Remote warfare, and warfare via remote: shifting civil-military relations and cultural experiences of war in the U.S. from Vietnam to the Gulf.

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Table of Contents

Abstract

American culture at large is saturated with images of war and war making. Dialogues about war, and cultural productions that are informed by war, continue to persist in the popular consciousness, creating a sense of "distant intimacy" between the American public and their relationship to warfare. This sense of militarism is ubiquitous, yet the paradox remains – Americans have become increasingly dislocated from the substantive processes of waging war. A new culture of war has emerged, evidenced through the transformations between military, civilian, and corporate spheres of interest. The question should be asked – what does "total war" mean for the twenty-first century? This thesis will argue that a concept of "remoteness" characterizes the complexion of "total war" in America's recent history. "Remoteness" informs how warfare is waged and conceived in a "post-heroic" era. Furthermore, this thesis will explore the complexity, significance, implications, and functions of these symptoms of "remoteness," as they resonate within the broader historical consciousness of America's contested cultural imagination – a survey of the cultural experiences of "total war." Finally, this project seeks to address and reconfigure our understandings of how a culture of war underpins some of the most fundamental questions that inform identity and citizenship in the United States.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)_____ Date: 27/3/2019

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Introduction

Total victory, total rupture, and total war.

"Although one wonders if "War and Peace" would have been as highly acclaimed as it was if it was published under its original name, "War: What Is It Good For?"" – Elaine Benes, *Seinfeld* (1994). [1]

"War stories aren't really anything more than stories about people anyway." Michael Herr, *Dispatches.*[2]

Four years after the end of the Cold War had been declared, historian Tom Engelhardt argued that the "loss of the enemy" had led American culture to enter "a period of crisis that raises profound questions about national purpose and identity." [3] Engelhardt's argument traces the degeneration of "victory culture" – the climate of total victory that shaped American self-perception following the outcome of the Second World War – to the moment of rupture that shattered the American consciousness during the war in Vietnam and the enduring reverberations of its impact. Central to Engelhardt's assertion that victory culture dematerialized during this period is his conception of the American "war story," the animus that had consistently guided and shaped the narrative consciousness of the United States – the history of a nation forged through and punctuated by violence and war. Engelhardt concludes that the post-war world had become "a world without and beyond the war story."[4] The post-Cold War climate engendered an atmosphere in which such a declaration could be made. Francis Fukuyama's provocative (and premature) argument that the end of the Cold War signaled "the end of history, as such," articulates a similar spirit. [5] From Fukuyama's perspective, the victory of liberal institutions following the collapse of the Soviet Block - "the triumph of the West, of the Western *idea*" – could be interpreted as the fulfillment of "mankind's ideological

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[1] *Seinfeld*, "The Marine Biologist*,*" originally aired February 10, 1994.

[2] Michael Herr, *Dispatches*, (Great Britain: Pan Books, 1978): 196.

[3] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, New York: Basic Books, 1995.

[4] Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, 303.

[5] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 4.

evolution."[6] Within this context, if "history" had been fulfilled, and the enemy defeated, what need was there for a war story? Yet the American nation has always conceived of itself in relation to war. The defeat of the "enemy" merely indicated that it was time to seek out a new one. Even during the Cold War, the war story had begun to transform. Richard Kohn argues:

> War infected language, not only as a metaphor for efforts to ameliorate major social problems but also in the every day idioms of social life, from sport to business. The United States declared war on cancer, crime, drugs, and poverty; military terms became part of the common vocabulary.[7]

Guided by the spirit of Engelhardt's narrative, this thesis seeks to refresh and update his argument by tracing the historical and cultural contingencies that underpin a new reconfiguration of the American war story.

In the acknowledgements section of his book, *My War: Killing Time in Iraq*, Colby Buzzell thanks his recruiter – "without your help none of this would have happened." Buzzell and his story lie at the heart of a new kind of American war story- his example exists as nexus between the rise of new media, the public visibility of an unpopular yet protracted war, the remoteness of distance, and the conditions that have fundamentally shaped the ways in which such a war is waged. Buzzell rose to prominence as an anonymous voice from the "trenches," blogging online about his experiences as a U.S. Army infantryman, deployed to Iraq between 2003 and 2004.[8] The revolution in information and communication technologies that attended the early twenty-first century have profoundly affected the experiences of contemporary war. The availability of the Internet, email, and blogging platforms, has transformed the "soldier's ability to communicate… and in this regard the experience of the soldier in the Iraq War is unique."[9] Buzzell's milblog (a portmanteau for military blog) titled "CBFTW" (Colby Buzzell Fuck The World) was characterized by his punchy, candid, and compelling entries that provided a "boots-on-the-ground" perspective of the war

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[6] Fukuyama, "The End of History?" 4.
[7] Richard H. Kohn, "The Danger of Militarization in an Endless 'War' on Terrorism," *The Journal of Military History* 73, no. 1 (2009): 191-192.
[8] See: Colby Buzzell. *My War: Killing Time In Iraq* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005).
[9] Stacey L. Peebles, *Welcome to the Suck: Narrative the American Soldier's Experience in Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011): 40.

in Iraq.[10] Stacey Peebles argues that Buzzell positioned himself as the "textual voice of the soldiers' war in Iraq," through the crafting of his online presence.[11] Buzzell's blog titles were consistently punctuated with references to contemporary popular culture – "Sleepless in Mosul," "Dude, Where's My Weapon" -shorthand gestures with the capacity to articulate his experience in the war zone. Significantly, Buzzell also configures his experiences in relation to the war in Vietnam. Marita Sturken argues:

> the rupture in history made by the Vietnam War is not only of the experience of warfare and the ability of this country to impose its will on others; it is rupture in how we perceive war."[12]

A post made on CBTW on July 25, 2004, demonstrates this impulse:

> If this was Vietnam, I'd probably have FTA (Fuck the Army) inked in black pen all huge on my helmet in protest of having my leave cancelled, but since this isn't Vietnam, I decided to put a black and white peace pin on my flak jacket in "peaceful protest… It's the exact same pin that Private Joker wore in the Vietnam movie *Full Metal Jacket.*[13]

Buzzell's blog ran for about ten weeks in total. After Buzzell's post "Men in Black" attracted significant media attention for his descriptions of an ambush in Mosul, Buzzell's commanding officers identified him as the blog's author. Confined to the base, and subject to his posts being monitored, Buzzell decided to "press the self-destruct button" on his blog, by reaching out to Jello Biafra, the vocal activist and front man of the punk band the Dead Kennedys.[14] Buzzell published the letter of support that Biafra penned, and was ordered to cease blogging. In a final act of defiance, Buzzell posted an email that was sent to him by his battalion commander – "What are they going to do, send me to Iraq?"[15]

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[10] Brandon Griggs, "Soldier finds his voice blogging from Iraq," *CNN*, January 23, 2009.

[11] Stacey L.Peebles, *Welcome to the Suck: Narrating the American Soldier's Experience in Iraq*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011): 42.

[12] Marita Sturken, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations* 53 (1991): 137-138.

[13] Buzzell, *My War,* 234.

[14] Buzzell, *My War,* 319.

[15] Buzzell, *My War*, 322.

But Buzzell's war story did not end in Iraq. Since his return to the U.S, Buzzell has authored several books, including a compilation of his blog posts. Furthermore, Buzzell has written several articles that focus on his experiences as a returned veteran living with PTSD, and acclimatizing to "civilian" life. Buzzell continues to articulate his experiences of war, in relation to the facets of his identity that have been reconfigured in the process- his identity as an infantryman, as a veteran, as a writer, even as an Uber driver.[16] Buzzell's "story" is a composite example of how the broader war story for the twenty-first century has been informed at large. If WWII represents a moment of "total victory," and the war in Vietnam represents a moment of "total rupture," how have perceptions of warfare been shaped by the contemporary conflicts that have defined American military operations during the twenty-first century? The paradox of late twentieth- and early twenty-first century wars is that the war story *is* "total war."

The prominent military historian, Hew Strachan, once lamented that the "pivot of total war has become less the conduct of war and more its cultural and political baggage."[17] Such "baggage" warrants historical analysis. Conventionally, the concept of "total war" has been used to articulate the practicality of specific military tactics, such as the "strategic bombing" campaigns that characterized America's involvement in conflict abroad during the twentieth century.[18] "Total war" also connotes the mobilization of the domestic population during an extended war effort. The purchasing of war bonds, scrap-metal drives, and rationing during the Second World War, translated personal sacrifices on the home front into an effort to 'support-the-troops,' whilst domestically fostering a sense of national unity.[19] However, by the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the tolls on the home front had been displaced – there was no need to retool factories, purchase bonds, or ration food or fuel.[20] In the wake of the war in Vietnam, with the absence of a military draft, Edward Luttwak argues that a "greater gulf between military and civilian values grew."[21]

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[16] Colby Buzzell, "My Life Driving Uber as an Iraq War Veteran with PTSD," *Vice,* 7 June, 2015: https://::/www.vice.com/en_au/article/znghttpsv39/driving-uber-as-an-iraqi-war-veteran

[17] Hew Strachan, "Essay and Reflection: On Total War and Modern War," *The International Review* 22, no. 2 (2000): 342.

[18] Strachan, "Essay and Reflection," 342.

[19] Christian Enemark, *Armed Drones and the Ethics of War: Military virtue in a post-heroic age,* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013):10.

[20] Colin McInnes, "A different kind of war? September 11 and the United States' Afghan War," *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003): 170.

[21] Edward N. Luttwak, "Toward Post-Heroic Warfare," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 3 (1995): 122.

Leading into the post Cold-War period – since described as "post-heroic" – a new culture of war emerged, one conditioned by a low tolerance of casualties, particularly following President Clinton's intervention in the Kosovo War during 1999, which did not incur a single allied death in combat.[22] These historical conditions have informed a new concept of war, evidenced through the transformations between military, civilian, and corporate spheres of interest. The question should be asked – what does "total war" mean in the twenty-first century?

Arguably, the history of the United States is a history of violence – the nation's landscape punctuated by the vestiges of war. The cartography of "military space" is an activity not often undertaken by scholars, as the prominent cultural theorist Paul Virilio suggests:

> People speak of the history of war, of battlefields, of deaths in the family, but no one speaks of the military space as the constitution of a space having its own characteristics… The objects, bunkers, blockhouses, anti-aircraft shelters, submarine bases, etc. are kinds of reference points or landmarks to the totalitarian nature of war in space in myth."[23]

These physical markers partially frame a spatial conception of the phenomenon of war, which ostensibly shapes a pervasive, cultural atmosphere of "total war." In many respects, the nature of this atmosphere resonates with Michael Billig's concept of "banal nationalism," a term that was introduced to "cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced."[24] Billig argues that:

> these habits are not removed from everyday life… Daily, the nation indicated, or 'flagged,' in the lives of the citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood… is the endemic condition… The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building.[25]

As a "military space" can be conceived and mapped in relation to objects such as the "instruments and artifacts (bombs, tanks, planes, bases, uniforms)," "total war" can

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[22] Niklas Schornig and Alexander C. Lembcke," The Vision of War without Casualties: On the Use of Casualty Aversion in Armament Advertisements," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50, no. 2 (2006): 209.
[23] Paul Virilio and Sylvere Lotringer, *Pure War,* Translated by Mark Polizzotti, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997): 10.
[24] Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism,* (London: Sage, 1995): 6.
[25] Billig, *Banal Nationalism,* 6-8.

also been constituted in terms of a cultural complex – the "cultural and political baggage" lamented by Stratchan – as a composite of attitudes and values that are espoused through policies, practices, and institutions. [26] These factors characterize what Ken Cunningham refers to as the "domestic hegemony of U.S. militarism," especially reflected by the actions of the Bush administration, and the nation's posture, following the implications and events of September 11, 2001.[27] For the purposes of this project, "total war" is defined as the cultural "space" that U.S militarism occupies – the culture of militarism that underscores contemporary understandings of American exceptionalism and the ways in which civic identity is constructed and shaped in relation to war.

A ubiquitous "war-culture" is reinforced through the conditions that underpin the "post-heroic" era, but despite this, it is clear that American civilians have become increasingly dislocated from the substantive processes of waging war. This thesis will trace the historical processes and contextualize the transformations that characterize the shifting complexion of civil-military relations in the recent history of the United States. This thesis will argue that a concept of "remoteness" characterizes the complexion of "total war" in the twenty-first century. "Remoteness" informs the relationships between civilians and their military, as well as informing how warfare has been waged and conceived in a "post-heroic" era. Furthermore, this thesis will explore the significance, implications, and functions of these symptoms of "remoteness," as they resonate within the broader historical consciousness of America's contested cultural imagination – a survey of the cultural experiences of "total war."

This project has been guided, in particular, by Harold Lasswell's seminal 1941 article, "The Garrison State," which sought to forecast the future complexion of a modern society deeply implicated by its relationship with technology and warfare – a society in which "all social change is translated into battle potential."[28] Writing on the eve of direct U.S. involvement in WWII, Lasswell's piece implicitly articulated the unique context of the unprecedented scale and scope of the war that would soon punctuate

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[26] Ken Cunningham, "Permanent war? The domestic hegemony of the New American Militarism," *New Political Science* 26, no. 4 (2004): 556.
[27] Cunningham, "Permanent war? " 556.
[28] Harold D. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," *American Journal of Sociology* 46 no. 4 (1941): 458.

U.S. civilian consciousness on the home front, and transform America's participation in armed global conflict. "The Garrison State" anticipates the emergence of a political condition that translates all aspects of civic life into functions that serve the military. [29] Lasswell proposed that the "military men who dominate a modern technical society will be very different from the officers of history and tradition," and furthermore, that "it is probable that the specialists in violence will include in their training a large degree of expertness in many of the skills that we have traditionally accepted as part of modern civilian management."[30] A series of institutional changes during the late twentieth century marked shifting perspectives of civic identity within the military apparatus – gradually dismantling the "central political character that had animated American civic ideals since the Revolutionary War: the citizen-soldier."[31]

Historically, the concept of the citizen-soldier has been fluid, its definition subject to a diverse set of historical contingencies. Zach Snyder's re-boot of the celebrated Superman franchise – *Man of Steel* – was released in cinemas in 2013. It signaled a new level of corporate and military collusion. In congruence with the release of the film, the National Guard used the franchise as a platform to launch their recruitment campaign – *Soldiers of Steel* (SoS) – connecting the narrative of the iconic superhero with the concept of the "citizen-soldier." [32] The SoS campaign carries serious implications for how and why Americans choose to serve in their nation's military forces. National Guard soldiers have previously been hailed as "weekend-warriors," – an embodiment of the citizen-soldier concept, due to the nature of both their military and domestic roles. Yet, since the first Persian Gulf War, from 1990 to 1991, and particularly in the period following 9/11, the National Guard has increasingly been deployed in active duty – its own arms of the military forces changing as the complexion of America's war-making has shifted and transformed.[33] During the twenty-first century the concept of the citizen-soldier has reached a point in crisis.

