSAF's role in that Heritage Area engages with visitor perceptions and expectations of authenticity. Visitors who come to sites where the cultural material of flight development is displayed and walk the grounds where the Wright Brothers tested their inventions are able to "touch history" and return from the experience with memory as their souvenir (Jarecka 2013). These various sites and alliances, i.e., the Aviation Trail, National Aviation Heritage Association, and the NMUSAF create a feedback loop with one another, amplifying and reinforcing the mythology of the Wright Brothers, and the sense of national pride. The site becomes a place where locals can experience an authentic local cultural legacy and take part in national heritage, and thus experience the national narrative (Macdonald 2003). This experience draws on what Tilley notes as a power from previous generations, a place where "the morphological characteristics and landscape serve to relate more generalized ancestral power embodied in the topography and the symbolic geography of places and the paths of movement" (1994, 202).

Just beyond the museum, there is an inactive runway and a large field that was once part of the base's military operations in the early 20th century. The space has been converted to a programming area for the museum, and is frequently used for large events where booths and tents can be set up and recreational vehicles can park. The runway is occasionally used by full-size replica and authentic historic aircraft to re-enact battles, demonstrate flight capabilities, and host "fly-ins" for public programming. For example,

in September of 2014 during my field research, the field was converted to programming space where WWI style trench replicas were dug for visitors to walk through as an entryway and tents and reenactment units were set up to recreate a battle scene.



Figure 4-1 Tents at entry to event at NMUSAF



Figure 4-2 Reenactments at the NMUSAF

The runway was cleared, and pilots flew WWI plane replicas as part of the midday show. It was a central focal point of the event for visitors to be able to hear and see the planes participating in authentic rituals of takeoff, flight, and landing.



Figure 4-3 Flight displays at NMUSAF

Having so much of the historic base intact is important to the understanding and interpretation of the site, and to its role as both memorial and museum. It shows the enmeshed nature of the museum's duality as both museum and active military base, providing windows to the past through programming and reenactments. These reenactments also create a sense of authenticity where visitors can touch the past (Jarecka 2013) and provide sites where the public can participate in rituals of commemoration (Saunders 2004). These types of ceremonies and commemorative events are common at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, allowing visitors to repeat these pilgrimages and rituals of embodiment that produce social memories about the history of the Wright Brothers, Air Force, and the museum (Connerton 1989).

The museum is currently composed of three large airplane hangars, and two silo shaped buildings, favoring functional and practical use over other forms of creative or commemorative architecture. Rather than using star architects, the museum instead decided to simply mirror its third hangar to build a fourth. To accomplish this, the museum used a design-build model for its expansion, a form of building where the construction company is both the designer and the builder. The contract was awarded to international construction company, Turner Construction (National Museum of the United States Air Force 2014). This decision means that the museum is in line with the architectural style of the rest of the base, and speaks to the museum's mission, which focuses heavily on the museum as a wing of the Air Force. The use of architecture to reorient and disrupt narratives about the past like in the case of the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr or the Imperial War Museum North is absent at this museum. Instead the National Museum of the Air Force engages with its historic past, linking it physically and metaphorically with the active military base that surrounds it. The architecture conveys the traditional military history narratives, messages, and mission that are presented inside the building through its exhibits, a model similar to other military museums (MacLeod 2013).

The first silo shaped building contains an IMAX theater and the second contains missiles. While these portions of the museum are readily accessible without ID, some portions of the museum, namely the Presidential Gallery and the Research Gallery are not. Those galleries are located on a part of the base that requires ID and an escort to

visit due to its location closer to active research laboratories. This limits visitor access to the museum, by forcing visitors to produce IDs and fill out paper work, adding an additional barrier for those who want to visit those galleries. This concept runs contrary to popular movements in the museum field to democratize access (Macdonald 2010, Simon 2010). This is a fact the museum plans to resolve with its current expansion (National Museum of the US Air Force 2015).

A fourth large airplane hangar is currently being built as part of a 35.4-million-dollar expansion to the museum. The expansion will provide easier access to the Presidential Gallery and the Research Gallery, which are being moved to the fourth hangar. In addition, the space mission training module that is temporarily housed in the Current Conflicts gallery is being moved to this new fourth hangar. Plans for the expansion also involve creating more STEM programming, and to a lesser degree social studies, literature, and art (National Museum of the US Air Force 2015, 3).

The NMUSAF is surrounded by active military comings and goings, armed service members, and military housing. Almost all sight lines from the museum feature some aspect of the military base itself, whether air strips, military labs or housing buildings. There is little separation between museum and base, besides a small buffer zone in the park-like area around the museum. This not only affects access to the museum, setting the bar higher to achieve increased community engagement, but also provides emotional barriers for visitors who may not identify with military protocols and layers of restrictive access.

The NMUSAF's location in Dayton, Ohio, its close proximity to Huffman Prairie, the Wright Brother's home, and other important sites pertaining to the invention and the technological advancement of aviation creates a multi-layered site. Visitors are able to participate in the collective memory of the invention of flight by visiting these sites, and the museum intensifies this through its nationalistic and patriotic metanarratives. The Wright Brothers' landscape surrounding the base is enmeshed with their local heritage, and provides a grounding sense of place for those metanarratives. The location and the architecture provide the authenticity visitors seek (Jarecka 2013). The public can come to this museum site and encounter these performative rituals of the past through commemoration ceremonies and museum events, and through them make the museum, and the military and aviation heritage part of their social memory (Connerton 1989). As Macdonald and others uncovered with other national museums, the artifacts and the landscape here are used to build a positive narrative, one that unites the community behind a unified central origin narrative of the United States (Anderson 1983, Macdonald 2010, Saunders 2004).

Exhibitions: Order and Layout

Once visitors are through the initial screening at the entryway, they enter a hallway with several choices. The NMUSAF is separated into several large galleries, organized in a primarily chronological order with a few thematic periphery galleries

along the way. To the right is the Early Years gallery, where the museum recommends visitors start.

The Early Years gallery features the birth of flight narrative, from hot air balloons to blimps, and traces the history of the Wright Brothers from their first successful flights up through their military contracts and business with what would eventually become the Air Force. With this exhibit the museum makes a direct connection with the surrounding National Aviation Heritage Area, linking in the museum exhibit narrative with larger national narratives about technological advancement and exceptionalism. Additionally, this experience of seeing items the Wright Brothers owned and used so close to the place they lived and worked adds the element of authenticity that museum scholars stress is sought out by visitors engaging with historic sites (Jarecka 2013, Winter 2013).

The gallery also features several WWI planes, and discusses the first “Ace” fighter pilots of that war. The story of flight in this gallery, while briefly mentioning those researching flight in other countries focused heavily on the American narrative and the accomplishment of the American Wright Brothers. The Flugwerft Schleissheim Museum in Munich, Germany, had the same narrative about the invention of flight focuses heavily on German researchers and inventors. Nearly the same amount of square footage is dedicated to the topic in each museum, even though the German inventors were not the ones ultimately credited with the “official” title of inventing flight according the American narrative.

With exhibits like these we see the importance of national metanarratives and authenticity that cross cultural boundaries (Anderson 1983, Jarecka 2013, Macdonald 2010). German and American museums both try to ground their authenticity and national heritage in stories of invention and technological achievements. The chronological and technological model of national military museums that began with the Imperial War Museum (Cornish 2004, Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013) are echoed in other western museums large and small, in an effort to establish themselves as a local part of a national whole, and perhaps more interestingly a language of western military museum exhibits. Macdonald and Anderson discussed how local museums often attempt to imitate national models of heritage making by drawing on larger narratives and using local history to authenticate those claims (2010 and 1983). The National Museum of the United States Air Force is participating in the nationalistic and traditional model, and the Flugwerft Schleissheim, a local aviation and military museum on a base in Munich, attempts to use the same model, to a smaller scale in its exhibits.

The Early Years gallery also features one of the few exhibitions that highlights the contributions of African American pilots, specifically the first African American military pilot, Eugene Bullard. Eugene Bullard was a pilot with the French air force during WWI. Although he was born in the United States and eventually returned, died and was buried in the United States, Eugene served in the French military because the United States would only allow white pilots to fly in the military. This is a fact that the exhibition omits. Instead, it only mentions that he was posthumously awarded second

lieutenant in the United States Air Force. The exhibition fails to put the soldier and his service in historical context. It also fails to answer many of the questions raised about why he is featured in the USAF Museum, and why the museum is in possession of his service medals, especially since he never served in the USAF. This is an important part of the workings of memory, where forgetting is often as important as remembering when it becomes too complicated or difficult (Assmann 2011). Eugene Ballard's service as a French soldier underlines the fact that the US military had racist policies through World War II. This information is potentially divisive, and in direct conflict with the national metanarrative of unity the NMUSAF focuses on throughout its interpretation.

The WWII gallery exhibits a number of large planes and follows through the history of the Army Air Force's role in combat in the European and Pacific Theater, in addition to the campaigns in China, Burma, and India. The largest and most popular plane in the gallery is Bockscar, the plane that dropped the bomb on Nagasaki and accompanied the Enola Gay (for further discussion see later section Chapter 4). The WWII gallery is extensive and one of the largest galleries in the museum. The narrative is one of sacrifice and triumph by the United States military, one that reinforces the collective memory of the 'good war' in American mythology (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996). These themes tie in to heroic metanarratives that the United States uses to unify the collective memory into a single positive framework, in order to create the imagined community of nation-state (Anderson 1983).

The Holocaust exhibit is a gallery that stretches between two of the other chronological galleries. It features information on the liberation of the concentration and extermination camps by the Air Force servicemen. While there is some context for the Jewish experience in the form of letters and artifacts, the driving narrative of this exhibit focuses on a video that plays in a small theater area in the center. The video shows a number of servicemen recounting their experience in liberating the camps, the people they saw, and the conditions at the camps when they arrived. All of them express their horror and shock. According to Susan Crane, the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington uses a similar approach by using videos to communicate servicemen stories. It is a purposeful choice on the part of the museum in order to situate the visitors amongst the good guys who were also struggling to understand the horrors of the camps (Crane 1997). This positioning is designed to give the visitors the opportunity to engage with the exhibit without the immediate feelings of disgust and guilt that could arise when dealing with difficult heritage (Macdonald 2010).

An interpretive panel in the Holocaust exhibit listed violations against human rights. The atrocities of the Holocaust and other genocides are lumped in to a larger interpretive panel which features a bulleted list of violations against human rights between the years 1900 and 2000. Japanese internment and other issues are briefly discussed alongside them but little discussion or context is provided due to the limited space of the interpretive panel. In *Difficult Heritage* (2008), Macdonald warns against German practices of cosmopolitanizing the Holocaust and relating it to other genocides

and war crimes. Doing so she warns, can be to the detriment of communicating the gravity of a singular case, which is frequently complex and fraught with information that is difficult for visitors to digest (Macdonald 2008). In this context, the American exhibit relies heavily on sterile quantitative data, leaving an absence of interpretation and context about how these historical atrocities developed and their long term consequences.

However, more interpretation on the subject, especially in the case of the narrative of Japanese internment, risks running afoul of American sentiments about celebratory and positive narratives being the business of national museums (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013).

The World War II galleries may be easier to interpret through celebratory and patriotic narratives, other galleries and wars are more difficult to present through the same framework (Linenthal 1996 and Young 1996). Not far from the World War II galleries are two separate gallery spaces entitled Southeast Asia War and Korean War. The title of “Southeast Asia War” refers to the Vietnam War. As discussed earlier in the case of Enola Gay Controversy, the Vietnam War could not be framed as a “good war” in the way WWII had been (Young 1996). The Vietnam War occupies an uncomfortable space in the American collective memory. It is politically charged and painful memory, particularly for the Baby Boomer generation that make up most of the Vietnam War veterans. The Vietnam War also caused a rupture between the American people and the American military, as many protested the military involvement in Vietnam and thousands dodged the draft (Young 1996).

In an institution trying to convey what it describes in its promotional material as a place where future generations will come to be inspired to join the military and a “...dream becomes reality” (Air Force Museum Foundation 2014) it is not surprising then that the museum avoids using terms like the Vietnam War, which would remind visitors of a time where many in the civilian population were not only unhappy with the military, but condemned it outright. Where Maya Lin’s design on the memorial created new perspectives on memorialization especially in regard to Vietnam (Savage 2011), other museums stick to traditional and chronological interpretation in order to circumvent interpretation that might disrupt larger institutional and national metanarratives of the military and the Air Force as an inherently positive institution.

Furthermore, for many cultures “pacts of forgetting,” whereby a spoken or unspoken social agreement exists to put difficult or painful histories behind them by not speaking about them, is an important aspect of moving on. According to Saunders these social agreements are part of the way that cultures commemorate conflict and respect those that died or suffered as a result (Saunders 2004). With the Vietnam War where factions of the American public were vehemently for or against American participation, it is difficult to come to a consensus about how we should remember the war, and how it will exist in the collective memory (Young 1996). It is even more complicated for soldiers who may have been internally conflicted as well and are not as readily lauded as heroes the way the previous WWII generation was. In this case, a cultural pact of

forgetting the Vietnam War keeps emotional and difficult memories and heritage safe from resurfacing.