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[29] Lasswell, "The Garrison State," 457.
[30] Lasswell, "The Garrison State," 457.
[31] Roger Stahl, *Militainment Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture,* (New York: Routledge, 2010): 12-13.
[32] Ryan Pumroy, "Recruiting Soldiers of Steel: The Cross-Promotion of *Man of Steel* and the National Guard," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 48, no. 4 (2015): 762.
[33] Susan Katz Keating, "Forget the weekend, they are full-fledged…" *VFW Magazine: National Guard and Reserves at War* (2006): 4.

Amidst the tumultuous climate of the war in Vietnam, Richard Nixon vowed to end military conscription during his 1968 presidential campaign. Public disaffection with the Selective Service System gave Nixon's proposal political traction and viability. In order to assess the feasibility of establishing a volunteer force, in 1969, Nixon announced the creation of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force – also known as the Gates Commission, in reference to the chair of the committee, former Secretary of Defense, Thomas Gates.[34] On February 21, 1970, The Gates Commission presented Nixon with "The Report of the President's Commission On An All-Volunteer Force," espousing a policy framework for the abolition of the draft. Many of the ideas that shaped the report were anticipated in a series of articles written by the prominent economist Milton Friedman, three years earlier, one of which was entitled "The Case for Abolishing the Draft – and Substituting for It an All-Volunteer Army."[35] Economists Alan Greenspan and W. Allen Wallis also sat on the commission. In essence, the creation of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) was fundamentally shaped by a group of prominent economists who were influential within the Nixon administration. They contributed to the ongoing debate within American society about the importance of individual liberty as a defining value of the nation. The Commission's report argued that the transition to an AVF was an issue of the labor market, able to be resolved by increasing the salaries and benefits issued to volunteers. Through the creation of a military force that could ostensibly offer an attractive alternative to the civilian job market, the vacuum left by the absence of the draft would replace the need for conscription with a market-driven all-volunteer force. Historian Beth Bailey's comprehensive book, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force,* is a significant contribution that updates the scholarship concerning the U.S. military's transition to an all-volunteer force (AVF). Her work traces the process of the transition, as well as explores the transformation of the idea of military service – from one of obligation, to one led by choice. Arguing that the impetus behind the transition was intended to "replace the logic of citizenship with the logic of the market," Bailey focuses on the Army's employment of extended commercial and broadcast advertising to entice recruits, from the late 1970s into the

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[34] Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force,* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009): 25.
[35] Viraktep Ath, "45 Years Later: Nixon and the Gates Commission," http://nixonfoundationblog.org/45-years-later-nixon-and-the-gates-commission/

early 2000s.[36] Nixon's abolition of the draft ostensibly removed the lynchpin that connected citizens to military service, and the implications of those policies arguably transformed the relationships between civilian, military and corporate spheres of interests even further.

Lasswell's analysis conceived the future emergence of a "garrison state," entailing a trend away from the dominance of the "businessman" figure toward the supremacy of the "soldier."[37] Those identities have become conflated – the once clear distinctions between a civilian and a soldier are enmeshed. In recent history, Private Military Companies (PMCs) have largely dominated American military operations, their proliferation enabling the outsourcing of functions that have traditionally been carried out by the U.S. military. During the first Persian Gulf War in 1991, estimates place the ratio of American troops to military contractors at "roughly one to one."[38] Further exemplifying the U.S. military's recent reliance on PMC vendors, by September 2009, "two months prior to the Obama administration's announcement of the troop surge in Afghanistan, contractors made up an estimated 62 percent of the U.S. presence in that country."[39] Aaaron Ettinger argues, "the degree to which the U.S. military has been privatized is so extensive that the viability of U.S. foreign engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan is contingent upon the availability of contracted labour."[40] P.W Singer's work, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry*, is one of the first systematic surveys to chart the phenomenon of PMCs, citing the end of the Cold War as the "heart of the emergence of the privatized military industry." [41]

The opacity with which PMC activity abroad is conducted, further obfuscates the citizen's connection to how warfare is waged.[42] PMCs have long been a hotbed topic for academic discussion within the disciplines of political science, international

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[36] Bailey, *America's Army,* 4.
[37] Lasswell, *"The Garrison State,"* 455.
[38] Deborah D. Avant & Renee de Nevers, "Military Contractors & the American Way of War," *Daedalus* 140, no. 3 (2011): 88-89.
[39] Avant & Nevers, "Military Contractors & the American Way of War," 89.
[40] Aaron Ettinger, "Neoliberalism and the rise of the private military industry," *International Journal* 66, no. 3 (2011): 743-744.
[41] Peter W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008): 49.
[42] Avant & Nevers, "Military Contractors & the American Way of War," 88-89; Ken Silverstein, *Private Warriors*, (New York: Verso, 2000): 143.

relations, and security studies.[43] The conditions of modern warfare that have led to the rise of PMCs are inherently connected to the breakdown and reconfiguration of the relationships between civilians and the military. The unprecedented level of PMC activity can be connected to the Total Force policies of the 1970s – in effect; the market has influenced the emergence of a Private Military Corps, the full realization of a market-driven force. As the rise of PMCs implies a growing disconnection between civilian, military, and corporate spheres of interest, a disconnection between civilians and the technological processes of waging war also informs "total war" in the twenty-first century.

In congruence with the increasingly role of private military corporations (PMCs) in American conflicts abroad, the concept of the "citizen-soldier" functions as a new articulation of shifting civil-military relations, signaling the ways in which the United States has conducted warfare in more recent history. If PMCs represent firms, do the "boots on the ground" belong to soldiers, or to citizens? Furthermore, as the technological modes of waging war are also shifting – the burgeoning deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or, colloquially, drones) – experiences of war are transforming, with more pilots trained to remotely fly drones than to pilot aircraft. [44] Commonly referred to as "9 to 5 warriors" or "cubicle warriors," (their deskbound responsibilities mirroring civilian occupations) do drone operators rearticulate what it means to be a "citizen-soldier"?[45] These new roles have profound implications for the historical concept of the citizen-soldier.

Chapter One will broadly sketch the functions and transformations of the citizen-soldier mythos, from its conception in the Revolutionary period, to its shifting meaning during the early and mid-twentieth century. Paying particular attention to the National Guard (as federally administered under the National Guard Bureau) and the SoS campaign launched in conjunction with the release of the Superman film, *Man of*

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[43] Katherine E. McCoy, "Organizational Frames for Professional Claims Private Military Corporations and the Rise of the Military Paraprofessional," *Social Problems* 59, no. 3 (2012): 323-324; David Shearer, "Outsourcing War," *Foreign Policy* 112 (1998): 69.

[44] Roger Stahl, "What the drone saw: the cultural optics of the unmanned war," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 67, no. 5 (2013): 660; David Hastings Dunn, "Drones: disembodied aerial warfare and the unarticulated threat," *International Affairs* 89, no. 5 (2013): 1239.

[45] Peter W. Singer, "Robots at War: the New Battlefield," *The Wilson Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2009): Peter. W. Singer, *Wired For War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century,* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2009): 328-330.

Steel, this chapter will then shift the focus, by further proposing that the concept of the "citizen-soldier" has been reconfigured in the twenty-first century – reflecting the changing nature of America's military involvement in conflict abroad. In an era characterized as "post-heroic," the popularity of cinematic superheroes reveals a cultural impulse to comprehend and interpret the contemporary anxieties that are salient to Americans. Richard Slotkin argues – "our heroes and their narratives are an index to our character and conception of our role in the universe."[46] The fusion of the citizen-soldier myth with the cultural capital of American comic book characters such as Superman and Iron Man, effectively allows for the reconfiguration of civilian and military identities that reflects the transformation between these spheres in an era of "total war."

In "The Garrison State," Lasswell connected a growing dislocation of the "human factor" in war with the burgeoning development of aerial warfare, a technology that would greatly influence the course of the Second World War, culminating with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. His argument that aerial warfare has "tended to abolish the distinction between civilian and military functions," particularly resonates with the "remote" conditions that are evident in the processes that have characterized the waging of modern warfare.[47] Lasswell states:

> It is no longer possible to affirm that those who enter the military service take the physical risk while those who remain at home stay safe and contribute to the equipment and the comfort of the courageous heroes at the front. Indeed, in some periods of modern warfare, casualties among civilians may outnumber the casualties of the armed forces. With the socialization of danger as a permanent characteristic of modern violence the nation becomes one unified technical enterprise.[48]

Medea Benjamin observes "war has always been a powerful incentive for technological innovation."[49] During the first decade of the twenty-first century,

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[46] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through violence: the mythology of the American frontier, 1600-1860.* (Middletown: Wesleyan University, 1973): 564.
[47] Lasswell, "The Garrison State," 459.
[48] Lasswell, "The Garrison State," 459.
[49] Medea Benjamin, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control,* (London: Verso Books, 2013): 164.

advances in unmanned drone technology significantly bolstered the U.S. Air Force fleet. By 2010, more pilots were trained to fly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or drones) than to pilot fighter aircraft.[50] Yet the paradox remains – as drones increasingly substitute "boots on the ground" and airmen in the sky, the U.S. military "is engaged in more and longer conflicts than ever [while] fewer people are involved, touched, concerned, or engaged."[51] Drone pilots are displaced from the combat zone, faced with the novel situation of "experiencing the psychological disconnect of being "at war" while still dealing with the pressures of home," – as one pilot describes,

> You see Americans killed in front of your eyes and then have to go to a PTA meeting… You are going to war for 12 hours shooting weapons at targets, directing kills on enemy combatants, and then you get in the car, drive home, and within twenty minutes you are sitting at the dining table talking to your kids about their homework.[52]

P.W. Singer's work, *Wired For War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21ˢᵗ Century*, considers the past, present, and future of robotics use in warfare. Focusing primarily on tracing the evolution of drone technology. Singer chronicles the hidden dimensions of the opacity with which the military has conducted their deployment in conflicts abroad. Representative of dominant trends within IR scholarship, however, Singer is principally concerned with codifying a framework for robotics use, as well as interpreting current drone technology as a portent for a post-humanist future military comprised of "warrior robots." Conversely, Christopher Coker's work, *Warrior Geeks: How 21ˢᵗ Century Technology is Changing the Way We Fight and Think About War,* stands as an emphatic warning against the post-humanist fantasies that envision a "new genus of soldier: cyber-warriors who are now wired into a cyberspace and 'cubicle warriors' (or drone pilots) who are wired into an electronic battle space."[53] Such a broad brushstroke analysis that sweeps across the historical continuum is simultaneously reductive, as Coker pays less attention to exploring the

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[50] Roger Stahl, "What the drone saw: the cultural optics of the unmanned war," Australian Journal of International Affairs 67, no. 5 (2013): 660. David Hastings Dunn, "Drones: disembodied aerial warfare and the unarticulated threat," International Affairs 89, no. 5 (2013): 1239.
[51] Medea, Drone Warfare, 164.
[52] Peter W. Singer, "Robots at War: the New Battlefield," *The Wilson Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2009): 34.
[53] Christopher Coker, *Warrior Geeks: How 21ˢᵗ Century Technology is Changing the Way We Fight and Think About War*, (London: Hurst & Co., 2013): xxii.

cultural experiences of warfare that have transformed since the advent of drones, and instead, focuses primarily on what the future of warfare will look like.

The concept of "remoteness" applies literally to understandings of how drones function operationally – that is, they are piloted remotely. In this respect, "remoteness" refers to the dislocation of the combatant from the spatial reality of the battlefield. In drone warfare, the battlefield is configured through the images that are captured by the drones themselves, effectively reorganizing "military space by reconstructing the site of engagement through the scope of its lens and the pace of its capture."[54] The asymmetrical reality of UAV technology has implications for the ways in which drone personnel reconcile their military identity with the nature of their role – often, drone operators work long shifts in front of screens, echoing some aspects of "9-5" civilian employment. Despite the wholesale removal of the drone pilot from combat as "unmanned aerial vehicle" denotes, Pratap Chatterjee suggests that drones are "hyper-manned," due to the large number of personnel that are required to staff an operational drone patrol.[55] Drone pilots are assisted by a team of specialists, including: sensor operators, image analysts (who are often based in separate quarters), and extensive ground teams who launch, load munitions, and recover returned aircraft. In this respect, "human" factors still attend the operation of drones, despite the concept of mechanical "remoteness" that has come to characterize them. An exploration of these human factors contrasts with the rhetoric of "precision," "cleanliness," and "efficiency" that often pervades official and military dialogues about the use of drones in modern warfare. Ian Shaw and Majed Akhter argue, "Drones are always messier and fleshier than advertised."[56] The popularity of drone operator testimonies that have proliferated online provide an opportunity to examine the "fleshiness" of drones -the human factors that inform drone operation and interpretation. The opaque governance of the intensification of the U.S. drone program under the Obama administration has obfuscated the realities of drone warfare from the American public. Yet despite the "official" rendering of "invisibility," the public's perception of drones has been shaped a variety of cultural productions.

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[54] Lila Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare: Visual Primacy as a Weapon," *Trans Visuality: The cultural dimension of visuality* 2 (2015): 202.

[55] Pratap Chatterjee, "Killing by Committee in the Global Wild West: The Perpetrators Become the Victims of Drone Warfare," TomDispatch, July 12, 2015.

[56] Ian G. R. Shaw and Majed Akhter, "The Unbearable Humanness of Drone Warfare in FATA, Pakistan," *Antipode*, Vol. 44, no. 4 (2012): 1493.

Drones have entered the popular consciousness in profound and unsettling ways. To pre-empt any advances towards his daughters by the musical trio, the Jonas Brothers, President Obama joked about employing the Air Force arsenal at his disposal, during the 2010 White House Correspondents Dinner: "I have two words for you, 'predator drones.' You will never see it coming. You think I'm joking." Lighthearted as Obama's intentions may have been, his comments demonstrate the normalization of the threat of violence, and the pervasiveness of "total war" that permeates military space as it manifests in popular culture. Drones are featured in numerous modes of visual culture– their presence symbolizing both the threat and thrill of "remoteness" in contemporary warfare. Chapter Two of this thesis – a case study in effect – seeks to historically situate and trace the evolution of the General Atomics MQ-1 Predator, arguably the most represented drone model, and explore how it has entered the public's collective consciousness. This chapter will pay particular attention to the ways in which the Predator's evolution and extensive use has transformed the ways in which war is experienced by both civilians and those within the military. The material, operation, and cultural anatomy of the "drone" informs a new facet of the "total war" story – one underscored by a paradox of ubiquity (visibility) and absence (invisibility), remoteness (machine) and "fleshiness" (human).

In May 2016, game publishing giants Activision and Electronic Arts (EA) launched online trailers to promote upcoming title additions to their game series, *Call Of Duty*: (COD) and *Battlefield,* respectively. Both titles have long held a monopoly over the market for war-themed first-person shooter (FPS) games. The *Battlefield* series has attracted over 65 million players globally, with 11 games and 12 expansions released since its inception in 2002, whilst *COD* has collectively sold over 175 million title copies since the launch of the franchise in 2003. [57] Both series have also released games that use the backdrop of historical war campaigns to situate their plots and gameplay: either explicitly, as *Battlefield: 1942* focuses on campaigns fought across the major theatres of World War II; or implied, as *COD 4: Modern Warfare* takes place in an undisclosed location in the Middle East. What is most significant about each new addition to the series, are the broader symptoms of

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[57] http://www.dice.se/games/battlefield-4/ ; http://www.gamezone.com/news/call-of-duty-franchise-surpasses-175-million-copies-sold-3414623

"remoteness" and "continuity" that are simultaneously articulated. *Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare,* Activision's new title, is set in a post-humanist future that envisions the inhabitants of Earth forced to colonize space in order to survive. A hostile faction's succession from the fictional United Nations Space Alliance (UNSA) becomes the catalyst for war. The trailer was met with an underwhelming response, receiving the rank of the "eighth most disliked" video on the online video platform YouTube (which is significant to consider, out of a pool of over 81 million videos in circulation).[58] In a stark contrast, the trailer for *Battlefield 1*, set during World War I, garnered an overwhelmingly positive reaction, becoming the most "liked" YouTube trailer (including film and television trailers) within four days of its release.[59] The implications of these responses are significant and profound. Trends in FPS war-games to recreate a nostalgia for "boots on the ground" combat experiences – amidst an age characterized by the increasing use of drones - highlight larger pressure points within the cultural experiences of war within the United States. Furthermore, what does "total war" mean in the twenty-first century, when a game entitled *Infinite Warfare,* offers players the future fruits of "tech-fantasy," in contrast to a game that seeks to represent the technologies of the "Great War"?

Videogames have long attracted the ire, skepticism, and repudiation of scholars. The motif that dominates the scholarship in the field typically is "one of decline and atrophy."[60] Yet an exploration of how videogames contribute to shaping cultural experiences of warfare – literally, via remote control – warrants further investigation. Historian Joanna Bourke's work, *Wounding the World: How Military Violence And War Play Invade Our Lives* is a treatise on the social effects of military violence. Bourke pays particular attention to unpacking notions of "aestheticized ultra-violence" and the "fetishization of authenticity" in visual culture. However, her underlying conclusion – "obviously, though, computer games are just entertainment" – is reductive. [61] Such an assumption prematurely denies these cultural artifacts the opportunity to be considered worthy of further study. As a pervasive element of visual

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[58] http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2016/05/09/battlefield-1-is-the-most-liked-trailer-in-youtube-history-infinite-warfare-the-most-disliked/#649c165e35c2

[59] http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2016/05/09/battlefield-1-is-the-most-liked-trailer-in-youtube-history-infinite-warfare-the-most-disliked/#649c165e35c2

[60] Steven Johnson, *Everything Bad Is Good For You: How Popular Culture is Making Us Smarter,* (London: Allen Lane, 2005):13.

[61] Joanna Bourke, *Wounding The World: How Military Violence and War-Play Invade our Lives,* (Great Britain: Virago Press, 2014): 192-193.

and interactive culture in an era of "total war," video games shape an entire spectrum of war experiences.

Roger Stahl's work, *Militainment Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture,* seeks to interpret the changing civic experience of war, by connecting the integration of these experiences with established genres of entertainment. Stahl argues that for many scholars, Operation Desert Storm in 1991 "represented a moment where the event of a war became a fixture in the entertainment landscape, a feature of popular culture, and an object of consumption."[62] In order to interpret this phenomenon, the prevailing trend in scholarship has been to position representations of war in the terms of "the spectacle" (in Guy DeBord's terms), arguing that "these discourses tend to function to control public opinion by distancing, distracting, and disengaging the citizen from the realties of war." [63] Stahl proposes instead that an "interactive mode" can be applied to assess how the relationships of the citizen to the soldier have been rewired in the context of the twenty-first century,

> The intensification of the relationship between the Pentagon and the entertainment industries brought about the crystallization of platforms that invite one to project oneself into the action… This new orientation toward war is a symbolic shift, described by dominant narratives of war, ways of imaging war, and the integration of the experience of war with established entertainment genres.[64]

This thesis is heavily indebted to Stahl's introduction of the "interactive mode" as a new discourse for exploring how cultural experiences of war within the United States are shaped and produced. However, while comprehensively tracing the implications of how economic, institutional, and technological trends have transformed the relationship of the citizen to the soldier in the twenty-first century, Stahl's research leaves room to further investigate the evolution and repercussions of "militainment" through an historic lens. Aside from Stahl's contention that focuses on the ways in which videogames invite citizens to participate in an interactive form of war making

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[62] Roger Stahl, *Militainment Inc.,*3.
[63] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* Translated by Ken Knabb, (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2014): 2; Stahl, *Militainment Inc., 3;* Paul Virilio, *desert screen war at the speed of light*, (New York: Continuum, 2002): 57.
[64] Stahl, *Militainment Inc., 3.*

as a "virtual soldier," videogames have also articulated those shifting relationships in other complex ways. The trajectory of Chapter Three is guided by the premise that "military games are best seen as a new kind of dialogue between military and civilian spheres."[65] Games have functioned on several levels of engagement: to recruit; to train; to heal; and to memorialize. This chapter seeks to explore how cultural experiences of war have been informed by these various engagements. Furthermore, this chapter will analyze how a desire for the recreation of historical narratives, demonstrates the potency of national myths to shape and reflect the conditions that characterize "remoteness" in America's recent history of warfare.

Karen Randell and Sean Redmond argue:

> The troubling vision of the bodies of the dead and the soon to be dead litter the contemporary media landscape, helping to frame and fix the way war, terror, and conflict are able to be understood and experienced."[66]

The bodies of the military dead are laden with symbolic potential, and the bodies left in the wake of war are always contested. Yet as warfare in the post-heroic era is increasingly characterized by casualty aversion and extensive drone use, fewer Americans are dying.[67] Recently, the United States government and wartime mortuary service have increased efforts to locate, retrieve, and identify American bodies.[68] The bodies that do return are coveted, sacrosanct, and contentious.[69] Four times a year, the Pearl Harbor base in Hawaii hosted Pentagon led "arrival ceremonies" of repatriated remains. [70] Later it was reported that the ceremonies did not actually involve victims that had been recently recovered from battlefields abroad, but rather, the planes "were towed into place before the ceremonies."[71] An Air Force veteran of World War II and Korea, and annual attendee of the ceremony, expressed his sense of betrayal: "I don't

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[65] Marcus Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army: Military Games and the Civil-Military Divide," *Journal of Applied Security Research* 8 (2013): 257.

[66] Karen Randell and Sean Redmond (eds.), *The War Body on Screen,* New York: Continuum, 2008: 7.

[67] Enemark, *Armed Drones,* 13; Medea, *Drone Warfare,* 151.

[68] Judith Keene, "Bodily Matters Above and Below Ground: The Treatment of American Remains from the Korean War," *The Public Historian* 32, no. 1, *Where Are The Bodies? A Transnational Examination of State Violence and its Consequences,* (2010): 60.

[69] Derek Summerfield, "Raising The Dead: War, Repatriation, And The Politics of Memory," *British Medical Journal* 311, no. 7003 (1995): 495; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture,* (New York: Random House, 1993): 687.

[70] Phillip Sherwell, "Pentagon faked repatriation ceremonies of US war dead," Telegraph. 12 October 2013.

[71] Sherwell, "Pentagon faked repatriation ceremonies," 12 October 2013.

know when they stopped being honest and switched over to this Mickey Mouse."[72] His sentiments exemplify the potency of memorial rites of commemoration, and their ability to re-contextualize the "bodies" of war – staged or otherwise.

Christophe Wasinski argues that the United States government and military "have applied rigorous social control over the visibility of the military mortality," the aim of which is "either to make these ghosts invisible in the political arena… or, control their words by 'ventriloquating' them in accordance with some political interests."[73] In effect, these bodies become politicized, as their visibility is manipulated and coded with specifics meanings. The example of the "phony" arrival ceremonies demonstrates how military bodies are effectively "ventriloquated" to service a variety of needs As a ventriloquist gives voice to the inanimate, so too, do those that "re-animate" and shape the meanings of military bodies in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Four explores how the "body" is reconfigured in the context of modern warfare, through repatriation, memorialization, and the visual representations that manifest in the popular consciousness. To address this enquiry, this chapter will trace how the "visibility" (or invisibility) of military bodies is shaped by the broader conditions that underscore the concept of "remoteness" that this thesis illustrates.

In conclusion, this thesis will contextualize the historical contingencies that have informed the complexion of "total war" in the twenty-first century. The historical and cultural dynamics that have given rise to the post-heroic factors of warfare have implications for how American citizens experience war. Themes of remoteness and dislocation largely underpin and shape the shifting relationships between American civilians and their military, as the conditions of warfare have transformed in the "post-heroic" era. Yet the cultural impulses to "connect" with the larger national project of contemporary warfare – whether to reject it, interpret it, or be entertained by it – inform the American "war story" for the twenty-first century.

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[72] Sherwell, "Pentagon fake repatriation ceremonies," 12 October 2013.
[73] Wasinski, "Post-Heroic Warfare," 115.

This project ultimately seeks to reconfigure our understandings of how a culture of war underpins some of the most fundamental questions that inform identity and citizenship in the United States.

Chapter One

Truth, justice, and the advertising way: the reconfiguration of the "citizen-soldier" tradition, coming to a theater near you.

"Contrary to the rumors you have heard, I was not born in a manger. I was actually born on Krypton and sent here by my father, Jor-el, to save planet earth."[1]

<div align="right">- Barack Obama</div>

In 2009, anthropologist Jessica Johnson published the culmination of her ethnographic research in a paper titled, "The Citizen-Soldier: Masculinity, War, and Sacrifices at an Emerging Church in Seattle, Washington." Her investigation examined how narratives of conscription and voluntarism were "preached and practiced" at the prominent (now defunct) Seattle branch of the conservative evangelical mega-church, Mars Hill. Johnson's research sought to demonstrate how "crises of masculinity and security" were "articulated in tandem with culture war discourses to constitute and organize evangelical citizen-soldiers as a vanguard to oversee Mar's Hill's regional, national, and global expansion."[2] A short video produced by the church in 2007, titled *A Good Soldier: A Conversation with Pastor Mark Driscoll,* suitably underscores the fusion of spiritual and military rhetoric, as Pastor Mark delivers his address whilst pacing through a sea of headstones marked with the names of WWII veterans. An example of Driscoll's diatribe follows:

> Most churches are struggling, dying, and failing, and most church planters will just be part of the rising body count of failed church plants, *if* they are unable to *gather*, to inspire, to correct, to discipline, to instruct *men,* and this is particularly important for *young men*. The least likely person to go to church in the United States of America is a young man in his twenties… Those are the guys who must get a swift butt in the rear, need a good run through boot camp, need to be told that Jesus Christ is *not* a gay hippie in a *dress* and that they're dealing with the king of kings…and that there's a *mission* that he's called them to… I'm glad that the ladies love Jesus, but if you want to win a

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[1] "US Elections: Barack Obama jokes he is Superman," *The Telegraph*, October 17, 2008:
https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/barackobama/3213768/US-elections-Barack-Obama-jokes-he-is-Superman.html
[2] Jessica Johnson, "The Citizen-Soldier: Masculinity, War, and Sacrifice at an Emerging Church in Seattle, Washington," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 33, no. 2 (2010): 326-327.

war, you've got to get the men, and once you get the men, you must know what to do with them. [3]

Driscoll's video sermons garnered positive responses from soldiers deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, able to access downloads of the church's material via iTunes. One soldier recalls the impact Driscoll's messages had on him:

> As soon as Pastor Mark made some comment about butch ladies and bucking authority, I was hooked on this guy's teaching… My wife started burning anything she could get her hands on from Mars Hill, from audio sermons to video sermons, and mailing them out to me in Iraq. [4]

The deprecating language that Driscoll employs to pose notions of homosexuality and femininity in violent opposition to discourses of martial masculinity, clearly struck a chord with this soldier, as Driscoll articulated "gender order in tandem with authority."[5] Johnson emphasizes a connection between the accessibility and reception of Driscoll's sermons on bases in Afghanistan and Iraq, and anxieties arising from the increasing presence of women in the military since the inception of the all-volunteer force (AVF) in 1973. Despite the radical shifts that accompanied the transformation of the United States military into an AVF following the abolition of conscription, in recent history, enlistees represent a demographic that has become "far more conservative and evangelical than American society as a whole."[6]

In many respects, Driscoll's disturbing rhetorical conflation between the expansion efforts of his church and military masculinity, also highlights many similar anxieties that have plagued the recruitment efforts of the United States military. As Driscoll laments the lack of young men willing to plant churches and engage in a "spiritual battle," so too, have branches of the armed forces struggled to recruit during a period of protracted conflict abroad – as Army Public Affairs officer Douglas Smith indicates - "we're recruiting for the first time in an ongoing war environment. It's

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[3] Johnson, "The Citizen-Soldier," 341.
[4] Johnson, "The Citizen-Soldier," 346.
[5] Johnson, "The Citizen-Soldier," 345.
[6] Barry Strauss, "Reflections on the citizen-soldier," *Parameters* 33, no. 2 (2003): 72.

taken a lot of hard work."[7] Both Driscoll and the military have tasked this responsibility to be fulfilled by the "citizen-soldier" – a "central political character" and identity that has arguably "animated American civic ideals since the Revolutionary War."[8] Conditions in America's recent history have informed a new concept of war, evidenced through the transformations between military, civilian, and corporate spheres of interest.