In another gallery, the visitor comes to a gallery about the history and legacy of the Cold War. The visitor enters another large hangar confronted by numbers on the floor, counting down from DEFCON 5 to DEFCON 1, the levels of nuclear armament readiness, with a large 20-foot banner showing a red radiating mushroom cloud.



Figure 4-4 Entry to Cold War exhibits at NMUSAF

This mushroom cloud is a physical reminder that during this period fears of the atomic war loomed large. The curators attempt to convey a sense of this fear with this display through the use of physical movement and ritual. As the visitor walks through the exhibit,

they are carrying out the embodied ritual of moving from DEFCON 5, the lowest level, to DEFCON 1 the highest. Traveling through the exhibit space recalls the fears of many Americans during the Cold War. Visitors re-enact this social memory of fear of nuclear holocaust, and by doing so begin to embody those fears. This culminates in a sizeable display of a nuclear bomb and mushroom cloud which intimidates through size and space (Connerton 1989, Tilley 1994). The image of the detonation of a nuclear bomb also taps into collective memories about the American past, and tensions with foreign enemies like the Soviet Union. Even for generations that did not experience the Cold War or nuclear weapons, they are enmeshed in popular culture through movies, books, and other media that present them for future generations. The museum utilizes these public memories to orient the visitors with the narrative in the Cold War gallery, which offers a retrospective on the race to armament and space.

Interspersed within the Cold War Gallery is information on the space program and adjacent to the Cold War gallery is the Space and Missile Gallery. This Gallery features tall, multi-story missiles, high altitude missions, and artifacts from space missions. Like the others this gallery focuses on technology and the advancement of military bombs dropped from airplanes into intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), which can be launched from one country into another. The arrangement of missiles shows the technological achievements over years of research. Visitors can stand at the bottom of the missile exhibit to view the missiles from below, or climb stairs to circle the missiles at midpoint. Again the size of the missiles is massive and the visitor is overwhelmed and

made small in their presence. These missiles again loom large not only physically, but also emotionally. They stand again as symbols of supremacy, much like the discussion of the atomic bomb around Bockscar. They are symbols of American exceptionalism, the achievements the military has reached through research and funding. The museum's use of size and space communicates message about the importance of those objects by relativizing the visitor to them. By doing so, they bring the presence of the past to consciousness (Tilley 1994, 202).

The focus in this section is again triumphant, pushing human boundaries, and most of all, as this gallery is adjacent to the Cold War Gallery, beating the Soviet Union in the space race and in international dominance. Like with the physical embodiment of the DEFCON levels at the beginning of the gallery the visitor experiences a similar embodied experience standing in front of the missiles (Connerton 1989). Even if the lived experience of the fear of nuclear war with the Soviet Union is unavailable to the visitor, the feeling of smallness and helplessness is achieved by making the visitor feel small in comparison to objects.

A section of the Cold War gallery is devoted to "Current Operations" where information on the Gulf War, Afghanistan War, and the Iraq War is featured. Much like the Southeast Asia War Gallery, the term "Current Operations" attempts to again sidestep politically charged terms for the wars in the Middle East. The wars in the Middle East are contemporary wars, where individuals, institutions and even entire countries continue to struggle with the consequences. Collective memories of this war both within the military

and amongst the civilian population are constantly shifting as active changes in this region change our understanding about the effects of our role there. Wars that are unsuccessful or become bogged down by insurgencies and political miscommunications, for example like those in the Middle East and Vietnam, are often forgotten by the public. Even the Afghanistan War, initially considered a “good war” by the American public in the wake of September 11th has quickly become a war of endless attrition. The reality of the costs of the war in terms of human lives and money is less glamorous, and the fact that the end of the war in Afghanistan is similar to the Iraq War, is even harder for the American public to come to terms with.



Figure 4-5 Warrior Airmen exhibit at NMUSAF

We see this illustrated in the USAF Museum in a recent addition of a theater experience, where mannequins are posed in a variety of positions and reenact a grueling and deadly mission that occurred in Afghanistan. Entitled “Warrior Airmen” the exhibit

highlights the valor and bravery of soldiers who enter dangerous situations in war torn areas of the countries where they are deployed. A narrator reads the events of the moment, while spotlights on the mannequins below shift the visitors focus between the different vignettes. First person dialogue and the sounds of helicopters and fire intensify the visitor experience. This exhibit is an attempt to bring the visitor into the moment with the direct the performance of the past. The focus is on this particular encounter with enemy forces, rather than on the larger war in Afghanistan. The result is an exhibit that focuses primarily on the positive aspects of the war that while painful can remain celebratory in nature. The exhibition attempts to place the visitor in the experience of war, to immerse and surround them with the sights and sounds. It is an attempt to make war “real”, the kind of interpretation that Winter warned against using in military museums due to the inability of accurately portraying the reality of war (2013, 161).

In another section of this Current Operations area entitled ‘Prime Ribs’ the discussion of making camp in foreign countries like Iraq and Afghanistan is illustrated through a video, and a small recreation of a tent. It humanizes the soldiers by showing the “everyday realities” a deployed soldier encounters (Whitmarsh 2001). The video shows men and women who are responsible for setting up tents, building mess halls, serving food, providing medical care, education, and entertainment for troops during their deployment. The video explains the typical life of soldiers while they are deployed, and how the military attempts to use comforts such as food and games to make deployments less stressful for the military. Soldier’s individuality is taken to consideration, noting that

each one has different challenges, wants, and needs while they are deployed. The daily reality, rather than a characterization of the soldier as valiant and heroic is presented (Hacker and Vining 2013, Winter 2013). Soldiers, like all of us, have moments of missing their family, their beds, or just going to see a movie at the local theater. The exhibit brings the abstract heroic figure of the Air Force service man or woman down to earth making them relevant to visitor. This attempt to bridge the gap between civilians and soldiers is an important part of moving towards a more engaging and democratized version of interpreting military history (Macdonald 2010, Saunders 2004, Simon 2010).

In this exhibit we see women as well as minorities in the video, showing the diverse range of individuals who sign up to serve their countries in the military. This is something that is absent from much of the rest of the interpretation in the museum where we frequently only see white male mannequins as representatives of veterans. This diversification reminds visitors of the multivocality behind the experience of war, and the importance of the individual experience, a critical necessity in a modernizing military museum (Hacker and Vining 2013, Winter 2013). With this exhibit we see the NMUSAF attempting to incorporate a more inclusive narrative and making a point of acknowledging the diversity of its armed forces. Though he was speaking primarily of ethnographic museums, Shelton's thoughts on diversification can be applied to military museums as well, as he notes that "multiple or plural interpretations" return the focus to the "speaking interpreting subject" are innovative interpretive strategies employed in museums looking to modernize their approach to history (Shelton 2011, 77-78).

The order and layout of the exhibits at the NMUSAF is chronological, and carries out the advancement of aviation technology from its inception during the early period of invention, culminating with the Wright Brothers in the early 20th century, all the way through to modern computers, drones, and other advanced military tactics. In walking through the museum the visitor participates in the ritual of visiting the nation's history, participating in embodied learning by physically making the symbolic pilgrimage through the museum from one significant technological achievement or conflict to another. In this participation, the visitor gains information about social codes and rules, most notably the nationalistic, patriotic and heroic metanarrative the museum's exhibits present. Through this interpretation the visitor is encoded with social memories in the form of "habit memories" (Connerton 2004, 35). A visitor participates in nation building aspects of the museum that tell Americans stories about who they are through significant cultural artifacts (Macdonald 2010) by reenacting or following a prescribed path of progression (Connerton 1989). This offers the visitor a meaning-making experience through the use of an authentic landscape where the visitor can participate in visiting a site of significant national importance (Jarecka 2013).

Objects

Objects in the military museum are vital to anthropological analysis. As first-hand accounts of events disappear, material culture is all that remains of war. Material culture, subject to changing historical importance, collective memory and multivocality means

that it is a vital resource in investigating the military museum and its contents as a cultural artifact (Saunders 2004, 6). By the nature of its collection and mission, the primary object and subject of the National Museum of the United States Air Force is the plane. All other objects in this museum are dwarfed in size and importance by the plane collection.

Objects other than the planes are stored in archetypical museum cases, placed in walls and more or less at the 60-inch height that is considered standard museum exhibition protocol (Serrell 1996). Unlike museums in Belgium, London, or German we see no attempt to use displays on the floor, angular walls, or artistic mounting in order to change the visitors' perspective of the object (Pieken and Rogg 2012, Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013). They are displayed classically on shelves, with mounts to prop them up, and standard lighting techniques in order to illuminate observation. Some cases are packed tightly with objects overwhelming the space, and limited interpretation describes the contents. This style of display offers a traditional model of the military museum where overwhelming the visitor with objects, typology, and technological awe has been more important, and even preferable to interpretation (Cornish 2004).

Some planes receive more interpretation than others. Bockscar for example has several text panels designated to it, as well as a video.



Figure 4-6 Bockscar on display at NMUSAF. Nuclear bombs displayed under its wing.

Only planes with a significant technical and national history receive this amount of interpretation. The vast majority receives much less. Bockscar and other planes that draw significant amounts of attention like the B2 Bomber in another gallery are more prominently placed along main aisles and close to entry and exit doors. Other, less well known planes are set back shown in conjunction with others or hung high from the ceiling. Here we see the social life of objects that Appadurai refers to (1986), once objects of war, with only a utilitarian function, they are now transformed into museal objects. In this way, the planes are assigned new cultural meanings. Planes like Bockscar, who performed symbolically important acts of violence during WWII receive more attention, focus, and respect while other planes, that were seen to have less significant influence on the war while still preserved, receive less interpretation and focus. The

object's role in the cultural narrative of nationhood dictates the importance the museum places on it, as well as its popularity with visitors.

Some planes have vignettes set up around them. This is particularly the case for planes that are known to have participated in a significant historical event over the course of their "lives" (Appadurai 1986). Scenes from the active life of the plane surround it, creating the illusion of action around the plane. Mannequins are posed in motion, seemingly discussing the issue they are working on while they operate on the plane. Palm trees and sand are all around, and the exhibit developers attempt to take the visitor to a different time and place through this staging process. These vignettes are attempts on the part of museum to create further instruction on the ways of seeing the past, illustrating what they feel the visitor may not be able to imagine, or "correctly" imagine through their personal memories (Crane 1997, Macdonald 2003, Whitmarsh 2001).

Other planes sit motionless, a medium sized text panel giving the history of this particular model of plane, what it was used for, its technical specifications and any information that the museum has on that specific plane's time in action. This last version is the most common for military or aviation museums (Cornish 2004, Saunders 2004, Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013). The plane as an object that can stand alone is employed at the NMUSAF, but also at the Flugwerft Schleissheim Aviation Museum in Munich, Germany. Even if German approaches to military exhibits in the MHMB are different from U.S. military museums, other museums in Germany still use very similar approaches as they rely on traditional methods of museum exhibition, where objects

speak for themselves and have limited interpretation (Ames 1992, Vergo 1989). With the museums' choice to forgo more than cursory interpretation the planes represent traditional models of staging military technology in which the object is more important than its context (Cornish 2004) This is a model that was perfected during its establishment and has been a part of western military museum exhibition since the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ultimately the objects at the museum at the National Museum of the United States Air Force are set apart from the visitor. They are mounted in traditional ways and interpretation varies with the importance of the individual place in the metanarrative. Attempts to “reorient” the visitor through new perspectives or techniques or use anthropological concepts to interpret objects are absent in the museum (Pieken and Roggs 2012, Winter 2013). This is due in part to space but also engages with traditional approaches to exhibiting objects which involves erecting barriers between the object and the visitor.

In the midst of these planes there are signs explaining to the visitor what their contact with the object should be like. For the purposes of recreating the emphasis of the sign I have left the capitalization choices and content of the museum's sign intact. The explanation reads:

WHY WE ASK YOU NOT TO TOUCH.

**WE HOPE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN – and their grandchildren too –
WILL SOMEDAY VISIT THE USAF MUSEUM. WE HOPE the aircraft
engines, items of aviation art, and other ARTIFACTS WILL BE HERE**

FOR THEM TO SEE, STUDY, AND ENJOY IN THE FUTURE, IN JUST AS FINE CONDITION AS THEY ARE TODAY.

THIS IS WHY WE ASK YOU NOT TO TOUCH.