Zach Snyder's *Man of Steel* (2013) signaled the highly anticipated cinematic re-boot of one of America's most beloved cultural icons – Superman – the square-jawed, all-American, boy-scout hero. The marketing of Hollywood blockbuster films has long and unremarkably been characterized through heavy promotion and product placement, and *Man of Steel* was no exception, tied to over one hundred sponsors.[9] The National Guard, however, stands out as a remarkable affiliate, using the film to launch their recruitment campaign, *Soldiers of Steel*. Although other promotional partners are primarily concerned with marketing Superman's preferred razor, a Super Bacon Cheeseburger, or anti-virus protection with "Kryptonian speed," the *Soldiers of Steel* campaign carries serious implications for how and why Americans choose to serve in their nation's military forces. Superman has been utilized for decades for his "exceptional symbolic versatility" to represent and reflect the socio-political concerns of Americans- and in the case of the National Guard, he is used as a linchpin to connect and establish equity between the National Guard brand, and his potency as an enduring symbol of American exceptionalism.[10] Superman's historical currency is thus translated into his potential to be successfully reconfigured as a "warrior" – in effect, typifying his relevance as a "hero" in a "post-heroic" period that has otherwise been characterized by the absence of one.

Driscoll's mission to rearticulate the identity of the "citizen-soldier" in order to service the needs of his church, in tandem with the National Guard's equivalent venture to recruit through the *SoS* campaign, demonstrates (perhaps in unsettling

[7] Jim Edwards, "How National Guard Is Fighting Attrition," *Brandweek*, October 2, 2006: 8.
[8] Roger Stahl, *Militainment Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture.* New York: Routledge, 2010: 12.
[9] Asawin Suebsaeng, "How The National Guard Is Using 'Man of Steel' To Recruit You," *Mother Jones,* June 14, 2013.
[10] Bradley Bailey, "O Superman: The Many Faces of the Man of Steel,: in *ConFiguring America: Iconic Figures, Visuality, and the American Identity.* Eds. Klaus Riser, Michael Fuchs, and Michael Phillips (Chicago: Intellect, 2013): 97.

terms) the nature of "total war" as a composite of attitudes and values that pervade the home-front – a cultural complex that Ken Cunningham refers to as the "domestic hegemony of U.S. militarism." [11] A clear tension emerges between the "remoteness" that characterizes warfare in the post-heroic era, and the ubiquity of consumable domestic militarism that manifests in American culture at large. Is it possible for these tensions to be reconciled? In order to explore this tension, this chapter will argue that the historical ideal of the "citizen-soldier" has been reconfigured both as a response and a result of the functions that have informed the "post-heroic" culture of total war. This new reconfiguration of the citizen-soldier services the shifting complexion of civil-military relations in the United States, whilst also existing as a symptom of the "remoteness" that has characterized this transformation.

The National Guard and reserve forces have historically been "conceived of as constituting the initial and primary sources for augmentation of the active forces in an emergency."[12] Yet following the transition to the AVF and the introduction of the Total Force policy during the 1970s, the operational role of both the Guard and the reserves has undergone a transformation. Since the First Persian Gulf War in 1991, and the various "peacekeeping" missions undertaken by the United States abroad during the 1990s, both auxiliary forces have increasingly been integrated into active-duty. Furthermore, the simultaneous proliferation of private military companies/contractors (PMCs) and their growing influence in American-led military operations, have fundamentally challenged the historical conceptions of the citizen-soldier tradition and the ways in which it shapes contemporary experiences of warfare in a post-heroic era.

This chapter will begin by investigating the cultural significance and dimensions of the citizen-soldier tradition, broadly sketching the context of its conception in the Revolutionary period, to its shifting meaning throughout the twentieth century. The second portion of this chapter will focus on an analysis of the National Guard's *SoS* campaign. The importance of surveying the National Guard is twofold. Notably, the role of the Guard as an operational force has undergone an observable transformation

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[11] Ken Cunningham, "Permanent war? The domestic hegemony of the New American Militarism," *New Political Science* 26, no. 4 (2004): 556.
[12] John R. Probert, "The Reserves and National Guard: Their Changing Role in National Defense," *Naval War College Review* 24, no. 9 (1972): 67.

as a consequence of the shifting conditions that have informed the post-heroic era. Moreover, the Guard's historical connection to the citizen-soldier tradition, coupled with its explicit endeavor to reclaim it through the *SoS* campaign, demonstrates a trend in recruitment that sought to reconnect martial service to contemporary understandings of American citizenship, in kind, raising interesting questions about what it really means to be a citizen in a period of "total war."

Throughout its history, the concept of the citizen-soldier has been fluid, its definition subject to a diverse set of historical contingencies. Historiographical trends have reflected this amorphous quality. Ronald Krebbs suggests that the "institutional definition of the citizen-soldier is appealing because it is so tractable and observable."[13] Indeed, the prevailing trend that characterizes the bulk of scholarship surrounding the citizen-soldier, seeks to locate the institutional origins of that identity – pinpointing it to the 1636 formation of the first militia regiment in Massachusetts.[14] The notion of the "citizen-soldier," born from the French and American revolutions, became inherently connected to the development of parliamentary institutions, in the respect that "military service emerged as a hallmark of citizenship and citizenship and hallmark of democracy."[15] Citizenship in the republic was, in effect, constituted and gained through martial service. Krebs convincingly argues that as scholars continue to lament and consign the "citizen-soldier" to death, they fail to acknowledge the endurance of the socio-political currency that the concept continues to diffuse. He proposes that the "citizen-soldier" exists "as a cultural phenomenon…independently of [its] presumed institutional manifestation," arguing that it is more useful to conceive of the citizen-soldier tradition as a "set of rhetorical conventions," in order to examine the ways in which the figure is practiced, experienced, and produced.[16]

The Revolutionary War was a "signal ingredient in America's creation of a national identity, and it played a formative role in helping them define and understand what they saw as their national character."[17] The military ethos of republicanism infused

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[13] Ronald R. Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition in the United States: Has Its Demise Ben Greatly Exaggerated?" *Armed Forces & Society* 36, no. 1 (2009):161.
[14] Raphael S. Cohen, "Demystifying the Citizen Soldier," RAND Project Air Force 2015: 3.
[15] Morris Janowitz, "The All-Volunteer Military as a "Sociopolitical" Problem," *Social Problems* 22, no. 3 (1975): 434.
[16] Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition in the United States," 160-161.
[17] Ricardo A. Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York: New York University Press, 2015): 3.

American socio-political culture at large, yet the connection that was forged between constitutive citizenship and martial service was underpinned by the premise that American soldiers, "whether regulars, volunteers, or militiamen, believed themselves to be citizens first and foremost."[18]

Following the Revolutionary War, the newly dependent American states dispensed with the remnants of the Continental Army in 1784.[19] Professional soldiers had become equated with tyranny and militarism, and in contrast, the militia, who had bolstered and augmented the standing army during the war, had "come to be identified with liberty and constitutional government, which effectively made military service in time of war a responsibility of citizenship."[20] Furthermore, the adoption of the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in 1791, powerfully demonstrates the intimate connection between the right to bear arms as a responsibility of citizenship, and the distrust of a standing army, or as Richrard Wronta characterizes it - "American schizophrenia concerning professional military organizations."[21] Peter Gardella argues that the U.S. Constitution functions "both as sacred text and icon," in the respect that phrases such as "We the People," and "to keep and bear arms," continue to endure in the public's consciousness, "attaining a power equal to that of prayers or invocations of gods."[22] The amendment's clause – "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed" – is profoundly significant on several levels.

First, Gardella suggests that such language has "in effect made the gun a sacred object of American civil religion, by associating it with the primary sacred value of personal freedom."[23] Although it is not the task of this enquiry to debate whether the clause creates an individual constitutional right for citizens of the United States to carry firearms, or a collective right for federal bodies to regulate their possession, it is

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[18] Herrera, *For Liberty and the Republic,* 1-2.
[19] Lois G. Schwoerer, *"No Standing Armies!" The Antimilitary Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974).
[20] James Wood, "Anglo-American Liberal Militarism and the Idea of the Citizen Soldier," *International Journal* 62, no. 2 (2007): 407.
[21] Richard M. Wrona Jr., "A Dangerous Separation: The Schism between the American Society and Its Military," *World Affairs* 169, no. 1 (2006): 27.
[22] Peter Gardella, *American Civil Religion: What Americans Hold Sacred* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 117.
[23] Gardella, *American Civil Religion*, 125.

important to note that that amendment still articulates martial service as a constitutive element of citizenship.[24] The Constitution and Bill of Rights as sacred texts provide a foundational framework that encodes notions of American citizenship with their centrality to a "formative martial impulse."[25] Furthermore, the framing of the Constitution defines citizenship through "white landowning masculinity," thus restricting the granting of citizenship by gender and race. Ilene Feinman argues, "martial duty in the United States has historically been a constitutive part of male citizenship… [a] traditional passage of citizenship and manhood."[26] The responsibility of military service granted men an opportunity to pursue economic independence, whilst allowing them to "demonstrate their manhood," through participating in the political process.[27] The granting of first class-citizenship based on gender during this period is significant to note. The connection between citizenship and masculinity provided the grounds for Black men to contest and gain basic "formal" citizenship rights, as those who fought successfully captured British soldiers during the war were ostensibly granted citizenship and freedom.[28] This basis would help to inform the fight for integration and increased citizenship rights for Black men following their service in the Second World War, further highlighting the enduring connections between citizenship, martial service, and masculinity.

In 1792, the passage of the Militia Act required all men aged between eighteen and forty-five years to enroll in the militia, further cementing the idea of the citizen soldier as a formative characteristic of national citizenship.[29] In practice, the ideal of the citizen-soldier persisted, yet during the period of American westward expansion, increasing federal regulation of state and local militias led to the growth of a regular army. Arthur Ekirch argues that conditions arising following the American

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[24] For scholarly perspectives regarding the debate that surrounds interpretations of the Second Amendment, see: Michael Busch, "Is the Second Amendment an Individual or a Collective Right?: United States v. Emerson's Revolutionary Interpretation of the Right to Bear Arms," *St. John's Law Review* 77, no. 2 (Spring, 2003): 345-370; Ariel A. Rodriguez, "Is the Right to Bear Arms Individual, Collective, Insurrectionist or All of the Above?" *Seton Hall Constitutional Law Journal* 10, no. 3 (2000): 797-805; Saul Cornell, *A Well-regulated Militia the Founding Fathers and the Origins of Gun Control in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
[25] Marcus Cunliffe, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865* (New York: Free Press, 1973): 26.
[26] Ilene Rose Feinman, *Citizenship Rites: Feminist Soldiers & Feminist Antimilitaries* (New York: New York University Press, 2000): 90-91.
[27] Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1984): 39.
[28] Feinman, *Citizenship Rites*, 92.
[29] James Griffith, "Contradictory and Complementary Identities of US Army Reservists: A Historical Perspective," *Armed Forces & Society* 37, no. 2 (2011): 265-267.

Revolutions made it "increasingly difficult for an individual to combine the normal like of a civilian with the duties of a soldier."[30] The popular influence of traditional liberalist thinkers like Adam Smith, informed American principles of self-interest – "commercial gain, industrial expansion, and middle class expansion" – rendering a balance of private and military life inefficient and unsustainable.[31] Despite the growing reliance on a regular army to secure to the western frontier during the nineteenth century, the ideal of the citizen-solider still persisted. James Woods argues that the paradox of the liberal ideology that developed during this period enabled Americans to maintain a regular army "without any concurrent abandonment of the liberal tradition of their commitment to the idea of the citizen solider as the cornerstone of American defense policy in the event of a major war."[32]

The tradition of voluntary part-time service endured following the Civil War, although, according to Krebs, "obligatory military service has been much more the exception than the rule in U.S. history."[33] In 1903, the Militia Act (also known as the Dick Bill) made provisions for the federalization of the state militia. Its passage informed the administrative creation of the National Guard, effectively determining the conditions in which the Guard could be activated as an operational force during times of war, and its composition as a peacetime reserve force.[34] The passage of the National Defense Acts in 1916 further solidified the institutional establishment of the National Guard, whilst also providing for the expansion of the regular army, and for the duration of the First World War, such legislation "empowered the president to draft militia units if sufficient volunteers did not appear."[35] The introduction of the Selective Service System in 1917, a term coined by the Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, profoundly shaped the policies that conscripted able-bodied men between the ages of 21 and 30 to be conscripted into military service.[36] Such legislation determining conscription would be consecutively expanded and shaped through the passage of the Selective Training and Service Act (1940), the Selective Service Act (1948), the Universal Military Training and Service Act (1951), and the Military

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[30] Arthur A. Erkirch Jr. "The Idea of a Citizen Army," *Military Affairs* 17, no. 1 (1953): 32.
[31] Wood, "Anglo-American Liberal Militarism," 414.
[32] Wood, "Anglo-American Liberal Militarism," 413.
[33] Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition in the United States," 160-161.
[34] Erkirch, "The Idea of a Citizen Army," 33; Timothy J. Perri, "The Evolution of Military Conscription in the United States," *The Independent Review* 17, no. 3 (2013): 432.
[35] Perri, "The Evolution of Military Conscription," 432.
[36] Perri, "The Evolution of Military Conscription," 432.

Selective Service Act (1967), fundamentally re-encoding martial service and citizenship with the obligation of sacrifice. The onset of the Second World War reinvigorated notions of individual responsibility for the security of the nation, and encouraged the sustained participation of the American citizenry to contribute to the project of war-making. The scale of societal mobilization for wartime production during World War II transformed the nature of civil-military relations, and furthermore, permutations of the citizen-solider ideal increasingly materialized in popular culture.[37] The popularity and widespread appeal of comic-book characters such as Captain America and Superman during the war (and their endurance following), demonstrates the potency and centrality of the citizen-soldier concept. The particular example of Superman as a cultural construction, highlights the impacts of cross-industrial collaboration – an early permutation of the military-industrial-entertainment complex – and the character's effectiveness as a symbol for American exceptionalism.

Although Superman's iconic appeal is largely associated with the proliferation of the character throughout the Second World War, it is important to locate Superman's origins as stemming from the cultural climate that preceded the era of his peak popularity. Superman was the brainchild of 18 year olds Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who first conceived of the character in 1933.[38] Although Superman would not debut on the cover of *Action Comics #1* until 1938, he was born during a time of significant socio-political upheaval, following the turbulent period of the Great Depression-bookended by the introduction of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Superman embodied the prevailing values and mores "that Americans cherished in the 1930s."[39] Jeffery Lang and Patrick Trimble argue that he:

> represents individual dignity and moral integrity while believing in justice for all, rich and poor, strong and weak. The ultimate egalitarian, Superman is fair to everyone in equal measure; he finds the means to give to the poor without taking from the rich. He does not compromise because his moral strength does not compromise. He upholds the values of the law and the establishment while

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[38] Jeffrey S. Lang and Patrick Trimble, "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow? An Examination of the American Monomyth and the Comic Book Superhero," *Journal of Popular Culture* 22, no. 3 (1988): 160.
[39] Lang and Trimble, "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" 160.

representing the best of personal freedom and anti-establishment feeling… He personalizes the values of the Puritan work ethic in its most virtuous form.[40]

In his earliest incarnations, Superman saved flood victims in Tennessee, rebuilt slums, and assisted struggling families in the Oklahoma dustbowl – in essence, Superman was a "super New-Dealer."[41] *Action Comics #1* effectively launched Superman's career, following its success, his exploits became the nexus of an unprecedented transmedia phenomenon. In 1939, a Superman comic strip entered syndication in approximately three hundred daily newspapers (including *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Post*) with a readership estimated at over 20 million– "he was everywhere at once, a godlike redeemer, but he didn't ask for worship and redemption only cost a dime."[42] Superman's introduction across the airwaves, however, signaled the beginnings of the character's alignment with an effort to bolster support for a war that the United States would soon enter.

Capitalizing on Superman's franchising and promotional potential, Detective Comics publisher Harry Donenfeld transformed "the character into a symbol of war propaganda, one attractive to the largest audience across the breadth of the era's cultural industries."[43] Arguably, *The Adventures of Superman*, a serialized radio show that made its broadcast debut on 12 February 1940 (mere months after the first wartime propaganda film reached American cinemas in November 1939), became one of the most successful incarnations of the superhero franchise. In some respects, Superman had "been co-opted into the war" before America's entrance following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. Adventure serials became a popular genre of radio programming during the war period, as many serials turned their narrative attention to the warfront. A 1942 reporter for the *New York Times* wrote, "immediately after Pearl Harbor the adventure serial went to war in a big way."[44] In 1943, reporter John K Hutchens described the connection between *Children's Hour –*

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[40] Lang and Trimble," Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" 160.
[41] Lang and Trimble," Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" 161; Gloria Goodale, "'Man of Steel' offers a new generation its own, brooding, Superman," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 13 June, 2013.
[42] Lang and Trimble, "Whatever Happened to the Man of Tomorrow?" 161; Matthew Freeman, "Up, Up and Across: Superman, The Second World War and the Historical Development of Transmedia Storytelling," *Historical Journal of film, Radio and Television* 35, no. 2 (2015): 218-219.
[43] Freeman, "Up, Up and Across," 220.
[44] Richard Match, "Scram, Cinderella," *New York Times*, November 1, 1942.

the allocated time slot for adventure serial broadcasting – and America's participation in the war:

> For some millions of American children, age 7 and up, it now starts about 5 P.M. with the whine of machine-gun fire spilling out of a loudspeaker. The fifteen-minute, Monday-through-Friday juvenile adventure serials have gone to war, vicariously taking their young public, and if the Axis is not defeated next week it will scarcely be the fault of sundry straight-shooting, clean-living, do-or-die heroes impersonated by members of the American Federation of Radio Artists.[45]

Throughout the early 1940s, Superman himself was tasked with "exposing Axis sabotage and punishing the malefactors."[46] Superman's war efforts, however, did not pass without scrutiny – "the modern kid likes it. His modern mother doesn't," one reporter expressed, as groups voiced their concerns regarding the violence they perceived to be polluting the airwaves.[47] In contrast, some felt that the adventure genre had greater potential to bolster domestic support for the war effort. Producer Dorothy Gordon suggested that "it is not so much what is on the air that is dangerous to the youth of America – it is rather what is *not* on the air."[48] She outlined her concerns, arguing, "American radio has failed – as Germany and Russia in their different ways did not fail – to utilize radio's tremendous influence on the young," and proposed that radio producers should "think seriously about educating American children in democracy and the building of the post-war world they will face."[49] Superman's efforts were also evidenced through his introduction to the silver screen.

Superman's screen debut was facilitated by the Fleischer studio, most known for their animated Popeye and Betty Boop shorts, who produced a series of Superman cartoons, "each to be exhibited in cinemas and distributed by Paramount Pictures as part of their double bills.[50] Notably, the Fleischer cartoon shorts were screened in

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[45] John K Hutchens, "Tracy, Superman et. Al. Go to War: These dauntless lads were never so busy and the debate over their influence on children flows on relentlessly," *New York Times,* November 21, 1943.
[46] Hutchens, "Tracy, Superman et. Al."
[47] Match, "Scram, Cinderella,"
[48] Hutchens, "Tracy, Superman, et. Al."
[49] Hutchens, "Tracy, Superman, et Al."
[50] Freeman, "Up, Up and Across," 228.

conjunction with war pictorials that aimed to broadcast the latest news from the warfront abroad. A less-than subtle example of Superman's domestic connection to the warfront is demonstrated through the ninth cartoon screened in the series, titled *Terror on Midway*, which was presented alongside *The Battle of Midway* in 1941 – a pictorial that captured coverage from the Japanese attack in the Pacific theater, occurring in June of the same year. A reporter for the *Film Daily* commented:

> Not the least of the attributes of the Superman shorts is their ability to slake the entertainment thirst of the rising generation, and amuse as well as astonish their elders. In the series, the present offering ranks high as a juvenile thriller and a stimulant to adult credulity… Rationing and getting treads for your tires seems so simple after viewing this one.[51]

Despite the sardonic tone, this reviewer's comment highlights how the war had increased the average age of Superman's general audience. Furthermore, the comment demonstrates Superman's connection to the larger war effort that characterized the cultural climate on the domestic front – one mobilized for "total war." In this respect, Superman was at the center of a phenomenon that had "begun to emerge between war propaganda material and comic book characters – the latter dispersed across media as emblems of the former."[52] Perhaps Superman's most enduring legacy, the comic book, is the medium that has the most complicated connection to the war.

Superman appeared on countless war-themed covers between 1942 and 1945, some of them even depicting Superman in combat with the Axis powers. One could be forgiven for mistaking the iconography of these covers with those of U.S. propaganda posters in circulation – "*Superman #17* (cover dated July-August 1942) shows Superman standing on a stylized version of the Earth holding a thrashing Hitler and Hirohito by their necks," while "*Superman #29* (cover dated July-August 1944) features Lois Lane walking arm-in-arm with a man from the Army, the Navy, and the Marines, telling them (and implicitly, all US soldiers), 'You're my Supermen!'"[53] Yet between the covers, "within the pages of the comic Superman never directly

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[51] "Terror on Midway," *The Film Daily*, Friday August 21, 1942.
[52] Freeman, "Up, Up and Across," 228.
[53] Julian Darius, "On 'How Superman Would Win The War'," *Sequart magazine*, Monday 10 June, 2013.

confronted the enemy and at most dealt with fifth columnists", unlike the actions of comic book super heroes who joined the allied cause and fought alongside them on the Western Front. [54] Bestowed with superhuman powers and near-invincibility, Superman's publishing company, Detective Comics (DC), were at odds to conceive of Superman's appropriate place in the war effort. The biggest concern for those charged with the character (and indeed, his longevity following the events of the actual war) was that if Superman won the war on paper, as he would be expected to, "the conflict would soon be over, and there would no longer be a need for him, either at home or on the warfront."[55] In order to relieve Superman (and his alter-ego, the mild-mannered reporter Clark Kent) from active service, DC ran a comic-strip across syndicated newspapers in February of 1942, having Kent attempt to enlist in the armed forces only to fail his physical examination (designated 4-F), as unwittingly, Kent reads the eye-chart hanging in the adjacent room, through the wall with his X-ray powers – "You're physically superb… except you're obviously blind as a bat."[56] In this way, Superman's patriotism was not compromised, and by staying home, he "demonstrated his faith in the prowess of the American fighting man, and by extension, the American way."[57] In a manner that also proved to be a commercially shrewd, DC's careful framing of Superman's participation during the war worked simultaneously to ensure his endurance following it. In contrast, other popular wartime characters such as Marvel's counterpart Captain America precipitously declined in popularity after the war, despite routinely "socking Hitler in the jaw."[58] Captain America was exclusively created to fight Nazis, but Superman was intimately connected to "a particular concept of America… Superman's appeal then became much more about domesticity."[59] By keeping Superman at home, DC was able to construct him as a "citizen-soldier," serving his role in the efforts of the people's "total war" on the home front, whilst putting his faith and trust in the American military to triumph abroad. Writing for *The New York Times* in 1946, reported Jack Gould neatly articulated the importance of the character's radio presence, "The significance of the new radio Superman is not only a reflection of these times… but

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[54] Ian Gordon, "The moral world of Superman and the American war in Vietnam," *Journal of Graphic Novels and Comics* 6, no. 2 (2015): 173.
[55] Michael Soares, "The Man of Tomorrow: Superman from American Exceptionalism to Globalization," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 48, no. 4 (2015): 749.
[56] Soares, "The Man of Tomorrow," 749.
[57] Gordon, "The moral world of Superman," 173.
[58] Darius, "On 'How Superman Would Win the War,"
[59] Gordon, "The moral world of Superman," 175.

that now he is to be a constructive participant in them."[60] As the war ended, some of America's "citizen-soldiers" returned – some returned to their civilian occupations as they were before the disruption of war. The American home front underwent radical transformations that traversed the economic, social, political, and cultural spectrum during the post-war period. Historical understandings of the "citizen-soldier" would be further challenged during the era of the Vietnam War. President Richard Nixon's move to replace a conscripted force with a volunteer one during the course of the Vietnam War, cast the concept of "citizen-soldier" into crisis.

Since the Nixon administration abolished conscription and began the transition to an AVF in 1973, the prevailing trend in civil-military scholarship has been to argue that the fundamental linchpin connecting the obligation of citizens to serve in their nation's armed forces had been removed. The advent of the AVF was born amidst the tumultuous climate of the Vietnam War. During his 1968 presidential campaign, Richard Nixon vowed to end military conscription, and as the war continued, public disaffection with the Selective Service System gave Nixon's proposal political traction and viability. By separating the citizen from soldier, Roger Stahl argues that Nixon's decision to abolish the draft effectively released "the executive branch from democratic accountability in matters of war" whilst functioning to "safeguard future wars from mass public protest."[61] Nixon tasked the Gates Commission with assessing the feasibility of establishing an AVF in 1969, and on February 12 1970, the commission presented Nixon with a report that espoused a policy framework to end conscription. Many of the ideas that shaped the report were anticipated in a series of articles written by the prominent economist Milton Friedman, three years earlier.[62] In essence, the creation of the AVF was fundamentally shaped by a group of economists who were influential within the Nixon administration. They contributed to the ongoing debate within American society about the importance of individual liberty as a defining value of the nation. Beth Bailey argues that the commission:

> Set aside the notion that military service is an obligation of citizenship; they
> walked around issues of fairness and shared sacrifice. Instead, they worked

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[60] Gould, "On the New Superman," 7.
[61] Stahl, *Militainment, Inc.* 13.
[62] Viraktep Ath, "45 Years Later: Nixon and the Gates Commission," http://nixonfoundationnblog.org/45-years-later-nixon-and-the-gates-commission/

from two major assumptions: individual liberty is the most essential American value, and the free market is the best means to preserve it.[63]

In order to facilitate the transition and attract recruits, the commission endorsed

> The development of a military salary system comparable to that in the civilian sector, including the substitution of cash for some benefits that are now provided in-kind.[64]

The commission's arguments centered on the notion that the military could be governed by supply and demand – the economic market force variables that ostensibly ensure a competitive market. By introducing an increased salary that rivaled those offered in the civilian sector, and by providing cash benefit incentives, the commission advocated for the all-volunteer force to rely on the market system in order to attract recruits and bolster the force. The proposition was not met without critics, as many commentators were wary of the repercussions such a policy would have on traditional configurations of the relationship between civilians and their military, particularly as those relationships had historically been informed by notions of obligation and sacrifice.[65] Charles Moskos called the transition to the AVF the Nixon administration's attempt to "buy an alternative to the draft."[66] Writing in 1979, he argued that

> Material-interest has helped move the U.S. military away from professionalism and institutional loyalty and esprit – the intangibles that also sustain Americans in uniform – toward an organizational mentality more and more resembling that of any civilian occupation. At its extreme, this mentality turns service people into "employees."[67]

In this respect, the abolition of the draft and the institution of the AVF ultimately removed the lynchpin of sacrifice that had informed civil-military relations. This moment of rupture profoundly shaped the ways in which the ideal of the citizen-

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[63] Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force,* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009): 33.

[64] Thomas S. Gates Jr., *The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force,* Washington, D.C., February 1970: 56.

[65] See: Morris Janowitz, "The All-Volunteer Military as a "Sociopolitical Problem," *Social Problems* 22, no. 3 (1975): 432-449.

[66] Charles Moskos, "The All-Volunteer Force," *The Wilson Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1979): 138-139.

[67] Moskos, "The All-Volunteer Force," 138-139.

soldier would be understood and reconfigured. Stahl and Bailey's assessments give more credence to the institutional configuration of the citizen-soldier, effectively advancing a "homology between military recruitment systems and political culture."[68] This kind of assessment does not account for the citizen-soldier tradition as a "cultural phenomenon" with the capacity to exist "independently of this presumed institutional manifestation," and the ability to survive institutional change.[69] Yet Stahl and Bailey both highlight two of the most fundamental transformations that attended the transition into an AVF: the war in Vietnam was a watershed moment that underscored a crisis in civil-military relations as citizens became increasingly disconnected from the substantive processes of warfare; and, the abolition of conscription profoundly transformed the culture of the military and in kind, the concept of the citizen-soldier, as the armed forces entered a trend towards professionalization. [70]

Anticipating the end of conscription, the Army began a heavy advertising campaign in order to attract recruits as early as the summer of 1971. Military advertising was not a new phenomenon, however, but up until the transition into the AVF, commercial advertising had not been utilized on such a scale. In 1973, the Army had spent less than $10 million on advertising expenditures, and by 1984, that budget had increased more than tenfold, with more than $100 million being devoted to attract volunteers.[71] The Army's reliance on conscription to bolster its ranks historically outnumbered other branches of the military, in part due to the fact that the Army "needed the largest number of recruits each year."[72] In order to meet this challenge, the Army embraced market research trends, hoping to effectively appeal to their target market. Bailey outlines:

> The army, relying on market logic in its attempts to create and maintain a volunteer force, defined the market as a site of consumer desire, a sphere in which the emotional weight of individuals' hopes and dreams and fears was more powerful than that of rational decisions based on practical information. The advertising that became crucial to recruiting campaigns was consumer

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[68] Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition," 154.