Almost everybody knows that a painting is fragile and may be damaged by even the most gentle touch. Few people realize that the same is true of a metallic object, even something as rugged and strong as a WWII cargo plane or a supersonic jet fighter. THE TRACES OF MOISTURE FROM A FINGERTIP CAN BEGIN TO REMOVE THE PROTECTIVE COATINGS FROM THE FINEST ALUMINUM SHEET OR START THE RUSTING PROCSS OF THE STRONGEST AIRCRAFT STEEL. THE FABRIC CONTROL SURFACES OR PLASTIC DISPLAY CASES QUICKLY SHOW THE EFFECTS OF REPEATED EXAMINATION BY HANDS, FINGERNAILS AND JEWELRY.

Children cannot be expected to understand unless you instruct them and, also, control their actions in the museum. A MUSEUM IS A SERIOUS PLACE, AN INSTITUTION FOR STUDY, CONTEMPLATION AND PLEASURE – IT IS NOT A PLAYGROUND.

PLEASE HELP US PRESERVE OUR COLLECTION (National Museum of the US Air Force 2014).

This sign takes a stern tone, giving visitors precise directions on how to interact with objects and even the display cases that enclose the object. It signifies the museum's attempt to indoctrinate visitors with certain social codes and rules (Connerton 2004), teaching them through signage and behavior how to engage with the objects taking a more didactic approach rather than a dialogical one (Shelton 2011, 77).

The mention of the museum as a place of contemplation harkens back to Duncan's ideas of rituals being sometimes silent moments of reflection or contemplation, as well as to older approaches of museum interpretation where the authentic object possesses innate and sacred "facts" that the visitor can understand simply by viewing the

object (Duncan 1995, Jarecka 2013). The idea of the museum being a serious place is generally speaking an older approach used in museums, when they were seen as scholarly research institutions alone, only available to those that understood the coded behavior and language inside (Duncan 1995).

The statement that the “Museum is a serious place” and “not a playground” is also significant. New museum theory and the ideology of the democratized museum often encourages other ways of seeing and engaging with the museum, often including play, not only for children but for adults as well. Simon would argue that interacting with the exhibits, being able to touch and engage with them, gives visitors the ability to participate in the museum, resulting in a more meaningful experience. Creating barriers by putting “do not touch” signs everywhere, and strongly worded signs like this one can create unintended significant barriers between the visitor and the museum (Simon 2010).

Despite the NMUSAF’s firm signage on the museum being a serious place they engage children and adults in a number of programs. Many of the programs have crafts and playtime activities like flying kites as part of their lineup. They use these programs to help supplement interpretation in the museum, and also to diversify the opportunity to learn.

Programming

The NMUSAF has a wide variety of program offerings, with many focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education, a theme frequently

found in military museums following traditional models of interpretation. This emphasis on STEM education, and on the advancement of technology rather than the history of war and conflict allows the museum to reframe its educational missions to focus on what it considers the positives effects of its existence – technological advancement. For the purpose of this thesis I chose to focus on the public program offerings which were widely publicized on the website, through social media, and available in the galleries and included STEM modules and concepts.

During the Family Day Program, a number of STEM oriented programs were available. In the Early Flight gallery, children had the opportunity to learn about vortexes through the use of two pop bottles connected and filled with water. In the Cold War Gallery, they were given the opportunity to climb into flight simulators and fly kites to learn about lift. Outside, children flew oversized kites against the background of large cargo planes. This programming recreated much of the narrative within the Early Flight gallery, focusing on technology and making that aspect accessible to children rather than the social and cultural context of the Wright Brothers, or the economic or social catalysts behind the impetus for the race to invent a lighter than air flight. These programs are the kind that visitors expect in an institution that focuses on STEM technology in its narratives, and are in line with collective memories about the Wright Brothers as inventors first, and people second. They allow children to recreate the process of inventing, exploring the scientific principles with modern technology. They practice reenacting a similar historic process to what the Wright Brothers might have done as they

honed ideas for how to move from bicycle to plane. These educational activities much like walking through the museum, provide the repetition and ritualistic qualities new members to the community may participate in to create the social and collective memories that encode community understandings of history and communal culture (Connerton 1989, Macdonald 2003) Future programming for the NMUSAF is outlined in their website, discussing plans for the new fourth gallery and the education programming inside of it. It primarily focuses on STEM education, and learning nodes:

NMUSAF education programs cover multiple disciplines, focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as social studies, literature and art.

STEM Learning Nodes...will allow museum staff to facilitate new STEM experiences, while guest scientists and engineers from Air Force organizations, the aerospace industry, and area colleges and universities will be invited to share their expertise. When the nodes are not in use for scheduled programs, multimedia presentations will captivate public audiences.

The Space Shuttle Exhibit and the space program represent avenues for a multidisciplinary approach to the curriculum, principally through emphasis on STEM. These hands-on, participatory programs will allow students and teachers to explore such topics as space science, the atmosphere, speed regimes, force and motion, aerospace vehicle design, aerodynamics, propulsion, thrust, weight, lift, drag, stability and control, orbital mechanics, and thermodynamics (National Museum of the US Air Force 2015).

Much like the museum exhibits, programming at the museum continues to put emphasis on STEM education. This is likely due to cultural preferences in the United States which focus on STEM education as crucial to the future, and the technological narrative as a

means of continuing its military supremacy and global power. In this focus on STEM we see the changing cultural values manifest in the museum, which is something we would expect if we take into account Anderson and Macdonald's assertions about the national museum being a place where the national narrative is imagined and held (Anderson 1983, Macdonald 2003). While technically multidisciplinary through its mission statement (National Museum of the US Air Force 2015), the focus on STEM education largely ignores a range of liberal arts disciplines in its interpretation. This approach overlooks the root of many conflicts, which are differences in cultural values and priorities. To avoid these topics creates programming that does not problematize those relationships, or investigate or analyze the human relationship with violent acts (Hacker and Vining 2013, Pieken and Roggs 2012, Winter 2013). While it is the most prominent, STEM programming isn't the only type of programming the museum does.

At the WWI Anniversary Day Program that was held out on the airfield, WWI era planes, some original and other replicas, took off and landed on the original air strip in front of the museum. A parade of WWI era cars stretched out, and soldier reenactors in WWI uniforms marched across the grounds. Visitors entered through a recreated trench and were greeted by a number of WWI era tents. Reenactors discussed weapons and technology of the day in uniform, an attempt to recreate WWI for visitors and create an embodied experience of the war through visual, oral, and interpretive reenactments that were intended to be both commemorative and educational (Connerton 1989). Announcers stressed the "authenticity" of the day, but historical events cannot be perfectly

remembered or reenacted as each performance is contextualized and influenced by the narratives and memory of those participating in the ritual at any given time (Connerton 1989, Saunders 2004, Tilley 1994). When a live demonstration of one of the 100-year-old engines was performed, the announcer again stressed the authentic nature of the sound, and the rarity of anyone from the current day having actually heard the sound of the engine. He discussed at length, the time, strength and physical ability on the part of the soldiers required to set the propellers in motion by hand, in order to start the plane while the technicians performed the action. Jay Winter noted that this type of “war authenticity” was dangerous, offering a voyeuristic and entertainment value that excites crowds but provides no real context for the realities of war (Seavers 2015, Winter 2013). When war is recontextualized through these kinds of programs and reenactments, packaged so that it is easily consumed by visitors seeking entertainment, it can remove the elements of human suffering and loss (Hacker and Vining 2013). This can make war into something kitsch and attractive, complicating the public’s perception of what the reality of war is and further complicating the relationship between the military and the public (Winter 2013).

Even if the museum has difficulty in implementing permanent exhibitions or interpretation within the museum that explores different or alternative methods of seeing conflict and war, framing them in the context of social and cultural causes or within anthropological framework, it is even more telling that programming is not used for that purpose. Programming is one of the efficient ways museums can enhance or alter

exhibition interpretation, and also one of the best ways to draw in more visitors and different communities. Seeing an absence of this in addition to the strict adherence to the national narrative and didactic storytelling through a chronological method offers evidence that the National Museum of the United States Air Force Museum prefers traditional museum models over new museum theory. To investigate this further, it is important to single out an exhibit for further depth.

Bombing Exhibit

At the NMUSAF museum one of objects that the museum prides itself on as a visitor attraction is Bockscar, a silver-plated B-29 bomber from WWII. While it is much less well-known than its counterpart the Enola Gay, it flew the second atomic bombing mission of WWII to Nagasaki. As mentioned earlier, the Enola Gay currently sits at the Udvar-Hazy wing of the National Air and Space Museum, far from the National Mall, where it has little interpretation attached to it. In contrast, Bockscar sits as a central piece in the WWII Gallery at the NMUSAF, with several panels of interpretation, surrounded by examples of the atomic bombs ‘Fat Boy’ and ‘Little Man’ as well as a video interpreting their history. The B-29 is also a major stop on the gallery tour circuit, where the tour guide discusses the plane and the plane’s mission.

The plane looms large in the gallery, overwhelming the space, and visitors are roped off at a distance, but still walk under its wings to circle it. A small Japanese plane sits encircled with it, tucked under one of the B-29’s large wings. This form of spatial

proximity communicates through space and juxtaposition social and political ideas through the interplay of monuments, in this case planes, and landscape, in this case the museum's exhibit space (Tilley 1994, 202). Whether intentional or unintentional serves as a symbolic reminder of the United States' domination over the Japanese at the end of the war. This display constructs the nationalist metanarrative, reaffirming visitor's predilections and assumptions that the US is heroic and good, despite the measures it had to take in order to achieve that victory.

While there is more interpretation for Bockscar than there is for Enola Gay in its current display, the interpretation still blatantly shies away from any sort of political confrontation or admission of wrongdoing. Instead we see the reassertion of a triumphant and celebratory narrative that was used to interpret the history of the Enola Gay (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013). These narratives constitute a safe space where the museum does not come into collision with public expectations or collective memories (Macdonald 2010, Post 2013, Winter 2010, Winter 2013).

Most importantly, the Japanese are completely absent from the narrative, except for one photo of a surrendering general on a ship. The historic aerial video clips only show the plumes of smoke, avoiding any visual reference to the people and the destruction below. Any reference to the death toll, or suffering is absent. The narrative here fails to give a plural voice to the history of the atomic bomb, leaving out many of the stakeholders directly invested even within the Air Force. In discussing the Nuremberg Rally Grounds, Macdonald examined the ways that pieces of history and cultures can be

“officially killed by silence” when objects or experiences of those people are removed or hidden from the public or not placed on exhibit (2008). In this case, the Japanese experience of the atomic bomb is officially killed by silence as it was in the Enola Gay exhibit (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013).

The text surrounding the exhibition of Bockscar mimics the narrative in the video, focusing on the American experience, creating an authoritative narrative, and leaving little room for questioning of the decision to use the atomic bomb. In a panel entitled “Bockscar: The Aircraft that Ended World War II” the decision to use atomic bombs on the Japanese is contextualized:

...Estimates of Allied casualties ranged from 250,000 to a million with much greater losses to the Japanese. To repel invaders, Japan had a veteran army of some two million ready, an army that had already shown its ferocity and fanaticism in combat. Some 8,000 military aircraft were available that could be used for devastating Kamikaze (suicide) attacks on U.S. ships. The draft had been extended to include men from age 15 to 60 and women from 17 to 45, adding millions of civilians ready to defend their homeland to the death, with sharpened sticks if necessary.

Experience throughout the Pacific war had shown that Japanese combat casualties had run from five to 20 times those suffered by the Allies, particularly in the battles of the Philippines and Okinawa. Whatever the predicted Allied losses, the potential Japanese military and civilian casualties would have been staggering. Whether Japan would have surrendered prior to invasion without the use of the atomic bombs is a question that can never be answered. Using the history and projections available to him, President Harry Truman made the grave decision to use the atomic bomb in an effort to end the war quickly, thus avoiding a costly invasion (National Museum of the US Air Force 2014).

The statement that the question of whether or not Japan would have surrendered before invasion can “never be answered” is a very didactic approach in interpretation. It is problematic, because it dismisses the question as not worth asking since it can never be answered, stifling dialogue with visitors (Simon 2010). The description of the Japanese as ferocious and fanatical, combined with portrayals of them as defending their homeland with sharpened sticks projects an image of the Japanese as savage and incapable of reason. There is a focus on othering, describing the Japanese in terms that make them seem so culturally different from the United States that their actions could not be understood through Western social constructs. Similar tactics were used in early museum exhibits where making another culture seem exotic was a point of interpretation used to emphasize the moral or cultural superiority of the country the museum belonged within (Ames 1992). We see this aim furthered with the narrative about the United States. The U.S. in contrast is framed as the reasonable and benevolent actor in the event, choosing to drop bombs in order to spare the Japanese ‘much greater losses’. This is a recontextualization of the event in order to underscore a positive narrative for the US during WWII, and to avoid running contrary to public emotions about a ‘good war’. Martin Harwit and the curators of the Enola Gay exhibit in 1994 attempted to revisit the humanity of the Japanese in interpretive text and found themselves at an impasse with those who believed it was historical revisionism (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013). Though the tour guide was unable to provide a date for the exhibit’s installation the age of television and video equipment as well as exhibit furniture hinted that the

Bockscar exhibit might have been created during the era where the Enola Gay controversy was fresh in curator's minds. This might have made them hesitant to create an exhibit that was not celebratory in nature (Post 2013).

In another text panel in front of the aircraft entitled "The Aftermath of the Mission"

Even after the second atomic bomb attack, disagreement raged within the Japanese government between peace advocates and those who urged continued resistance. An attempted coup by militant extremists failed, and on Aug. 14, Japan surrendered unconditionally. In a break with tradition, Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender in a recorded radio message. Japan accepted the terms of the July 26 Potsdam Declaration calling for unconditional surrender -- terms which the Japanese had rejected previously. This was the first time the Japanese people had ever heard their emperor's voice, and some Japanese officers committed suicide upon hearing his decision. On Aug. 28, U.S. aircraft began landing the first occupation forces at Tokyo. B-29s now were flying relief missions, dropping food, medicine and other supplies to U.S. Allied prisoners at some 150 Japanese prisoner-of-war camps.

Americans generally felt no moral dilemma over the dropping of the atomic bombs. The surrender ended more than a decade of Japanese aggression in Asia and the Pacific. After three and one-half years of brutal warfare following Pearl Harbor, Americans anxiously awaited the homecoming of surviving service personnel and a return to peacetime normalcy. To an American POW working in a coal mine near Nagasaki when the atomic bomb detonated, the bomb meant survival. He weighed only 98 pounds after 40 months of captivity (National Museum of the US Air Force 2014).

The statement that Americans generally felt no moral dilemma over dropping the atomic bombs is problematic in historical context since even Hap Arnold, General

of the Army Air Force and many other military strategists at the time of the bomb had strategic and moral qualms about the necessity of the use of the bomb according to historic documents (Alperovitz 1995). The narrative also generalizes the American population into one homogenous group, rather than addressing differing opinions and motivations, something that visitors interested in engagement on the subject might find counterproductive to dialogue.

In this paragraph we see the recontextualization of the B-29 bomber from 'bad' object to 'good one'. While the primary service the bomber carried out for the U.S. military was firebombing missions, and ultimately the dropping of the atomic bombs, the interpretation is quick to point out the B-29 as a plane that eventually flew relief missions. This speaks to the metanarrative of WWII as the 'good war' (Linenthal 1996, Post 2013). Even inanimate objects, such as planes that played a role in the war, must be given a chance at atonement. Through this interpretative text we see the social role of Bockscar change taking on new meanings in the museum through the context of the metanarrative the museum communicates, and the renegotiation of what the military plane means in the collective memory of the American people (Appadurai 1986, Connerton 1989, Saunders 2004).

Bockscar is the epitome of interpretation at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, as one of the prize objects in the collection of the museum it gets more extensive and complex interpretation than many of the other

objects, and as a result can be used as a representative artifact. Bockscar offers a celebratory narrative, praising veterans' sacrifices and American victory, over enemies during WWII and over the unknown as scientific advancements like the Manhattan project and the silver-plated bomber brought about a new era in technology. It reinforces the American narrative of exceptionalism, focusing on how Americans at home and at war through patriotism and hard work, overcame obstacles in a way that no other country or culture was capable of at the time. To get a better contextual understanding of the National Museum of the United States Air Force it is important to frame it in a comparative light. Seeing another museum's approaches to exhibits and collections illuminates alternative theories. In the next chapter, I turn to the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr in Dresden.

Chapter 5 Analysis of the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) Place and Architecture

The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (MHMB) is located in an older part of Dresden, but outside the ring of the Altstadt, or Old City, where many of the other palaces and museums are located. A tram ride from the center of the city to the location of the museum, is a trip through decades of architecture and occupation from Baroque and Rococo, to Cold War era apartment buildings intermixed with more modern intrusions. Dresden wears many of the sociopolitical scars of its past, from the 1940s and the rise of Nazism, the subsequent bombings during the war, the Russian sacking of the city after the fall to the Allied Forces, to the rise of Communism, and the city's ultimate return to unified Germany in the 1990s. The architecture and the organization of the communities within the city are testaments to its complicated past.

In February of 1945, due to its strategic location with access to rail lines and industrial complex, the city was firebombed intensively by Allied Forces, with British and American planes leading the raids. Damage to buildings and infrastructure was catastrophic, and the loss of human life was enormous. Historians do not agree on the exact number of civilian deaths, as soldiers were not on the ground to count the bodies and by February of 1945, German forces and political groups were spread thin, making it

difficult to come up with a true estimate from the other side. The general consensus, however, is that roughly 22-25,000 people were killed between February 13th and 15th of 1945 during the raids (Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr 2012).

After the end of the war, Russian armies marched on Dresden. German treatment of Russians in earlier parts of the war had been abysmal and when Russian forces moved in to the city they sacked what was left after the bombings, carrying significant portions of German cultural goods with them as they left. Germans that were unable to escape the city were subjected to harsh and violent treatment from the invading Russian forces. Dresden, which to this day is a center for museums and heritage, was plundered. Many pieces of cultural heritage looted during World War II by the Russians, still sit in Russian museums to this day, as many Russians see them as a form of war reparations. Ultimately, Dresden in 1945 was a battlefield, marred by war in physical and cultural ways and served a symbolic representation in popular culture in the west for many other German cities. The landscape of Dresden is deeply embedded with political and commemorative history and meanings. AS Saunders noted in discussing sites of conflict, they are not “inert empty backgrounds, nor solely terrains of commemorative monumentality” (Saunders 2004, 7). Dresden is more than a neutral canvas, but rather “constituted by differential densities of human experience, attachment and involvement” (Tilley 1994, 11). The complexity of Dresden’s space is illustrated in and engaged in its military museum.

The palatial building complex is set on top of a hill at the corner of Koenigsbrueker Strasse and Stauffenbergalle. The latter street being named after the famous Claus von Stauffenberg, who was executed for his central role in Operation Valkyrie, one of the most famous organized attempts to assassinate Hitler. The placement of the museum on this street, which frequently juxtaposes opposing viewpoints on war and peace throughout its installations, adds another layer of dimension and created social context (Tilley 1994, 11). The museum, the largest object in the collection, also sees itself contextualized within the larger history of Dresden in its location in a neighborhood overlooking the older part of the city. It is then juxtaposed at the cross streets of Kings Bridge, named after the quintessential leader of a period often thought of as a golden age in military history viewed through a retrospectively nostalgic lens, and a Stauffenberg's alley, named for a man who famously turned against party and country to take out the most nefarious leader in German history during some of the darkest days of European history. Here we see the crossroads in the landscape between what might be considered the lightest and darkest points in Germany's military history metanarrative, each with a complex and layered sub narrative. Dresden is a place that bears the scars of a violent past reflected as something "political and dynamic...constantly open to renegotiation" (Bender 1993, 276). The museum then becomes a literal and figurative crossroads where history meets with the present, and Dresden's old city comes into collision with Dresden as a modern and cosmopolitan metropolis, which is only further emphasized with the new architecture.

The Libeskind shard in the building was introduced as part of a major renovation for the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr. Libeskind's plan for the architecture was to create a division within the museum, driving a shard of shrapnel through the original neoclassical building. It would symbolically represent a separation with previous German history, as well as a separation from earlier military history interpretation. The shard section also represented the literal separation of the new interpretation from the older, chronological interpretation in the galleries. While all of the galleries have been extensively renovated, the newer more avant-garde style galleries reside almost exclusively within the shard's physical footprint.



Figure 5-1 The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr.

From the outside of the building though, the shard looks similar to some of Libeskind's buildings. The sharp steel jutting up and out from various angles of the building looks only slightly different from the same sharp steel jutting up and out from other Libeskind buildings such as the Denver Art Museum, the Imperial Museum North, and the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Libeskind's use of the same architectural structure and ambiance on so many buildings result in the architectural language losing its effectiveness as a form of disruption. There is a certain irony to the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Military History Museum of the German Armed Forces having the same architect. It seems to speak more to the vernacular of Libeskind's architecture having a star quality rather than what museum developers were presumably attempting to achieve, which was speaking thoughtfully and critically to the social and cultural issues the architecture attempts to convey. The use of Libeskind's architecture repeatedly throughout museums that are attempting to problematize their architecture, exhibits, objects and history, seems to be counterproductive. While Libeskind's vernacular was chosen to subvert norms about military museums, Libeskind's architectural choices may already be a new normal for museums with problematic or complicated heritage.

The symbolic representation present in the architecture at the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr is still a critical part of the renovation of the building. Libeskind emphasized the symbolic importance of the design in his own words:

The new façade's openness and transparency is intended to contrast with the opacity and rigidity of the existing building. The latter represents the severity of the authoritarian past, while the former reflects the

transparency of the military in a democratic society. The interplay between these perspectives forms the character of the new Military History Museum. (Libeskind 2015).

The “interplay of perspectives” is also important in the other ways the building serves as a symbol of Germany. The shard represents the violence of war on the people of Germany and those outside of Germany, by the German people. The shrapnel through the museum building, is symbolically the shrapnel that so many soldiers found in their own bodies, the severing and dismembering of bodies in WWI and WWII, and also of soldiers and civilians outside of Germany that fell to German armaments. The shard also stands as a physical representation, in the way the shard severs the old building representative of old museum nation-hood and neoclassical architecture, of the division of Germany, the ultimate cost of the World Wars. It can also be seen as symbolic of the disarmament of Germans post WWII, where the military was broken and fragmented not only from losing two consecutive wars but as a result of international sanction for their war crimes. It was a metaphorical wound that not only the German military would have to recover from, but the German population as a whole. This would come to represent decades of ongoing readjustments to the past in an effort to find new ways to define who they were and would be in the future, in relation to a difficult past (Macdonald 2008)

The cold steel and concrete of the building, and the awkward, angular and dystopian style of the building on the inside helps to set a tone for the exhibitions that other military museums that house their designs in typical four walled rooms do not have. In the same way Macdonald described the Documentation Center in Nuremberg as being

disorienting and changing visitor perspectives and relations to objects through that disorientation, or the way the Jewish Museum in Berlin used angles and unexpected architectural devices like the use of light and concrete to make visitors uncomfortable, the MHMB used architecture to disorient and reorient visitors (Macdonald 2008). Visitors are forced to look up around themselves, walk over cage-like floors that call to kinds of floors that submarines and navy vessels typically have, and duck and weave as they make their way through narrow hallways. In another room, a bullet from the largest gun ever designed, made in the WWII, lays in stark relief and shadows.



Figure 5-2 A bullet from the largest gun ever made during the Nazi era. Libeskind's architecture and windows of light give a unique perspective on the object.

The walls and ceilings of this part of the museum are not what the visitor would expect, and much like the objects and interpretation housed within them, they are a jarring experience as the visitor moves from the chronological neoclassical temple-like halls of the rest of the museum. The visitor is forced to confront not only an uncomfortable past, but what is also, though much milder, uncomfortable present. These architectural elements in the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr result in a dizzying and disorienting effect, much the same as the Nuremberg Rally Grounds architecture employs with its glass floors and pathways cut through the original façade of the building (Macdonald 2008).

Even moving through the building can create constant ruptures for the visitor. The visitor has two choices to ascend the floors in the museum. The steps, which are neoclassical in nature, as well as wide and broad in their expanse. They have a marble like façade and white walls rise above, with broad windows allowing visitors a view to the outside. In order to access the stairs, the visitor must return to the older part of the building to climb them, and classic looking portraits line the walls. While this staircase is in keeping with the architecture of the older part of the building, walking through it after visiting the themed galleries in the new addition is very jarring. In walking through the thematic galleries and then back into the hallways the visitor leaves the modern, new museum theory based interpretation, and returns to the older traditional model of interpretation through the architectural features. The second option, is the elevator that lies within the shard wing of the building. The elevator is a steel barred cage. The cold

steel and the tight space gives visitors a feeling of imprisonment as they ride from one level to the next and containing the visitor within the thematic approach. Again, the architecture is used to convey the embodiment of the soldier's experience, making the visitor uncomfortable, claustrophobic and somewhat disoriented. Like the Jewish Museum in Berlin and the Documentation Center in Nuremberg the architecture plays a role in making the visitor reenact similar feelings and emotions in order to engage with the cultural material from a different perspective (Pieken and Rogg 2012).

The architecture in the Military Museum of the Bundeswehr plays a critical role in visitor expectations and perceptions. From the outside, as the visitor climbs the steps, the shard jammed through the front of the temple-like façade communicates immediately that the visitors should expect something different from a traditional military museum. What they find inside breaks with previous cultural understandings and traditional models of what military museums were in the past. Museum architecture plays an important role in setting visitor expectations and communicating narratives. It creates more than just a container for the exhibits and objects, but goes beyond to add to the social relationships and cultural negotiations that happen between the visitor and the exhibits, and between civilians and the military (Tilley 1994, 11).