[69] Krebs, "The Citizen-Soldier Tradition," 154.

[70] For a thoroughly comprehensive history of the U.S. military's transition to an all-volunteer force, see: Bernard Rostker, *I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006).

[71] Leonard Shyles and John E. Hocking, "The Army's 'Be All You Can Be' Campaign," *Armed Forces & Society* 16, no. 3 (1990): 369.

[72] Melissa T. Brown, " 'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman': Representations of Women in US Military Recruiting Advertisements for the All-Volunteer Force," *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 33 (2012): 156.

driven, even as the consumer was constructed through research profoundly shaped by historically specific assumptions about everything from models of psychological development to assumptions about family structure, peer culture, and the meaning of masculinity and femininity. The focus on the "important psychological needs" and desires of potential volunteers was given added weight by the market surveys and social science research that offered quantitative evidence about what young men and women wanted. It is probably not surprising that studies conducted in the early 1970s would emphasize psychological needs, or that the psychological needs they discovered in young men concerned their desire to be treated as individuals and to have "freedom."[73]

These ads focused primarily on touting benefits such as job training and travel, presenting the Army as a "job with good benefits and a place to learn a skill and prepare for college."[74] This shift is significant because it illustrates the magnitude of the transformation that the Army underwent towards professionalizing itself as an institution, in effect, becoming an occupational force – an attractive alternative to the civilian job market. Following the transition to the AVF, the Army increasingly began to employ language that recast the image of soldiers as "professionals." James Griffith argues that this "followed trends of professionalizing jobs in the civilian job market, adding prestige, status, and privileges to the occupation of the solider."[75] In turn, this shift had profound implications for the tradition of the citizen-soldier, an identity that had historically rested upon the notion that one would return to a civilian life after service in the military. Furthermore, this shift would have significant socio-cultural implications, transforming the composition of the United States military. Following the abolition of the draft, "men as a group were no longer responsible for the nation's defense, and women enlisted in increasing numbers."[76] Women have served in the United States military in an official capacity since World War I, however, they have typically been relegated to support roles, and have only been deployed in "Military

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[73] Bailey, "America's Army," 76.

[74] Melissa T. Brown, " 'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman': Representations of Women in US Military Recruiting Advertisements for the All-Volunteer Force," *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 33 (2012): 156.

[75] James Griffith, "Reserve Identities: What Are They? And Do They Matter? An Empirical Examination," *Armed Forces & Society* 37, no. 4 (2011): 619-620 .

[76] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 151.

Operational Specialties (MOS) designed to aid and support male combat efforts."[77] Whilst the Army had been the most receptive of the forces to begin recruitment efforts targeted towards women, Melissa Brown maintains that it has "had to find ways to attract them without disrupting the association between military service and masculinity that has helped to draw in the young men who are still the main focus of recruiting efforts."[78] In her study of the Army's print media advertisements spanning from the early years of the AFV into the 1990s, Brown's examination highlights how the military has actively constructed gender in order to propagate "ideas about what constitutes acceptable femininity, in service of its own personnel needs," and by doing so, the military creates "normative ideals of militarized femininity for an audience composed of not just potential recruits but their larger communities."[79]

Throughout the 1990s especially, ads worked to emphasize the Army as an alternative to a civilian career, underlining the potential educational benefits and "self-development" that would attend enlistment. These ads presented these benefits couched in military iconography, using "camouflage-print backgrounds, tanks, artillery, rifles, and soldiers in battle dress."[80] Although many of these ads occasionally depicted women alongside men, they were never pictured with weaponry. Instead, the exclusive pitches made to women separated them from "the imagery of war and combat," whilst "reasserting the connections between masculinity and warriorhood."[81] One example from 1995 illustrates this gender distinction, beginning with a text box that began, "There's something about a soldier":

> Especially if you're a woman. Because you'll find yourself doing the most amazing things. Like being a flight Crew Chief or a Topographic Surveyor, or any one of nearly 200 skills the Army offers. You'll also find yourself doing some very familiar things. Like getting into aerobics, going to the movies or just being with friends. The point is, *a woman in the Army is still a woman*. You carry yourself with a little more confidence. And you may find yourself shouldering more responsibility than you ever dreamed, but that's because, in

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[77] Merrianne E. Dean, "Women in Combat – The Duty of the Citizen-Soldier," *San Diego Justice Journal* 2 (1994): 435.
[78] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 152.
[79] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 152-153.
[80] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 158.
[81] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 155-156 – italics added.

the Army, you'll gain experience you can't find anywhere else. You could also find yourself earning as much as $30,000 for college, if you qualify, through the Montgomery G.I. ill and the Army College Fund.[82]

The strategy to offer educational assistance as an inducement to serve may have been effective in encouraging women to enlist, yet the beginning of the post-Cold War period signaled a significant shift. Sam Mendes' film *Jarhead* (2005) based on U.S Marine Anthony Swofford's memoir of the same name, unnervingly articulates how the culture of the armed forces had begun to shift by the period of America's participation in the Gulf War from 1990 to 1991. As the drill instructor lambasts Swofford's (Jake Gyllenhaal) athletic performance – "What the fuck are you even doing here?" – Swofford sarcastically retorts, "Sir, I got lost on the way to college sir!"[83] In light of the conditions that have come to inform America's recent participation in war, those that may have been attracted to Guard and reserve service to benefit from educational assistance have found themselves deployed to combat zones for extensive periods.

Since the first Persian Gulf War, from 1990 to 1991, and particularly in the period following 9/11, the National Guard has increasingly been deployed in active duty – its own role as an arm of the military force changing as the complexion of America's war-making has shifted and transformed. This transformation has fundamentally challenged the historical meanings of the citizen-solider concept. One of the biggest recruitment draw-cards the National Guard and Reserve forces had historically relied on was the flexible nature of their role as a strategic force. Throughout the Second World War, and indeed in the period following, the concept of the "weekend warrior" articulated the attributes of a Guardsman's service – "reservists participated in weekend activities much like a pastime, not requiring the level of involvement and commitment as did active-duty military service or even a civilian full-time job during the work week."[84] Even during the war in Vietnam, the National Guard's role did not extend outside the nation's borders. Early on, President Johnson was wary that a full-scale mobilization of the reserve forces would "bring the growing costs to hometowns

[82] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 158.
[83] Sam Mendes, *Jarhead* (2005): Universal Pictures.
[84] Griffith, "Contradictory and Complementary Identities," 269.

and further erode the support of the war," and his decision effectively rendered the reserve components "a place to enlist and serve rather than be drafted and likely sent to Vietnam."[85]

The origins of the Guard and reserve forces' transition into an operational force can be traced back to the inception of the Total Force Policy, implemented by Nixon's Secretaries of Defense, Melvin Laird and James R Schlesinger during the 1970s.[86] Confronted with budget cuts to the defense forces, the Total Force Policy attempted to mitigate costs by streamlining and integrating both the active and reserve components of the forces. [87] This policy precipitated the transformation of the National Guard in recent history, and its effects were demonstrated most acutely beginning with Operation Desert Storm (ODS), the U.S. military's campaign during the First Gulf War. During ODS, more than 84,000 reservists, and 60,000 Army National Guard soldiers served in the Persian Gulf.[88] Reservists had not been called into active service in such a capacity since the Korean War.[89] From this point, it was clear that the mobilization of the National Guard would be instrumental for any large-scale military operation abroad. The roles of the Guard continued to shift after the Gulf War. Budget cuts to defense that followed America's participation in the Gulf led to the consolidation of military bases and facilities throughout the United States.[90] In order to defer additional expenditure, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin "transferred the First Air Force, responsible for the air defense of the United States," to the Air National Guard. [91] By 1996, the Air National Guard (ANG) was responsible for providing " 43.9 percent of the Air Force's tactical airlift and 43.2 percent of the KC-135 air refueling capabilities."[92] In this respect, the expectations of an auxiliary force that historically was relied upon to supplement and support active duty forces, was now being reconfigured in such a way as to make them indispensible to regular operations.

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[85] Griffith, "Contradictory and Complementary Identities," 269.
[86] Cohen, *Demystifying the Citizen Soldier*, 22.
[87] James Griffith, "Contradictory and Complementary Identities of US Army Reservists: A Historical Perspective," *Armed Forces & Society* 37, no. 2 (2011): 261-283.
[88] Gary Kuripius, "Citizen-Soldiers Count on VFW," *VFW Magazine: National Guard and Reserves at War* (2006): 3.
[89] James Griffith, "Being a Reserve Soldier: A Matter of Social Identity," *Armed Forces & Society* 36, no. 1 (2009): 40.
[90] Cohen, *Demystifying the Citizen Soldier,* 23.
[91] Cohen, *Demystifying the Citizen Soldier,* 23.
[92] Cohen, *Demystifying the Citizen Soldier,* 23.

Following the escalation of America's participation in the Middle East after the events of September 11, 2001, Guard members were being deployed for combat operations, for lengthy periods of time. This shift to a fully operational force is crystalized in a report to Congress, which concluded:

> There is no reasonable alternative to the nation's continued increased reliance on reserve components as part of its operational force for missions at home and abroad… the future of the all-volunteer force depends for its success on policymakers' undertaking needed reforms to ensure that the reserve components are ready, capable, and available for both operational and strategic purposes.[93]

In 2006, the Army Reserve component issued a personnel plan called the "Army Force Generation," which outlined the timeframes for reservist deployments. These designations required reservists to deploy for one to one and a half years every five years, which significantly increased the demands placed upon deployment readiness for personnel in the reserve forces.[94] Political scientist Raphael Cohen argues that such a transition to becoming an operational reserve has come at the "greatest cost to the "civilian" dimension of the citizen soldier,' in the respect that the

> Global War on Terrorism and increased military budged allowed for reservists to functionally sever their ties to the civilian sector and jump from one mobilization to another.[95]

Edna Lomsky et al. suggest that the experience of being a member of the reserve forces can be conceptualized in accordance with the theory of transmigration, which refers to "some combination of plural membership in social groups or social networks, and cultural identities reaching across and linking people and institutions."[96] Within this framework, reservists could be configured as embodying a "structural duality" which is informed and mediated by the dynamics between civilian and military roles that Guard and reserve members are expected to vacillate

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[93] Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 31, 2008.
[94] Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7 memorandum, Planning Directive for ARFORGEN, Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2006 : 2-6
[95] Cohen, *Demystifying the Citizen Soldier*, 27.
[96] Edna Lomsky-Feder, Nir Gazit & Eyal Ben-Ari, "Reserve Soldiers as Transmigrants," *Armed Forces & Society* 34, no. 4 (2008): 598.

between.[97] Yet in light of the changing demands placed upon the National Guard and reserve forces, recent studies indicate that Guard and reserve personnel are more likely to identify with active-component soldiers – informing a sense of military identity – than with civilians, in contrast to their historical status as "weekend warriors."[98] The shift from the "weekend warrior" mentality to ostensibly becoming the "boots on the ground" due to extended active-duty deployment, is congruent with the introduction of the "warrior ethos" and attending rituals that infuse official and institutional reconfigurations of military identity within the armed forces.

In 2003, months after the United States-led coalition invaded Iraq, the U.S. Army installed an upgraded basic training program in order to "emphasize combat leadership skills," and what officers at the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) had termed the "warrior ethos."[99] Military leaders voiced concerns that the high-tech nature of modern warfare has created a military force that has become too specialized, encouraging troops to focus on specific military skills at the detriment of acquiring basic combat skills. Commanding General Kevin P. Byrnes commented on the shift in many troops' perception of their military identity – "They'll tell you, 'I'm a mechanic,' not 'I'm a soldier,' and we've got to change that."[100] Writing in the *Marine Corps Gazette,* Col. John Glasgow argues that the Marine Corps' long-standing dictum that "every marine is a rifleman" is no longer appropriate in the face of protracted wars on global terror.[101] He insists that the transformative nature of such conflict has instead made the axiom "every marine [is] a student of warfare" more plausible.[102] Military Creeds, often memorized and chanted by personnel, are an example of institutionalized ritualism that historically have instilled and shaped complexions of military identity. Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) famously depicts a filmic representation of such a ritual, as Gunnery Sergeant Hartman (Ronald Lee Ermey) "officiates a pseudo-sacramental rite that weds the recruits to their rifles."[103] Hartman barks, "You're married to this piece, this weapon

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[97] Lomsky-Feder et.al., "Reserve Soldiers as Transmigrants," 594.
[98] Griffith, "Being a Reserve Soldier," 42-43; Griffith, "Reserve Identities: What Are They?, 620; Griffith, "Contradictory and Complementary Identities of US Army Reservists," 262.
[99] Vernon Loeb, "Army Plans Steps to Heighten 'Warrior Ethos'; Leaders View Many Soldiers as Too Specialized," *The Washington Post*, September 8, 2003.
[100] Loeb, "Army Plans Steps to Heighten "Warrior Ethos," 2003.
[101] John P. Glasgow Jr. "Every Marine a…!" *Marine Corps Gazette* 88, no. 2 (2004): 2.
[102] Glasgow, "Every Marine a…!" 2.
[103] Joseph E. Bisson, "Irruptions of the Sacred in a "World of Shit": Profanity, Sacred Words, and Cinematic Heirophanies in Stanley Kubrick's Full Metal Jacket (1987)," *Journal of Religion & Film* 16, no. 1 (2012): 12.

of iron and wood, and you will be faithful," before instructing the recruits to mount their bunk beds and "pray" – a uniform recitation of the "Rifleman's Creed" whilst cradling their M14 rifles:

> This is my rifle. There are many like it, but this one is mine. My rifle is my best friend. It is my life. I must master it as I must master my life. Without me, my rifle is useless. Without my rifle, I am useless.[104]

The symbolic currency of the Rifleman's Creed scene in *Full Metal Jacket* has demonstrably informed and shaped the ways in which military personnel configure their own identities in relation to their experiences of warfare in recent history. In his memoir, Iraq veteran and influential "milblogger" (military blogger) Colby Buzzell recounts the "240 Creed" that he formulated as homage to the scene, and to the M240 Bravo machine gun he was issued with:

> The M240 Bravo is my primary weapon. Without my M240 Bravo machine gun, I am useless. Without me, my M240 Bravo is useless…. I wrote that *Full Metal Jacket*-influences shit down on a piece of card stock paper with a black Sharpie market and taped it up on my barracks wall, right next to my headboard. That way, every night right before I'd go to bed, I'd read it to myself several times so I'd have it memorized.[105]

Jonathan Ebel argues that such practices inform a ritual culture of the American military, and are "deeply implicated in fashioning soldiers and in establishing expectations of meaning and end of military service."[106] In this respect, the power of ritualistic processes such as the incantation of military Creeds, position soldiers as "embodied practitioner[s] of American civil religion."[107] The intimate connection between the values that are espoused through these Creeds, and process of individual embodiment as facilitated through repetitive practice and memorization, continues to shape the experiences and post-service identities of military personnel, long after they are actively engaged in war making. Years after his service as an infantryman,

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[104] Stanley Kubrick, *Full Metal Jacket* (1987).
[105] Colby Buzzell, *My War: Killing Time In Iraq* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005): 49.
[106] Jonathan H. Ebel, "Of the Lost and the Fallen: Ritual and the Religious Power of the American Soldier," *The Journal of Religion* 92, no. 2 (2012): 225.
[107] Ebel, "Of the Lost and the Fallen," 225.