Exhibitions: Order and Layout

The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr is arranged into two separate sets of galleries. The first being the chronological galleries which lead the visitor from the 1300s up through the modern day. The displays here are uniformly presented in equally sized black cases with large window fronts, and white lined interiors. Objects are variously displayed on the wall, shelves, and bottoms of the cases as necessary. The cases are utilitarian and static, serving as literal and figurative blank canvases for the material displayed in them.



Figure 5-3 Display at the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr.

This presentation is very different from other sections of the museum, where cases are set at odd angles, unique heights, and are composed of primarily of polygons. This

presentation, at least from the exterior, is in line with visitor expectations of a classic museum, presenting items in the style that old museology did.

The chronology begins with the 30 years' war, a turning point in German history, and leads on through the ages of knights and pikes, to long and broadswords. The knights' armor and pikes and spears stand in order and formation, reminiscent of how they might have appeared in pitched battle.



Figure 5-4 Armor displayed at the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr.

The visitor continues through the hallways, as a history of Germany's early kingdoms progresses. The visitor carries out the embodiment of the progression of time and invention as interpretive texts educates them on methods of warfare and armor creation.

Even in the chronological gallery, there are thought-provoking breaks with traditional interpretation. In one section, the entire character of the knight is called into question as well as the morality of the Christian church:

The miles christianus, the noble Christian warrior who used his sword and shield to protect those in need, was a frequent subject in medieval art and even today is part of our image of the knight...Crusaders, however, repeatedly massacred both non-Christians and Christians. Gruesome acts of violence stood in stark contrast to the moral claims of Christian charity and compassion made by the church (Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr 2015).

The interpretation is a rupture with previous narratives. Knights play an important role in the collective memory as symbolic representations of “good” in our collective history. This can create a feeling of discomfort for the visitor as they try to reconcile collective memories that may have become quite personal through fairy tales they were told as children, or envisioned through popular culture mediums like film (Winter 2013). If visitors are unable to come to terms with these new assertions on fundamentally held beliefs, it can result in feelings of discomfort and even anger, as Shelton saw in so many guest books at the Vancouver museum, and can be seen in many online visitor reviews of the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr (Shelton 2011). Though ultimately, these ruptures and reorientations were the results the curator hoped to achieve in order to reorient the visitor with objects of war and preconceived notions of morality and justification in war (Pieken 2012).

These ruptures and reorientations carry over into the rest of the chronological galleries. Part II of the chronology is the age of the World Wars. The exhibit begins with a brief but important introduction:

The period from the beginning of World War I to the end of World War II is occasionally referred to as a second Thirty Years' War. The enormous violence of World War I continued in World War II and led to the destruction of millions of human lives. The genocide of the European Jews represented an unimaginable abuse of state and military power (Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr 2012).

This statement at the beginning of the chronological galleries confronts a frequent criticism of military and war museums in Germany: that Germans, in building memorials and museums to WWII, avoid taking direct responsibility for their responsibility in the destruction of the continent and the Holocaust (Macdonald 2008). The proclamation that the state and military are capable of abusing their power is one that is rarely seen in military history museums, especially when the criticism is aimed at the military hosting the interpretation. This self-reflective statement indicates that while the orientation and layout of this set of galleries might be traditional, the interpretation is a much more modern take on museums (Shelton 2011).

The other set of galleries, thematically oriented, make their way up the four stories of Libeskind's shard. The thematic response was an intentional one on the part of the curators and directors at the museum who wanted to make a purposeful break with previous military history interpretation (Pieken 2012). The thematic galleries deconstruct

previous narratives about chronology and technological development, instead presenting the cultural material of war from a more anthropological perspective. Dates, figures and chronologies are less important in these galleries with theory, context, and dialogue taking their place. This was done with purpose, in order to discuss the war as a uniquely human experience fraught with social and cultural cause consequences and to avoid a focus on Nazism within Germany during that period (Pieken 2012).

The thematic portion of the museum begins with a video art installation by artist Charles Sandison of the words love and hate wrapping their way around the uneven walls in an erratic manner, tumbling and tossing across the visual plane. The visitor is confronted with a question about what drives people to war. The intervention of artists within the museum and exhibit is one of the signs Shelton tells us we will see in museums that are attempting to engage in new museum theory (Shelton 2011). At the very beginning we see an attempt to address the subjective, and create a dialogical relationship with the visitor on the notion of war.

The visitor then enters the Militar und Technologie (Military and Technology) gallery. This gallery is what can traditionally be expected in a military museum, one that shows the technological advancement and recalls the need for technological supremacy in order to impose one country's will on another, something that was seen in the National Museum of the United States Air Force's Bockscar exhibit. Instead however, the exhibition is a reflexive look on the permeable relationship between the civilian and military realms of the government, and the uses of technology for destructive and

conservative purposes. It humanizes both war and the technology of the military make it relevant and accessible to the average citizen, something Hacker and Vining point out as vital to military museums that wish to make them relatable and valuable to the public (2013).

The Leiden am Krieg (Suffering in War) gallery features the ways that war causes human suffering from sickness, death, amputation and rape, the gallery asks the visitor to confront some of the worst realities of war. A black walled in gallery sits in the midst of the larger gallery. A sign warns visitors with children and sensitivities that the material inside will be difficult and features human remains and other difficult heritage that the museum did not feel comfortable putting on outward display. By closing this section off the museum also gives the visitor the opportunity and the choice as to whether or not to enter and confront this part of military history. They are given additional choices once they walk inside the small gallery. If the visitor wants to view what is behind them, they must make the choice to pull down the loop and reveal the contents.

This part of the exhibition presents a ritual experience for the visitor, where he or she enters a cloistered or sacred space in order to carry out the ritual of reflection (Connerton 1989, Duncan 1995, Winter 2013). The room is unlike the rest of the museum, more darkly lit and shadowed. Rather than exposing these horrible parts of the war they are still kept partly hidden, allowing the visitor to choose how and when to engage with it, empowering the visitor to make choices within the museum (Simon

2010). This Suffering in War section of the museum, in particular the closed off trapezoid has a memorial nature to it.

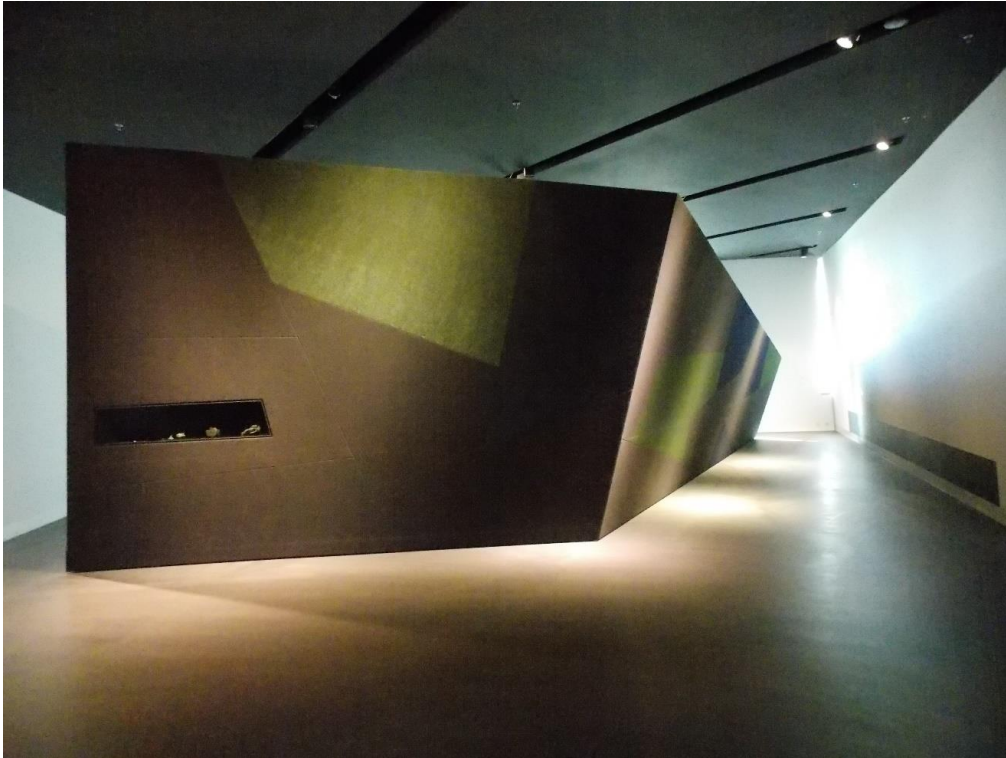


Figure 5-5 Monument at Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr

The black trapezoid represents a tomb or a cenotaph, similar to the concept of the Unknown Soldier. It is a place within the museum that visitors go to observe the suffering and sacrifices of those who came before. It holds human and cultural material remains that symbolically represent the suffering and loss and engage with collective memories of that period (Cornish 2004, Saunders 2004). However, the interpretation surrounding this part of the exhibit focuses more on the loss of life as a horrible consequence of war, reflecting on topics like rape, disfigurement and death the exhibit is far from the heroic

metanarratives that we see in the National Museum of the United States Air Force. It confronts uncomfortable heritage in a more direct way, choosing to discuss those subjects in the context of social choices to go to war, and the social and cultural behaviors around morality and justification during periods of warfare. Where other parts of the museum, particularly in the chronological gallery, present soldiers' sacrifices in a more honorable way through uniformed photos and stories about noble deaths, in this part of the museum we see another side much like the critical reflection on the knight. This variety of interpretation offers multivocality, the museum visitor engages with multiple viewpoints on the war and on soldiers, instead of receiving only a didactic heroic interpretation. This kind of multivocality and self-reflexive interpretation is a hallmark of the interpretation we expect to find in a museum that is implementing new museum theory and changing traditional methods of interpretation (Shelton 2011).

The *Militar und Gesellschaft* gallery, or the Civil-Military gallery, outlines the places where military and civilian lives intersect, overlap and interact. It focuses on the contact zone that happens not only in regular life, but also within the museum where visitors frequently have no military experience. It features a sections on language, fashion, music, and children's toys. This exhibit is unique for a military museum, choosing to focus on the intersection of military and civilian life rather than draw a line between it with heroic narratives, complicated terminology and specifications, and the reinforcement of the othering of soldiers. The choice to make this connection, and to draw a likeness between the two expresses in a physical manifestation the importance of

the museum's mission to create a connection between the military and the public. The objects, rituals and veterans are made relatable through this connection, by showing military objects that have been incorporated into civilian life. This is done through the use of military toys and games, the incorporation of military language in colloquial use, and the use of military motifs like camouflage used in high end fashion design.



Figure 5-6 Fashion items inspired by the military in one of the galleries.

It uses Connerton's ideas of habit-memory and social embodiment to show the ways we are all indoctrinated into certain rituals and behaviors, in this case children playing with toy guns or the use of camouflage in fashion design, through our social relationships and agreements (1989). It also shows the overlapping space between these two sections of society, military and civilian where they must and do interact, creating permeable contact zones where cultural information is exchanged.

The next floor is the Krieg und Gedächtnis (War and Memory) gallery. This gallery is filled with video projectors, movies, artifacts of pop culture, and rolling shelves.



Figure 5-7 Mobile shelves in the gallery allow the visitors to create their own exhibits. Visitors act as curators by choosing what items to reveal and conceal in this gallery on war and memory.

This section allows the visitor to create their own exhibition with the bias of their own memories and understandings of war. The visitor can manipulate the gallery in full here, moving the rolling archival shelves to exhibit their choice of history, featuring movies,

propaganda, and art pieces. The videos show artistic movies, highlighting perspectives on war. For many national museums, the prescribed path allows the visitor to participate in habit-memory, participating in a prearranged ritual in order to learn social cues and embed collective memories about the communal past into personal memories (Anderson 1983, Connerton 1989). By allowing the visitor to create their own path, not only does the visitor change the way they interact with artifacts but it changes the way the visitor participates in habit-memory in the museum (Connerton 1989). It subverts this narrative by allowing individual visitors to contribute to the collective memory by altering exhibits in the national museum and creating new “paths” of memory through spatial reassociation (Tilley 1994). Allowing the visitor to engage with their personal memories and experience in the museum in this way makes for a participatory museum, a place where Simon and others argue visitors have more relevant and essential experiences (Falk and Dierking 2012, Simon 2010).

While the chronological exhibit has visitors weaving down long mostly symmetrical halls of black display cases, the thematic exhibits are more haphazardly placed, at non-right angles and in the middle of open spaces or corners, providing the visitor the opportunity to wander. The chronological galleries have you following a prescribed path, carrying out the physical ritual of progression through history and the curator’s narrative. The thematic exhibits allow the visitor freedom to create their own narrative path, and engage in discourse as they go, arriving at their own conclusions and questions rather than those directed by authoritative narrative path. This right to choose

for the visitor and the dialogical experience, culminates in the top two galleries, War and Memory and the Dresden Gallery. In these galleries the visitor is asked to physically move the exhibit space around as they influence the interpretation, and then to imagine the war on the landscape through their own memories of the exhibitions and their exposure to WWII in person and through the collective memories of the public in movies and television.