Buzzell still recognizes his connection to the Creed of his corps, and recalls his experience during a viewing of the *The Unknown Known* (2013), a documentary about U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, directed by Errol Morris:

> Bored in the theater, I tried to type, from memory and onto my yellow memo pad app on my iPhone, the entire Infantryman's Creed – "I am the Infantry. I am my country's strength in war, her deterrent in peace. I am the heart of the fight – wherever, whenever… I forsake not my country, my mission, my comrades, my sacred duty. I am relentless. I am always there, now and forever. I am the Infantry. Follow me! – Nailed it. [108]

U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki called for the Soldier's Creed to be rewritten in order to reflect the values espoused in the 'Warrior Ethos' training program that was adopted in 2003.[109] Newly minted "warriors" that completed the in-field training exercises would also be issued with a dogtag engraved with the "Warrior Ethos" in recognition of their completion. General Peter J. Schoomaker commented that

> Every Soldier is a warrior. Every Soldier has to embody not only the Army Values every day but take to heart the Soldier's Creed and, most specifically right now, the Warrior Ethos that will be around that Soldier's neck and lived by Soldiers every day.[110]

The amendments that were made to clauses of the Creed are of profound significance in light of the transformations that have underscored military operations in the post-heroic era. The first three lines of the Creed explicitly articulates the role of soldiers in relation to their identity as a "warrior," as a member of the military, and as an American:

> I am an American Soldier.
> I am a Warrior and a member of a team.

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[108] Colby Buzzell, "Couples, drugs and Rummy: how an Iraq veteran sees the Unknown Known – Watching the new Errol Morris documentary about my old boss, Donald Rumsfeld, is a little like working for him: you feel nothing," *The Guardian*, Tuesday 8 April, 2014: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/07/rumsfeld-documentary-iraq-veteran-unknown-known-errol-morris

[109] Loeb, "Army Plans Steps to Heighten "Warrior Ethos," 2003; Elizabeth D. Samet, "Leaving No Warriors Behind: The Ancient Roots of a Modern Sensibility," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 4 (2005): 625.

[110] Reginald P. Rogers, "New values cards, Warrior Ethos 'dogtags' available to Army units," *TRADOC News Service*, September 24, 2004.

I serve the people of the United States, and live the Army Values.[111]

Prior to 2003, the U.S. Soldier's Creed made no reference to the "warrior" identity, nor did it instruct personnel to embody – "live" – the values of the army. Shinseki's updated Creed reinforces the notion that soldiering is a profession, in connection with the emphasis that soldiers are fighters:

> I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills… I am an expert and I am a professional.[112]

Such additions to the Soldier's Creed reflect the shifting contingencies that have come to underscore American warfare in the post-heroic era. The Creed unequivocally defines the military cult of the "warrior," whilst also reflecting the changing complexion of military conflict and experiences of war. Furthermore, the clauses that were omitted from the pre-existing Creed are equally significant to consider. The revised Creed removes the following clause:

> No matter what the situation I am in, I will never do anything, for pleasure, profit, or personal safety, which will disgrace my uniform, my unit, or my country. I will use every means I have, even beyond the line of duty, to restrain my Army comrades from actions disgraceful to themselves and to the uniform.

In light of the emphasis that the revised Creed places on the individual as a warrior, the exclusion of such a clause removes any obligation of responsibility or accountability for individuals to regulate their behavior whilst participating in war. The concluding phrases of the former Creed read:

> I will try to make the people of this nation proud of the service I represent, for I am an American solider.

In contrast, the final clause of the revised Creed reads:

> I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life. I am an American soldier.[113]

In this respect, the solider – the warrior – is a literal embodiment of the American way of life, a physical representation of American exceptionalism abroad, whose conduct

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[111] Soldier's Creed, *US Army*: https://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html
[112] Soldier's Creed, *US Army*: https://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html
[113] Soldier's Creed, *US Army*: https://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html

and actions are understood as an extension of American power and authority. Within months of the Army's adoption of the revamped Soldier's Creed, reports began to circulate concerning the misconduct of U.S. Army officials and soldiers in Iraq. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) reported that inspectors had witnessed gross mistreatment and torture of Iraqi prisoners detained in the Abu Ghraib prison in October of 2003.[114] On April 28 2004, an episode of CBS's "60 Minutes II" broadcast photographs and film evidence of abuses that had been occurring in the prison, captured by a military policeman, Joseph M. Darby, who had been assigned there.[115] The swell of controversy that arose animated the American public and garnered the attention of international Human Rights organizations at large, also prompting investigations into abuses perpetrated at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, located within the U.S. Naval Base in Cuba. The outrage resulted in the suspension of the commander of the Military Police Brigade, a systematic investigation into the Army's prison system, and the prosecution of several personnel on charges of "conspiracy, dereliction of duty, cruelty toward prisoners, maltreatment, assault, and indecent acts."[116] Although this example does not intend to simply correlate the incident at Abu Ghraib prison with the revision of the Soldier's Creed, it can be argued that such an omission is consonant with the institutional opacity that has increasingly characterized the way that warfare has been conducted in the post-heroic era.[117] Furthermore, the omission of the clause that previously discouraged soldiers from participating in any situation or activity for "profit," unsettlingly resonates with the increased activity of Private Military Contractors abroad. The absence of the phrase subtly articulates the transformations that have profoundly affected how the identity of the citizen-soldier has been reconfigured in relation to the ways in which the United States has waged war.

In recent history, Private Military Contractors/Corporations, or Private Military Firms (PMCs, PMFs), have largely dominated American military operations, their proliferation enabling the outsourcing of functions that have traditionally have been carried out by the U.S. military. During the Gulf War, estimates place the ratio of

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[114] Elizabeth Brownell Balestrieri, "Abu Ghraib Prison Abuse And The Rule Of Law," *International Journal on World Peace* 21, no. 4 (2004): 7.
[115] Balestrieri, "Abu Ghraib Prison Abuse And The Rule of Law," 8-9.
[116] Seymour M. Hersh, "Torture At Abu Ghraib: American soldiers brutalized Iraqis. How far up does the responsibility go?" *The New Yorker*, May 10 2004.
[117] Hersh reports that private military contractors were involved in security operations at the Abu Ghraib prison.

American troops (both active and reserve forces) to military contractors at "roughly one to one."[118] Further demonstrating the U.S. military's unprecedented reliance on PMC vendors, by September 2009, "two months prior to the Obama administration's announcement of the troop surge in Afghanistan, contractors made up an estimated 62 percent of the U.S. presence in that country."[119] The explosion of global PMC activity has sparked increasing academic interest in order to trace the historical contingencies that have precipitated contractor participation in warfare.[120] Furthermore, pressing questions that have arisen from the extensive use of PMCs in facilitating modern conflict, have led scholars to reflect upon the legal, moral, and ethical consequences their continued activity abroad.[121] A discussion of PMCs is necessary to explore how their presence in contemporary warfare has impacted and shaped notions of the citizen-solider.

P.W. Singer defines PMCs as "corporate bodies that specialize in the provision of military skills."[122] On the battlefield, such skills have come to include "combat operation, strategic planning, intelligence, risk assessment, operational support training, technical skills," and the provision of security.[123] Since the 1990s, PMCs have been present in active zones of conflict across the globe. On the continent of Africa, pervasive PMC activity has often shaped and determined the outcome of several conflicts, including the Angolan Civil War, and the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the mid-1990s.[124] In Europe, "an explosion of private military activity has accompanied the fall of the Berlin wall."[125] The conditions that immediately arose during the breakdown of the Soviet Bloc led to a significant

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[118] Deborah D. Avant & Renee de Nevers, "Military Contractors & the American Way of War," *Daedalus* 140, no. (2011): 88-89.
[119] Avant & Nevers, "Military Contractors & the American Way of War," 88-89; Ken Silverstein, *Private Warriors*, (New York: Verso, 2000):143.
[120] For historical perspectives of PMC evolution, see: Janice E. Thompson, *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns: State Building and Extraterritorial Violence in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Ken Silverstein, *Private Warriors* (New York: Verso, 2000); Deborah D. Avant, *The Market Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Sarah Percy, *Mercenaries: The History of a Norm in International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
[121] For legal perspectives of PMC use, see: Juan Carlos Zarate, "The Emergence of a New Dog of War: Private International Security Companies, International Law, and the New World Disorder," *Stanford Journal of International Law* 34, no. 1 (1998): 75-162; Anna Leander, "The power to construct international security: On the significance of private military companies," *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2005): 803-826; Dawn L Rothe and Jeffrey Ian Ross, "Private Military Contractors, Crime, and the Terrain of Unaccountability," *Justice Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2010): 593-617.
[122] Singer, *Corporate Warriors,* 8.
[123] Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, 8.
[124] Sedan Akcinaroglu and Elizabeth Radziszewski, "Private Military Companies, Opportunities, and Termination of Civil Wars in Africa," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 57, no. 5 (2013): 795.
[125] Singer, *Corporate Warriors,* 10.

number of former-Soviet soldiers seeking employment in the PMC field. Furthermore, PMCs played a significant role during the crisis in the Balkans. In 1994, the United States contracted an American company, Military Professional Resources International (MPRI), to provide military assistance and training to the Croatian government. [126] Such an example illustrates the opaque process that enables contractors to "facilitate foreign policy by proxy," effectively allowing governments (in this case, the United States) to "change events on the ground, but at a distance that allows for plausible deniability."[127] Although many governments across the globe have employed the services of PMCs, the United States arguably makes "the most extensive use of the privatized military industry."[128] Singer reports that between 1994 and 2002, the U.S. Department of Defense has entered into "more than 3000 contracts with U.S. based firms, estimated at a contract value of more than $300 billion."[129] The Department of Defense has outsourced many of the functions and services that have traditionally been understood as the responsibility of the military, including the training of personnel. Singer notes "the maintenance and administration for such strategic weapons as the B-2 stealth bomber, the F-11 stealth fighter, the KC-10 refueling aircraft, the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft, and numerous naval surface warships are all privatized. [130] The significance of extensive outsourcing fundamentally rewires the relationships between civilians and the military. While Eisenhower famously warned the American public about the perils of an encroaching military-industrial-complex in terms of the private sector's monopoly over weapons development and manufacturing, it is evident that PMCs are "no longer merely suppliers to the government, but participants in the administration of public functions."[131] In order to understand these conditions, Ettinger argues that the explosion of PMC activity can be understood as an "institutional strategy in a broader syndrome of policies that constitute economic liberalism."[132]

The broader phenomenon of the neoliberal market framework that underscored globalization during the 1980s provides a useful context within which to interpret the

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[126] Deborah Avant, "Mercenaries," *Foreign Policy* 143 (2004): 23.

[127] Avant, "Mercenaries," 23**.**

[128] Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, 15.

[129] Singer, *Corporate Warriors*, 15.

[130] Singer, *Corporate Warriors,* 15.

[131] J. Stephan Dupre and W. Eric Gustafson, "Contracting for Defense: Private Firms and the Public Interest," *Political Science Quarterly* 77, no. 2 (1962): 161.

[132] Ettinger, "Neoliberalism and the rise of the private military industry," 744.

rise of PMCs. The emergence of neoliberalism as an "organizing policy principle" rose to prominence during the administrations of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan.[133] Both initiated sets of reforms that intended to "rollback" state-enacted regulations to the market, through the introduction of policies that decreased funding, shrunk federal bureaucracies, and encouraged privatization.[134] The Reagan and Thatcher administrations defined the complexion of neoliberal economic policy, fundamentally altering the ways in which "military policy and market principles interact."[135] In 1985, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General John A. Wickham signed the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) into effect. In accordance with Army Regulation 700-137, the objective of LOGCAP is to "preplan for the use of civilian contractors to perform selected services in wartime to augment Army forces.[136] The regulation further states that the "utilization of civilian contractors in a theater of operation will release military units for other missions or shortfalls," which would provide the Army "with an additional means to adequately support the current and programmed force."[137] The LOGCAP regulation outlines the policies and procedures governing the use of civilian contractors in order to replace the "boots on the ground" during wartime. In this respect, the administrative origins of defense privatization can be configured within the context of other neoliberal polices enacted during the Reagan administration. Furthermore, the outsourcing of military functions can be understood as a final component of the transition to an AVF. While the institution of the AVF was reliant upon market forces, the proliferation of PMCs has developed a market for force.

The increased use of PMCs abroad has had unintended consequences for the military's recruiting efforts. Army Lt. Gen Steven Blum expressed that recruiters have entered into a "bidding war" in order to incite potential recruits who have already been offered "lucrative contracts" – "We are offering them bonuses to stay with us, yet other elements of the United States government are offering them more significant

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[133] Ettinger, "Neoliberalism and the rise of the private military industry," 753; Monica Prasad, "The Popular Origins of Neoliberalism in the Reagan Tax Cur of 1981," *The Journal of Policy History* 24, no. 3 (2012): 351.

[134] Ettinger, "Neoliberalism and the rise of the private military industry," 752; See also, Jamie Peck, *Constructions of Neoliberal Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[135] Ettinger, "Neoliberalism and the rise of the private military industry," 752

[136] Army Regulation 700-137, Department of the Army, Washington DC, 16 December 1985: 1.