Objects

In comparison to the National Museum of the United States Air Force, the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr has a much wider variety of artifacts on display. This is due in part to their broader focus and in part due to intentional choices by the curators. While the NMUSAF displays primarily weapons and pieces of military technology alongside uniforms and medals, the MHMB incorporates a number of objects that are more civilian in nature. It includes items in its exhibits like high fashion pieces from runway shows inspired by the military, toys made with military battles in mind and other elements of civilian life. This creates a juxtaposition of the “sacred and the profane” (Seavers 2015, Winter 2013), and incorporates elements of armed conflict that remind the visitors of the humanity of those behind war (Hacker and Vining 2013).

The positioning of many of the objects in the thematic galleries creates ruptures with visitors’ expectations of museum displays, breaking objects out of their square glass boxes and placing them into new physical and philosophical spaces. Visitors are not only asked to assess the objects in a new framework that breaks from chronological and

technological narratives of the past but they are also asked to look at the objects from new physical perspectives as they are arranged on walls above, below, and all around them. The visitors experience with the objects becomes an immersive one, where the visitors engage more directly as they become a part of the exhibit space by being surrounded with objects or being forced to interact with them. These interactions allow visitors to experience objects in a new way, one that makes the museum less like a space full of “glass boxes” with barriers between the visitors and the objects. and encourages more direct dialogue (Ames 1992, Shelton 2010).



Figure 5-8 Another display using the odd angles of the museum, and displaying artifacts with unique light displays. The pulls at the bottom of the cases offer additional information and interactives.

These new perspectives are not exclusive to the thematic galleries however, and carry over in elements to the chronological galleries as well. While the cases are traditional, the objects used within them are not. In the MHMB’s chronological gallery, for example, a

shirt from a battle is displayed covered in blood stains and ribbed open at the sleeve from where the incendiary device ribbed open both the shirt and the individuals body and marred it with shrapnel. Where most uniforms in the NMUSAF and many military museums are pressed and perfect specimens, this messy and bloody uniform creates a rupture with the expected encounter at a military museum (Cornish 2004). Rather than the cleansed hygienic view of war, and ordered bodies and uniforms, the object reveals the consequences and chaos of battle making it more difficult to imagine the perfect heroic ideal or a romanticized reenactment (Saunders 2004, Winter 2013).

Another display, discussing the rudimentary use of battlefield medicine in the early years and the use of medicines developed for soldiers such as penicillin and plastic surgery to help treat injuries, features a display of a necrotized foot from a soldier injured in a march in the snow. The museum does not shy away from the use of human remains to help illustrate the consequences of war, it favors instead, stark realism. While some might consider it voyeuristic or shocking, the interpretive text that accompanies many of the objects and images of dead or dying soldiers reminds the visitor of the less glamorous aspects of war, that not every soldier died in pursuit of a good cause and that not every soldier came back from the war as a heroic figure, but frequently returned as someone different or damaged. The goal is to incorporate new ways of engaging with a violent past, where previous traditional models had ignored death and disfigurement the new MHMB confronts it. This is part of the renegotiation process of how cultures deal with death and loss, and can be seen as more evidence of new museology at work (Saunders

2004, Shelton 2011). These kinds of displays are critical to overturning the pristine and glamorized versions of war that inspire sanitized heroic images of war for public consumption, that fail both in historical accuracy and engagement with critical reflection (Jarecka 2013, Winter 2010, 2012).

A rudimentary IBM computer is also on display in the chronological exhibit, fitted with cards and early version processors. A Nazi eagle sits atop the machine. The interpretation around the computer explains how technology was not always used for or against soldiers, but was turned against civilian populations. In this case, the computer was used to catalog people of Jewish descent, in order to speed up the process of what the Nazi's considered the "Final Solution", or the extermination of Jews in Europe. This display not only contextualizes and provides a solid example of how technology can and was abused by military powers in order to eradicate human life, but how machines that were not necessarily designed to kill like a gun or tank might be, can still become a weapon of destruction when employed as part of the military machine. It also illustrates how many civilian companies become weaponized through the use of their products during war time, creating a space where visitors must reorient themselves with definitions of weapon and notions of participation in conflict. IBM was not the only corporation to fall into this category during WWII, as a number of other national and international companies also had direct or indirect associations with Nazi Germany in the name of business. Displaying the machine was as political risk to the museum as IBM is still a major corporate company with an image to preserve. While some museums might have

shied away from displaying this piece or interpreting this dark part of a company's history in order to preserve potential relationships or eventually procure donors, the museum chose instead, to place the piece on exhibition.

Objects like the IBM computer can often become controversial with curators, stakeholders and boards, urging museum's to be conservative in their displays lest they cause public disfavor or even lawsuits. These types of displays can cause financial and sponsorship ruptures for the institution, but they can also cause ruptures with personal and collective memories. For more recent generations IBM, Volkswagen, Hugo Boss and Fanta represent what are now largely innocuous consumer brands that are used in daily life. Framing them in a complicated and even nefarious role can create ruptures. Feelings of guilt and anger can erupt as visitors try to reconcile these different visions of the same company, and their own role in the consumption of the goods from a company who tangentially participated in these historical acts. These are exactly the kind of objects and interpretations that despite the Enola Gay controversy in the 1990s, can confront difficult memories for visitors and sponsors, colliding with public memories about the history of a company, and their own history as a consumer of those goods (Linenthal 1996). This kind of juxtaposition asks the visitor to confront how they might be contributing to war or persecution through less obvious ways like consumer dollars to war and conflict, opening up wider questions of personal responsibility.

Items from popular culture such as the IBM computer are not the only icons that receive new interpretation though. The German tanks, including the Panzer, are exhibited

outside of the museum on the front and side grounds and in a separate bay and therefore outside the broader narrative is notable. In military history circles, it is widely understood that German tanks were superior to those of their counterparts, particularly during the WWII era. That the museum avoids these symbols of supremacy, in a moment where they could ostensibly point it out without entering into larger conversations about Nazism, is poignant. The museum circumvents disrupting the central narrative that they have established inside the museum, one that is in direct opposition to the technological and supremacy based narratives that are in most military museums. Instead the museum focuses on smaller objects, human narratives and the everyday lives of soldiers and civilians living in conflict zones.

One of the most effective displays of visitor engagement and reorientation with an object was the case on shrapnel and bullets.



Figure 5-9 Shrapnel is hung on filaments from the ceiling of the case and bullets are spread out across the base.

The object is brought down to human level, stripped of patriotic display, and simplified.

It is consumable in size and scope, and the visitor is given the opportunity to absorb the information in the context of their own individual memory, while still engaging with more profound questions around the subject of human violence (Winter 2013). The use of space within the case and the illusion of movement served as a conduit to communicate ideas about the horror of war and the humanity of the soldiers that a whole object or more traditionally exhibit object would not have made (Tilley 1994, Winter 2013). Much like the war museum in Ypres that placed uniforms “in the ground” of the museum, it reconstructs the narrative, and reorients the visitor with the objects outside of their

metanarratives. By allowing the visitor to view the object from a new physical perspective, one in which the objects appear to be in motion as they might have been in their historical moment, they are able to reimagine the object from a new conceptual perspective as well. As Tilley put it “The meanings are a product of our encounter, and participation and personal involvement creates perceptual intensity” (Tilley et al. 2000, 60). The object has moved from its existence in the museum collection as tiny fragments of an explosive device, to an actively “exploding” piece of artillery, connecting the present day visitor to the historic past, and allowing them to “touch history” (Jarecka 2013) by reimaging the scene as it might have existed one hundred years ago. This presentation makes an unrepeatable moment in history and an intangible memory open to reimagination and renegotiation by the visitor.



Figure 5-11 In this display of prostheses and disfigurement the visitor's shadow is cast on to the display and they become "one" with the exhibit, imaging their own limbs replaced with prosthetics. Another example of Tilley's concept of participation creating perceptual intensity.

The Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr uses a number of exhibit techniques to change the way visitors interact with objects in the collection. They reorient the visitor, producing new experiences and new dialogue with objects that were once

subdued and contained behind glass. In addition to these approaches, the museum also incorporates an extensive array of integrative programming that takes visitors' connections to the collections a step further.

Programming

While the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr participates in traditional military museum programming like anniversaries of battles, and has group gatherings for military units, the museum often does them in ways that are unique. Artists and community often come together in programming projects at the Museum creating interactives and interventions within the museum wall by revisiting the idea of what a military museum should be. The programming at the MHMB is diverse and innovative, especially when comparing it to other military museums in the field. They work regularly with other institutions, museums, artists and community members to put out programming that can be accessible to a broad public.

The Semperoper, a significant tourist attraction that houses both the Saxon State Orchestra and the Semperoper ballet, is an impressive Dresden baroque building that was destroyed in the firebombing of February 1945 and rebuilt in the 1980s. The MHMB has worked with these institutions, the orchestra and the ballet, in the past to create artistic interventions within their gallery space. Ballerinas and musicians have interpreted war, or given their take on a particular battle or subject by acting out their analysis through dance and music. By doing this, they offer visitors a new perspective on military technology, infusing it with aesthetic and artistic interpretations. This is one of the many signs of the

implementation of new museology in museums according to Shelton (2011). In addition to creating new means of interpretation, the artistic interpretations also allow new visitors access to the museum. Individuals who might not have come on the basis of military history alone, may come to the museum to see the ballet or orchestra perform. This opens the museums visitor base, and provides access to more of the community, improving relations and making military history accessible to a new demographic, something Simon and others noted would be important to a healthy, dynamic and relevant institution (2010 and Falk 2009).

In another project the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr enlisted local community artists to participate in the reorientation of military objects. A tank on the front lawn of the MHMB, one of the famous 1940s Panzers was the subject of a community project. A group of visitors and community members gathered over a period of time in order to knit a sweater for the tank. The sweater, which covered the tank, was covered in displays of peace symbolism. This represents a break with traditional models of interpretation where war implements were shown as technological instruments without other context (Saunders 2004) and where previously even having a replica flag shown near a display of weapons was considered controversial for its lack of authenticity (Cornish 2004). In the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr, new interpretations and democratic access to interpretation is favored over old models of authenticity and technology, even going so far as to reimagine what authenticity and technology are in today's world.

The museum also holds poetry readings, showings of films, lectures, and town halls that are relevant to their changing and temporary exhibition spaces as well as their permanent exhibits and collections. They invite the public to come in to give opinions on the galleries, and regularly encourage dialogue. They stage discussions of not only historic events, but more modern and relevant discussions such as dialogue on German soldiers in active military conflicts and neo-Nazis within Germany. The discussion of neo-Nazis in the museum is particularly relevant as right wing groups, and the largest neo-Nazi marches in Germany post-war have happened in Dresden with thousands of attendants, and right wing groups like Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) which was founded in Dresden, have held large rallies in 2014 and 2015. In the wake of the recent migrant crises, and significant Muslim immigration, the museum has served as a safe space for the community to confront issues of xenophobia, bigotry, and its historic and present consequences.

All of this programming as well as exhibition building and collections acquisitions and storage are regularly shown through the museum's social media outlets. They often show "behind the scenes" footage, and have several significant photo albums on websites such as their Facebook page. This is important, not only for this thesis project as it allowed me to continue to monitor and participate in ongoing studies from thousands of miles away, but because it provides access to the museum and its collections for thousands of people around the world who also have limited access to the museum. While the posts are mostly in German, translate features through website capabilities or

browser capabilities are now incredibly easy for those who are not fluent. Accessibility is a priority for the museum.

As programming is often an important way of enhancing exhibit attendance and interpretation, seeing addressing the kinds of programming the institution is vital in understanding and analyzing institutional missions and attitudes. The programming is diverse, and consistently opens up dialogue with the community. The museum regularly holds a number of artistic interventions in the style Shelton claimed museums actively implementing new museology principles would. This kind of programming opens the museum to a new area of visitorship that might have otherwise been uninterested or intimidated by a military museum. The programming at the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr is a direct reflection of institutional goals and mirrors the exhibitions.

Bombing Exhibit

At the MHMB, the exhibit on bombing is overwhelming, not so much due to the size of the exhibition as the curatorial choices that were made with installation and placement. The curatorial choices ask the visitor to confront the concept of bombings as something that should incite fear rather than awe. Rather than as heroic or triumphant figures prepared for battle, soldiers are shown as victims of violence. As you walk into the exhibit space, to your left you pass a group of faceless mannequins in defensive gear everything from police riot gear to bomb suits to gas masks arranged in a circular

formation in the middle of the room. The mannequins are not only wearing protective gear but are also posed in defensive positions, holding their arms up, crawling and other positions to protect their bodies as though readying themselves for the impact of bombs and shrapnel. While the mannequins are faceless, the pose still communicates a narrative of fear and stress.



Figure 5-10 Mannequins shown in defense positions.

In comparison to the NMUSAF, where mannequins are typically shown projecting happiness and victory – in the case of the American representations, or aggression and power in the case of German and Japanese representations, these mannequins are fearful and defensive; brought to the ground in some cases while attempting to preserve their own lives. Rather than subtle narratives about the heroic valor of soldiers, these soldiers

are humanized, showing the emotions of fear, concern, and worry. They are not triumphant, as they are at the NMUSAF, but instead defeated and cowering in fear. This speaks to the larger narrative in the MHMB, where themes of suffering and the consequences of violence are woven throughout, even in these subtle background mounts for the uniforms and protective gear.



Figure 5-11 US soldiers undergoing surgery after being hit with IEDs in the Middle East.

To the visitor's right are a long series of photographs showing American soldiers on hospital tables being treated for wounds sustained in Iraq many of them from IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and other explosive weapons used by the insurgency. These images further support the concept that the mannequins try to display. Rather than

discussing the scientific method as the National Museum of the Air Force did, breaking down the science behind the bomb, the MHMB uses the subject of explosives and bombs to remind visitors of the consequences of using those devices against other human beings.

In using the American example, the German Military History Museum focuses on soldiers outside of Germany, universalizing the concept of war and suffering beyond the German experience. Universalizing interpretive techniques like this one are uncommon in military museums where the narrative focus typically remains on the soldiers of the country the museum represents. This also differs from the National Museum of the United States Air Force, where the museum focuses almost exclusively on the heroic and exceptional story of the American soldier, particularly in its discussion of soldier suffering.

At the end of the hall, in an irregular corner typical of the Libeskind style, you find yourself standing beneath a group of bombs that are carefully tethered to the ceiling, pointing down at the visitor. This method of exhibit technique forces the visitor to view the weapons by standing beneath them.



Figure 5-12 Bombs hung from the ceiling with bomb shelters and an interactive display

Looking up at the bombs is a truly disorienting and frightening experience, one that is both due to the size of the bombs and the orientation of the bombs to the visitor. This use of architecture and exhibit technique is reminiscent of the glass walkways in the Nuremberg Rally Grounds and the hallways in the Jewish Museum in Berlin, using physical space to instill feelings of discomfort in visitors (Macdonald 2010). The museum offers an experiential aspect, putting the visitor in the place of historical events and creating a dialogue with them in the process. Tilley stressed the importance of this interplay between personal and collective memories in the cultural construction of social memories and in renegotiating the visitor's relationship to the past (Tilley 1994).

Behind the visitor there are several small, one and two-person bomb shelters made of concrete and stone. Rather than the overwhelming experience of the bombs the

visitor is drawn to wonder how, if one did survive the initial blast, how terrible it might be to have to continue to hide in such a small space. As the visitor rounds the bomb shelters they are brought up against a large green wall, and just as they wonder what it's there for there is bright disorienting flash of light. The visitor's shadow appears on the wall, mimicking the way the nuclear explosions left the shadows of citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the streets and sidewalks of the city. This exhibition treads a line between the space where Winter was concerned with problems in "voyeuristic and experiential" exhibits in the military museum, and the performance of collective memory (2010 and 2013). The reenactment of this shadow of death is concerning. During the observation of visitors, many attempted to reenact painful and huddled poses, while others used the moment to create funny shadows on the wall, missing the historical context of the exhibition altogether. Macdonald warned about this behavior in her book *Difficult Heritage*, where school children in learning about the Nazi Party Rallies were lightheartedly goose-stepping their way across the landscape of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds. She focused on the idea that reenactment if not firmly grounded in the seriousness of the historical context and explicit interpretation could result in unintended consequences (Macdonald 2008).

In a secondary exhibit about bombing upstairs, the large pointed piece of architectural shrapnel rises to the fifth floor, jutting out and providing a plank-like walk to a metal shrouded view of Dresden. This being a view of the section of Dresden that was most heavily bombed during WWII, the night that left tens of thousands of Germans

dead as a result of Allied bombing. As the visitor walks back in to the main part of this gallery, they see assemblages of bombed rubble. The rubble on display is not only from Dresden but also from England and other cities who suffered the effects of so-called strategic bombing that sought to demoralize the citizenry by destroying food and communication lines, while also destroying homes, lives, and places of employment. The bombing of Dresden is placed here in context with the Blitz, a similarly physically and emotionally destructive campaign on the part of the Germans in London. The exhibit universalizes the suffering during WWII, focusing not just on the German experience but on the way all Europeans suffered from the war. As Gorch Pieken, the curator, describes one section of the exhibit:

Close to the pavement slabs of Dresden, two biographies document the story of a boy who lost his entire family on 13 February 1945 and the fate of Henny Brenner, a writer who was one of around 200 Jews still living in Dresden in the last year of the war. Just hours before the Allied bombardment of the city, Brenner received news that she was to be taken to a concentration camp. The bombing therefore saved her life (Pieken and Rogg, *The Bundeswehr Museum of Military History: Exhibition Guide 2012*, 165).

Here we see the comparative approach that contextualizes the war. In providing two experiences of the war in the exhibition, we gain multivocality. The voice not just of the Germans who suffered, but the Jewish woman saved, and somewhere in the background the story of the Allied Forces as triumphant. The Dresden Gallery exhibit also communicates subtly that while the Allied Forces are responsible for thousands of

civilian deaths, German aggression and German bombings of civilians precipitated the bombing of Dresden by offering up images of the Blitz in London where German's incited and necessitated the Allied invasion. The result is an inwardly reflective look at the causes and consequences of the war. This approach to explaining war, to express the causes and consequences of war in the context of all participants in a new method for military museums.

However, the exhibit cannot escape critique. In her assessment of the Nuremberg Rally Grounds, Macdonald pointed out that often times the Germans lost the direct connection to their past and their specific responsibility for atrocities by removing it from the nation state and attempting to universalize the story (2008). Macdonald argues that war is decontextualized, and placed in a larger more nebulous international story of good and evil. While at times this approach can make stories from the distant past relevant to ongoing conflicts in the world, and make it more consumable for the public, it can be problematic. It forces a public collective memory into the development of a cosmopolitan one, where we lose connection to historical time and space. It is consumed by those who have no direct connection to it, and as a result it allows the visitor to avoid personal responsibility for the atrocities committed by their state. The larger story of good vs. evil plays out in cosmic way, and no individual(s) can take ownership or agency in trying to turn the tide. This results in a loss of agency, and inevitably some loss of responsibility as Macdonald suggests happens when Germans cosmopolitanizes suffering rather than focusing on atrocities committed during WWII (2008).

The MHMB combats this problem in other sections of the museum. In one exhibit in the museum the curators placed the bombed out shell of a jeep that belonged to soldiers killed by an IED in Afghanistan on display. Next to it are voting cards for Merkel and Schroeder, prime ministers of Germany who voted for continued military action in Afghanistan. The curator and the director of the museum have been clear that the intention here was for the visitor to reflect on their own personal connection to the war. If they vote people into power who lead us to war, they have cast their vote in support of the war as well. The message the museum encourages is that the visitor does have a role to play in today's conflict, and must take ownership for their part in it, or risk repeating mistakes of the past.

The National Museum of the United States Air Force and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr took radically different approaches to the interpretation of war time bombing, a subject that has been historically difficult and even dangerous to approach in a national museum (Dean 2009, Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013). The MHMB took a tone of critical reflection, giving context to the violence of the Dresden firebombing and creating a dialogue between the visitor and collections, by using exhibit techniques and interpretation that reoriented the visitor (Pieken 2012, Winter 2013). Visitors were reminded of the noncombatants that suffered as a result of these bombings, using text and objects to humanize the death and suffering and engage visitors in dialogue about the morality of this form of military action (Hacker and Vining 2013). The National Museum of the United States Air Force used a more conservative

and traditional approach, favoring standard methods of display behind glass and barriers and a narrative of exception and victory. The interpretive text and video surrounding Bockscar was didactic, retelling events and narratives through the authoritative voice of the curator and leaving no room for dialogue about morality. The narrative surrounding Bockscar was of a collection piece that was symbolic of the end of WWII and therefore the end of human suffering rather than the cause of it. This approach is in keeping with the museum's positive and celebratory approach to American history, one that is in line with American metanarratives about victory and patriotism (Macdonald 2010, Post 2013). The bombing exhibits were representative of larger themes and narratives throughout the National Museum of the United States Air Force and the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr as well as striking differences in theoretical and practical approaches to the way that military history was exhibited and interpreted in the museums.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Conclusion

The emergence of museums in the late 18th and early 19th century was closely linked with the establishment of the nation-state identity (Macdonald 2003). While museums of history and science were subtler in this process of indoctrination, military museums were overt. They stood as representations of heroic and nationalistic metanarratives where the public could go to see, remember and ritually recreate stories about the creation and supremacy of the nation-state (Anderson 1983, Macdonald 2003, Winter 2013).

In the late 20th century when many museums were becoming more self-reflexive and addressing issues of representation, identity and problematic exhibitions, military museums remained largely sheltered from these changes. This was a direct result of military museums being hyper-intensive sites of national metanarratives about heroism, pride, exceptionalism and patriotism. They were places where the public went not only to cheer for their 'home team' (Macdonald 2003), but to memorialize and honor that same team. Later in the 1980s and 1990s, changes in the study of military history and the way that history was exhibited began to transform military museums in subtle but visible ways (Hacking and Viner 2013, Whitmarsh 2001, Van der Pols 2014, Winter 2013). New

museology was implemented in military museums, and though at first wrought with problems like the Enola Gay Controversy (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013), it began to gain traction and momentum, leading to more widespread discussions and changes within the field.

Shelton outlined a list of ways we might see new museology manifest in the museum through its interpretation and exhibits (2011). I modified that list to more aptly reflect and represent changes in the military museum. Revisiting those questions will help highlight the comparison between the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr and the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

One of the first elements Shelton addressed was the use of thematic approaches as a means of moving away from traditional and chronological approaches (2011). In the MHMB we see this purposefully and explicitly used. Chronological and thematic galleries are placed side by side and the visitor is able to see the conflicts through each lens. The chronological galleries showing the progression of military technology, politics, and strategies, while the thematic galleries focus on aspects of war that are more universal. Issues of battlefield surgery and medicine, suffering, and order are addressed, as well as more visitor relevant interpretation in the case of the effects of the war on the front, language, dress, and song that has been incorporated into daily civilian life, and the consequences that war has for society. These thematic attempts make the history of conflict more accessible to visitors by engaging them in specific topics, and allowing

them to make more direct connections between civilians and military members lives and culture.

Through the prosthetic exhibit and the bombing exhibit visitors interact and reenact historical encounters like the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in WWII and the loss of limbs that was prevalent during trench warfare in WWI. These exhibits allow visitors to perform rituals of engagement, walking in the metaphorical shoes of soldiers and civilian victims, and thus embodying the social and collective memories that were produced by those traumas (Connerton 1989, Jarecka 2013, Winter 2010). They also participate in the ritual of remembering, one that Assmann and Halbwachs both stated was vital to moving on from memories of trauma (2010 and 1992). These rituals of remembrance are also what makes the military museum a place with a “sacred aura” that allows visitors to touch the past through participation in museum rituals and meaning-making (Jarecka 2013, Winter 2013).

In contrast, the National Museum of the United States Air Force relies heavily on chronology and a narrative of American exceptionalism. Visitors progress from the earliest era of flight through to the modern age of space exploration and supersonic and stealth bombers. The progression involves the ritual of American history, and as visitors walk through they reenact important moments in the American metanarrative; from the invention of flight, to the victories in Europe and Japan during WWII. Through this process they arrive at the culmination of the United States’ narrative as a modern super power that depends on STEM directives and technology to maintain global supremacy.

These narratives reflect traditional models of museum interpretation where nation-building and community defining narratives are the driving factor of the visitor's experience (Anderson 1983, Macdonald 2010).

There are elements of thematic or alternate ways of seeing the war in the National Museum of the United States Air Force. The *Prime Ribs* exhibit focuses on the individual soldier and the “everyday realities of war” that Winter and others stressed was important in interpretation in museums that sought to break with fantastical reproductions of it (2013, Hacker and Vining 2013, Whitmarsh 2001). STEM themes and narratives, while arguably not as progressive as the social and historical context at the MHMB, still provide breaks from chronological narratives. STEM themes provide opportunities to make airplanes more relevant to the average civilian, simplifying the complex technology of aerodynamics, lift and propulsion into more accessible discussions of everyday life. These approaches make visitor interactions with the elements of warfare more accessible by relating them to everyday encounters like flying kites and riding bicycles (Simon 2010). This new context makes military museums more appealing to new demographics, something that Rath stated was necessary for them to remain relevant (2012). They may however, distract from the role of weapons as destructive and deadly (Saunders 2004, Winter 2013) as well as disregard the humanity of those affected by war (Ehrenreich, Klinger 2013) and the “moral responsibility curators have not to overlook” those experiences (Seavers 2015), by oversimplifying war into a problem solved by scientific method.

Shelton emphasized reflexivity as being an important indicator of new museology in museums. In military museums this might be seen in terms of critical reflection on the use of violence and the consequences of conflict (Saunders 2004, Winter 2013). In the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr this reflexivity takes a central role throughout the museum where it is woven in to the chronological and thematic galleries. Exhibits like the bombing exhibit that show the shadows of human remains in Hiroshima, the rubble of cities that Germans bombed in WWII, and the critical self-reflection that Dresden's bombing was as much the fault of German aggression as it was the Allies who flew the planes. An entire gallery, War and Suffering, is dedicated to the consequences of war in a much more explicit fashion. Human remains, prosthetics, and gravestones force visitors to confront the other side of heroic valor and patriotism. The MHMB emphasized the visitor's responsibility and role in war with the exhibit featuring the jeep destroyed by an IED alongside the voting card for Angela Merkel who authorized German involvement in the war in Afghanistan.

At the National Museum of the United States Air Force we see less of this reflexivity. Exhibits on bombing, like the one surrounding Bockscar and the bombing of Nagasaki, focus on the positive consequences of the decision to use nuclear weapons; the end of a long war, the freeing of American prisoners of war, the civilian Japanese lives spared in comparison to the smaller number that died, and the technological advances of the Manhattan Project. Bockscar's interpretation is very similar to that of the Enola Gay's which is likely the result of the planes both being displayed at national museums with

traditionally celebratory and positive narratives about American history (Post 2013, Linenthal 1996). Unfortunately, these celebratory narratives frequently overlook the more critical and thought provoking reflection that new museology calls for (Ames 1992, Cameron 1971, Macdonald 2003, Winter 2013). Similarly, the avoidance or glossing over of difficult heritage, such as the firebombing of Germany or the internment of the Japanese during WWII can be seen in the National Museum of the United States and other museums. Many military museum theorists, curators and critics say engaging with this history is necessary for military museums to remain relevant and morally rigorous in their interpretation, so its absence signals a reluctance to completely break with traditional military museum models (Hacker and Vining 2013, Seavers 2015, Winter 2013, Van der Pols 2013).

Transparency in the assembly of collections and the creation of exhibits is also an important hallmark of new museum theory's implementation in military museums (Shelton 2011). The MHMB is not as transparent as it could be, but it does occasionally list in the interpretive text how the items came to be donated to the museum and provides information on the historical legacy of those donations. Finding information on the funding of exhibitions was somewhat difficult. There was no obvious donor wall, and information in pamphlets and on the museum's website spoke of funding only in very general terms. Some public information was available on the military's contribution to the renovation and reopening of the exhibit but beyond that very little details were readily available. Through exhibits like the one of IBM and pharmaceutical companies the

museum did touch on elements of corporate donation and influence over the military, but did not reflect more explicitly on how government funding and attitudes might affect the interpretation about those collections and objects in the museum (Ames 1992, Seavers 2015, Winter 2013).

In contrast, the National Museum of the United States Air Force is very transparent about funding and donors. Visitors entering and exiting the museum must walk alongside a long list of corporate donor plaques. Pamphlets available on the museum are clear about their corporate donors and reports on the museum's expansion clearly designate the corporations that provided the money to build the new expansion. This is in part due to American cultural practices of non-profits honoring donors in very explicitly public ways in order to give donors credit for their contributions, and also due in part to the museum being federally funded and free, and therefore subject to revealing its annual report information to the public, as is the practice with most government funded museums. Wider questions about the military industrial complex and the political nature of corporate alliances and funding in museums were absent, which may again signal an avoidance of heritage that might be disruptive to celebratory narratives (Macdonald 2003, Post 2013, Winter 2013).

Artist and outsider interventions were another important element Shelton suggested that museums using new museum theory would use in their exhibits (2011). The MHMB incorporated artist and outsider interventions throughout the museum, and continues to do so on an ongoing basis. At the very first, the visitor encounters this in the

love/hate installation at the entrance to the galleries. The MHMB involves a number of outside artists and organizations like knitters, the Opera, poets, and artists to create new and changing exhibits within the museum. Outsiders are invited to interact with collections in the case of the peace sweater that was knitted for the tank and the physical rearrangement of collections that visitors can take part in within its galleries. This interaction allows for social commentary, rituals and changes that are brought in by the community. This artistic and interpretive interaction is the kind that Shelton stated museums implementing new museology in their exhibits would encourage and it is also an opportunity to use the everyday profane, in the case a knitted sweater, to alter visitor perceptions of the sacred, the tank (Winter 2013). These approaches are the kind that Simon called for when she posited the idea of museums that were truly relevant and participatory, and thus engaging with democratizing principles of new museology (2010).

On the other side of the spectrum, the National Museum of the United States Air Force does not use artistic interventions. This approach preserves the ritualistic space and the temple concept, as narratives within the museum are celebratory and positive in nature. A loss of control over the narrative in the museum could potentially produce views that disrupt or collide with collective memories about the U.S. history, endangering visitorship and funding (Linenthal 1996, Post 2013). These conversations are a delicate balance that museum's must navigate in order to justly address the history of war while still making exhibits that are popular and gathering funding that will keep doors open (Winter 2013, 23).

The National Museum of the United States Air Force does allow for plurality of voices, and increasingly incorporates them as the chronology and the exhibition advances to more recent wars. In the Current Operations galleries, the voices and videos of individual soldiers are available for visitor review. Experiences of individual soldiers are highlighted, and their experiences are based as much in their cultural experiences of faraway locations like Iraq and Afghanistan as they are in the strategy or technology of the battle. However, the voices of the Iraqis and the Afghans are absent. Even civilian Americans receive little to no interpretation within the museum despite the fact that many served and supported American military forces abroad and at home. The focus is entirely on military culture, language, and rituals. This creates a boundary between the public and the military history on display, making it more difficult for visitors to see the relevance of these foreign wars to their everyday lives (Hacker and Vining 2013, Whitmarsh 2001, Winter 2013).

In contrast, interpretation at the MHMB is purposefully multi-vocal. While the military is the central focus and mission of the museum, civilians and their efforts, contributions, and suffering at the hands of the military are also given an opportunity to “speak” in interpretation, collections and exhibits. This is most evident in the use of biographies that are found throughout the chronological galleries that offer the experiences of war from the viewpoints of individual citizens, each with different values, social relationships, and roles to play in the war. This interpretation was also kept symmetrical in the case of all of the individuals, Hitler receiving as much space for

interpretation and context as a woman who was the victim of the Holocaust. This form of interpretation allowed space for a more democratic form of interpretation in the museum. As historic figures are represented with equality in mind, visitors can also see themselves as having an equal say in the choices and effects of their own militaries. Civilians are as much regarded as soldiers, and this form of interpretation keeps the museum relevant and open for those who may have less experience or understanding of military culture and values. This trend of including more civilian voices and the experiences of non-combatants is one that Hacker and Vining (2013) cite as one of the most important indicators of a military museum that is modernizing and implementing new museology principles within its interpretation.

Both the MHMB and the NMUSAF have progressed from the times of royal armories, and interpretation plays an important role in giving historical context and life to objects within the museums (Simpson 2001, Tawadros 1990). The MHMB however, has put more explicit and purposeful emphasis on incorporating new museum theory into the museum, while the NMUSAF has held to a primarily traditional model as Vergo described it (1989). This seems to be largely a result of different museum missions and different priorities that stem directly from national narratives in the respective countries of these institutions. Germany and its military are self-reflexive and self-critical, largely as a result of the country's difficult heritage and the war crimes of the 20th century (Macdonald 2008, Van der Pols 2014). The United States, in contrast, has dominated global politics since the end of WWII, and has generally been in a position of power to

tell stories about its history as victor, even in cases where victory was not altogether clear at the end of the war (Dubin 2000, Linenthal 1996, Post 2013, Young 1996).

However, military museums cannot only tell stories about their respective country. The nature of war, where there is always an opposing side, necessitates telling one's own story in contrast with another story; one about another people, another culture, and another way of seeing and knowing the world. Military museums must also inevitably, whether directly or indirectly, discuss and explain the history of conflict. They balance a role as both a place for education and a place for memory. As Winter put it, history and memory are not set in isolation but play an inseparable role, guiding society in knowing and understanding their past (2010).

The first modern military museum, the Imperial War Museum in London, was erected with the intention of being a memorial. It was a place where letters, articles of war, and memories of lost soldiers could be collected, displayed and visited by those who wanted to remember. It was a site of ritual remembrance, and continues to exist in this manner today as people gather for events such as Armistice Day remembrances (Bouquet 2012, Duncan 1995, Saunders 2004). Other military museums have followed similar paths. They too, serve as places where rituals can take place around the remembrance of war dead and atrocities. They serve their communities by being palaces of memories (Davis 2014, Van der Pols 2014), and places where veterans and civilians can return to view and participate in the collective memory of historic conflicts (Winter 2010).

Military museums serve as secular temples (Duncan 1995), not only as a place where these rituals of remembrance can happen but also as a place where the public goes to learn more about who they are (Bouquet 2012, Macdonald 2010) and perform acts of habit-memory that inform their understanding of the national narrative (Connerton 1989). Military museums are contact zones between civilians and their militaries. National museums produce and legitimize narratives about our collective history (Anderson 1983), and military museums play a crucial role in our understanding of conflicts with other cultures. They define not only how we see others, but how we see ourselves. If it is the duty of informed citizen to understand war, and military museums shape and are shaped by their communities then military museums are at the epicenter of those social relationships, and their exhibits are manifestations of them (Macdonald 2003, Winter 2013, Vergo 1989). It becomes critical then to analyze them from an anthropological perspective, investigating how these representations are created and what efforts curators, directors and boards at military museums are making in order to democratize the way that information is expressed and how we are represented.

Ultimately, military museums, including the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr and the National Museum of the United States Air Force are hybrid institutions. They are both memorial and museum, and they are both temple and forum (Cameron 1971, Williams 2008). They are considered memorials and temples because they are closely linked to death and commemorative rituals, and as such intimately linked to collective memories. They are museums and forums because they collect and interpret

military history, providing education and acting as a social construction of national metanarratives and serve as community gathering spaces (Anderson 1983, Macdonald 2010). As Winter expressed, bringing the sacred and profane together in military museums must be carefully negotiated, with respect to both representation and collective memory (2013, 23). While the road to incorporating new museology into military museums and interpretation around the history of war has been fraught with difficulty, it is important to acknowledge its usefulness as a transformative principle. Whether its introduction is slow and mediated in the case of the National Museum of the United States Air Force or radical and innovative in the case of the Military History Museum of the Bundeswehr it is being used to increase visitor participation, diversify representation and involve visitors in critical reflection on history. Benedict Anderson (1989) cited the importance of museums like these as critical nation-building assets but Assmann and Winter point out the importance of memory and memorializing and the legitimacy of multiple perspectives of the past, particularly those that are traumatic (Assmann 2010,39, Winter 2012).

Military museums must be less concerned with the “correct” version of history, particularly one in which they can feel a guiltless patriotism upon reflecting on historical events, and more concerned with the way in which that history affects the way the public understands and engages with the military today. Rather than being deliverers of one nation-building message, they must engage in open dialogue with members of the military and the public, asking and being willing to hear the honest responses they

receive. New ways of exhibiting military collections, radical forms of architectural intervention, and artistic and interpretive engagements within the museum and the exhibits are all ways that facilitate relationships between the public and their military. With these changes, visitors can see themselves reflected in the displays rather than as cosmopolitan third party bystanders (Hacker and Vining 2013, Hanks 2012, Macdonald 2008, Simon 2010), heralding a potential change in the public's view of their responsibility in these actions (Pieken and Roggs 2012, Winter 2013). As Tilley put it, through dialectical interactions with objects "The meanings are a product of our encounter, and participation and personal involvement creates perceptual intensity" (Tilley et al. 2000, 60). The intensity of these perceptions can create links to social and personal memory in ways that produce critical opportunities for mutual understanding and discussion that may have previously been absent in traditional models.

If military museums are able to successfully able to navigate their roles as temple and forum (Cameron 1971) and memorial and museum (Williams 2008), they must and will create safe places where visitors can engage with difficult and dark heritage in meaningful ways that redefine our understanding of war and our social responsibility to our national and global communities (Macdonald 2008, Winter 2013). Their role as contact zone can enable new relationships with military members and civilians, providing physical and philosophical space to renegotiate community understandings about war, our military, and how we see ourselves.

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