[137] Army Regulation 700-137, Department of the Army, Washington DC, 16 December 1985: 1.

bonuses to go and do this basically in a paramilitary civilian contractor capacity…
We've got to get that in alignment."[138]

In 2004, a message was sent to the staff of LM&O, a commercial advertising firm
charged with devising a new marking campaign for the Army National Guard. It
articulated the difficult task ahead:

> This is WWIII and the stakes are high… There is no denying that we are
> struggling right now in terms of recruiting… but it is the work that you do that
> reached that young adult who volunteered to join the ARNG [Army Reserve
> National Guard] 18 months ago who tonight will be in a fight for his life in
> Iraq hoping to kill the enemy and win a small battle on a street corner that is
> key to taking the entire neighborhood which leads to an entire city.[139]

The Guard's message to LM&O is significant because in conjunction to reflecting the
difficulty recruiters were facing in order to fill quotas during a period of protracted
military presence abroad, the message also reflected the transformation of the Guard's
role in such a conflict. For most of its history, the Guard "had been known as the
service that asks only, 'One weekend a month, two weeks a year'," regarding itself as
the "branch of the military that offered the best overall deal to its recruits: the most
money and opportunities for the least perceived "cost" in terms of risk."[140] In a post-
heroic era, characterized by the shifting relationships between civilian, corporate, and
military spheres, that was no longer the case. Hoping to address their recruitment
concerns, the Guard decided to conduct market research in order to test four character
positions from which their brand could be modeled – "the Hero, Everyman, Caregiver
and Explorer – each of which characterized a different portrayal of life in the
Guard."[141] The study highlighted the deleterious impact the Iraq War was having on
the target market's reception of military brand messaging. The "Explorer"
characteristic, an aspirational positioning echoing the rhetoric of early Army
advertisements during the formative years of the AVF, tested particularly negatively.

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[138] Nathan Hodge, "National Guard Chief: Private Military Contractors Stymie Recruitment," *Defense Daily* 227, no. 8 (2005): 1.
[139] Jim Edwards, "How National Guard is Fighting Attrition," *Brandweek*, October 2, 2006.
[140] Edwards, "How National Guard is Fighting Attrition."
[141] Edwards, "How National Guard is Fighting Attrition,"

Promising recruits that joining the Guard would provide countless opportunities to be exposed to "new things they've never seen before," one male participant responded – "The new things you could see is your friends getting killed and bombs exploding."[142] In 2006, the LM&O took a novel approach to reinvigorating an old recruiting draw card for the Guard, by emphasizing the incentive of college tuition aid – 328,000 pizza boxes were bought and "printed with photos of handsome guard members," and a slogan that said "You've paid for the pizza, now how about your tuition?" The boxes were distributed at no charge to "mom-and-pop pizzerias across the country" in college towns. [143] As the "pizza offensive" proved to be fruitless, and the "Explorer" tact was perceived to be disingenuous and outmoded, the National Guard expended their resources and energy cultivating an unsettling partnership with Hollywood, by concentrating on reinvigorating an identity trope that was positively received throughout their market studies – the trope of the "Hero."

Maj. Greg Galligan of the Army National Guard's advertising branch, approached Warner Bros. with the pitch for *Soldiers of Steel*, after identifying a perceived congruence between the character of Superman and the roles of a Guard soldier – "The military's values align with Superman's creed [so] this just made sense."[144] On a superficial level, Superman's connection to the National Guard as propagated through the campaign is not unique or unprecedented, as it can be understood within the context of the character's historical relationship to the military. Yet on another level, the *conflation* of Superman *as* a Guard soldier taps into something deeper that transcends that tradition – working instead to reconfigure the concept of the citizen-soldier. Writing in 1972, author and literary critic Umberto Eco eloquently articulated the potency of Superman's iconic potential:

> Clark Kent personifies fairly typically the average reader who is harassed by complexes and despised by his fellow men; through an obvious process of self-identification, any accountant in an American city secretly feeds the hope that one day, from the slough of his actual personality, a superman can spring forth who is capable of redeeming years of mediocre existence… Such a

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[142] Edwards, "How National Guard is Fighting Attrition,"
[143] Dan Ephron, "The National Guard: The Pizza Offensive: Casualties were up. Recruitment was down. Then came a savvy ad campaign. How the guard got its groove back," *Newsweek,* 29 May, 2006: 30.
[144] Suebsaeng, "How The National Guard Is Using 'Man of Steel' To Recruit You."

character will take on what we call an "aesthetic universality," a capacity to serve as a reference point for behavior and feeling which belong to us all.[145]

The *Soldiers of Steel* campaign launched in tandem with director Zach Snyder's *Man of Steel*, in 2013. A multifaceted campaign, SoS included "a partnership with NASCAR, an official workout plan, and two theater spots that played on 90% of U.S. movie screens… these facets concentrated on the SoS website, www.soldierofsteel.com, which now redirects to the Guard's recruiting website, www.nationalguard.com."[146] In an effort to consolidate the Guard's connection with (and reconfiguration of) the "citizen-soldier," the term itself became a registered trademark of the Guard, appearing on all official recruitment material.[147] Ryan Pumroy suggests that while the SoS campaign "is cross-promotional – promoting both *Man of Steel* and the National Guard – it also serves as a paratext for both."[148] In other words, SoS shapes and frames the way both the film, and the Guard itself, are encouraged to be interpreted by viewers and potential recruits.

The LM&O website includes the National Guard within their portfolio of clients and campaigns. Narrated in the manner of a film trailer, a video titled "Integrated Campaign Case Study," outlines the strategic functions of the campaign's various facets:

> In the movie *Man of Steel*, Superman saved our planet from complete annihilation. But an even more heroic feat was getting him to join the National Guard… Superman and the National Guard… it made perfect sense. One of the National Guard's most difficult messaging challenges is explaining the concept of "citizen-solider." Guard members are ordinary everyday citizens who put on their uniforms in times of need, to protect their families and communities. Superman proved the perfect analogy. Theater spots pounded the similarities home. [149]

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[145] Umberto Eco, "The Myth of Superman," *Diacritics* 2, no. 1 (1972): 15.
[146] Ryan Pumroy, "Recruiting Soldiers of Steel: The Cross-promotion of *Man of Steel* and the National Guard."
The Journal of Popular Culture 48, no. 4 (2015): 762,
[147] Pumroy, "Recruiting Soldiers of Steel," 764.
[148] Pumroy, "Recruiting Soldiers of Steel," 763.
[149] http://www.lmo.com/work/army-national-guard-soldier-of-steel-campaign

As a part of the SoS campaign, the "Soldier of Steel Workout" stands out as the most remarkable example of the Guard's strategy to reconfigure the concept of the citizen-soldier. Furthermore, the workout component effectively reinforces a gendered dimension – one that fuses the citizen-solider with notions of martial masculinity. The "Integrated Campaign Case Study" continues:

> LMO also used a secondary tactic focused on transformation – the parallel for what it took for actor Henry Cavill to become Superman, and what it takes to become a citizen-soldier. So LMO created the "Soldier of Steel Workout," which became so popular it received over one million YouTube hits in a single week. [150]

Celebrity fitness coach, Mark Twight, the "founder of Gym Jones, a fitness company that trains athletes, stunt crews, actors, and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) soldiers", designed the "Soldier of Steel Workout".[151] Visitors to the National Guard's "Soldiers of Steel" website could download instructions for a workout plan, and watch videos of Twight, Guard Soldiers, and actors from the film performing them, as well as listen to input from *Man of Steel*'s director Zach Snyder.[152] In the first episode, Twight divulges his training philosophy- "point number one… is that the mind is primary, and one of the outcomes of training the mind at the gym is the development of values." [153] As these values in bold text are flashed across the screen – "Loyalty. Duty. Respect. Selfless Service. Honor. Courage. Integrity." – Twight explains that they are, in fact, military values. These values echo the Warrior Ethos that is conceptualized within the revised edition of the Soldier's Creed. The conflation between the values of a training mindset and the values of the military is intentional, as it augments Superman's role as a citizen-solider- the Guard *is* Superman, and Guardsmen *are* Supermen. This sentiment is further exemplified in the final video that depicts actor Henry Cavill's transformation for the role. He intimates:

> One hundred percent, the training has been a journey of discovery just like Superman's journey of discovery. Superman learnt he could fly. I learnt I

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[150] http://www.lmo.com/work/army-national-guard-soldier-of-steel-campaign
[151] Pumroy, "Recruiting Soldiers of Steel," 768.
[152] Pumroy, Recruiting Soldiers of Steel," 768.
[153] "Soldier of Steel" Episode 1: Introduction. May, 2013.

could do all sorts of things in the gym, which I never thought were possible. It's not just a physical thing, but a psychological thing as well.[154]

The emphasis on the concept of "transformation" is paramount to the Guard's effective reconfiguration of the citizen-soldier ideal. As Eco suggested that the source of Superman's iconic power was to trigger a process of "self-identification," in order to transform one into a "superman…capable of redeeming years of mediocre existence," Cavill's personal narrative highlights such an intimate transformation. Twight further underscores this process, and reconnects it back to the National Guard:

> There is a strong connection between the process that a soldier will go through in the gym and the process that Henry went through to become the character of Superman. He's got this great power that he develops, and with that there's this great responsibility, and a genuine code of ethics or values that guides how he behaves and allows him to make choices for the great good. It's a process of self-discovery and it's a process that a soldier will go through to learn whether he or she has what it takes and I think that is one of the reasons why a lot of people have joined the military. To join the National Guard is to find out what they are made of, to find out if they have what it takes to accomplish a particular task, if they have what it takes to give back in a meaningful way to their society and to their peers and the people around them.[155]

The concept of transformation is equally significant within the context of the National Guard's role in contemporary warfare. As the National Guard has been increasingly deployed in an active capacity for extensive periods - in contrast to its historical function as a reserve force – members of the Guard are now transforming into "warriors," in-line with the Army's institutional impulse to configure troop identity in tandem with the "Warrior ethos." In this respect, the physical transformation of Superman (and those that undertake the training program) intimately connects the gendered dimension of the male body with martial service. Yann Roblu argues that the male body

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[154] "Soldier of Steel" Episode 4. May, 2013
[155] Soldier of Steel" Episode 4. May, 2013

as an external signifier, has… come to represent all the conventions traditionally linked to assumptions of male power and masculinity. And, as a heavily inscribed sign, the muscular body clearly marks an individual as a bearer of masculine strength and superiority… Muscles symbolize masculine power as physique-derived, operating as a means of coding the performative nature of the superhero – he does what he does because he physically can.[156]

As Henry Cavill transforms his body into Superman – a superhero body "remarkable for its permanent state of tension, readiness," - National Guard recruits transform their bodies in order to become warriors that are physically able to withstand the demands of active duty and extended deployment.

Although Twight makes a passing reference to potential (and existing) female recruits, women are underrepresented, or effectively absent across the broader scope of the SoS campaign. Brown argues, "representations of women in recruiting material taken as a whole serve to at once normalize the participation of women in the military and to erase it." [157] Throughout the four-part video series, only one female Guard member is depicted exercising alongside seven other Guardsmen. The *Man of Steel* actress Antje Traue, is briefly featured discussing her own preparation for the character of Faora-Ul, yet her narrative is not connected to the agenda that the film is promoting – her training will not transform her into Superman, she is incapable of becoming a superman, and by extension, a post-heroic incarnation of a citizen-soldier that has been re-inscribed with the attributes of martial masculinity. The gendered dimension of the SoS campaign is consistent with other examples of National Guard recruitment strategies. In 2004, Sgt. Stacey Weston, a Guard recruiter from Indiana, designed a shirt to be handed out as a recruitment incentive to women – a pink shirt with the words "Soldier Girl." Weston explained

A lot of young ladies are under the impression they can't be feminine if they join the military… I want to dispel that myth. [158]

Yet the impulse to connect "femininity" in tandem with a military identity does little to dispel the myth. In contrast, it works more successfully to confirm and perpetuate

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[156] Yann Roblou, "Complex Masculinities: The Superhero in Modern American Movies," *Culture, Society & Masculinities* 4, no. 1 (2012): 79.
[157] Brown, "'A Woman in the Army Is Still a Woman,'" 158.
[158] "National Guard shifts strategy to attract recruits," *NBC News*, November 2, 2004.

the polarity between acceptable displays of gender. Women cannot assume a military identity without first articulating it in relation to constructed notions of "feminine" gendered identity. Susan Jeffords argued that through the processes and discourse of remasculinization,

> an ambivalent and apparently increasing breakdown of gender articulations has become specified to redefine the constructions of masculine and feminine in even firmer and more exclusionary terms, so that women are effectively eliminated from the masculine narration of the war and the society of which it is an emblem.[159]

She concluded by making a connection between the language and discourse of warfare used in an advertisement for the 1984 film Chuck Norris film, *Missing in Action,* whose tagline read "It ain't over until the last man comes home."[160] Jeffords identified the use of gendered language with the continuity of a culture of war that maintains an inherently gendered dimension – "This is the voice that echoes throughout contemporary American culture, reminding us of its project of remasculinization through the discourse of warfare – reminding us of the intimacy of war and gender."[161] The National Guard's SoS campaign exploits Superman's historical connection to the citizen-solider ideal by aligning its own connection as a force traditionally composed of "citizen-soldiers." Furthermore, the citizen-soldier is reconfigured as a "warrior," effectively encoding the soldier's body with notions of martial masculinity. Superman's endurance as an American monomyth – a signifier of exceptionalism, sacrifice, citizenship, and American "values"- renders him as a template for rearticulating the meanings of the citizen-solider within the context of post-heroic warfare. The pervasive cultural presence of comic book superheroes – in part, a result of the proliferation of superhero films produced within the last decade – demonstrates the power of the "hero" trope as a "meaning-making system."[162] Furthermore, filmic representations of these heroes effectively "produce various subject positions and articulate often-conflicting discourses surrounding identity questions such as race, gender and class."[163] If Superman's universal quality has

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[159] Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America,* 186.
[160] Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America,* 186.
[161] Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America,* 186.
[162] Evdokia Stefanopulou, "Iron Man as Cyborg: Between Masculinities," *Gender Forum* 62 (2017): 22.
[163] Stefanopulou, "Iron Man as Cyborg," 22.

enabled him to become the "hero" in an era characterized by the absence of one, the case of Marvel's Iron Man – a complicated anti-hero- demonstrates another way in which the ideal of the citizen-soldier has been reconfigured.

The Marvel character Iron Man, created by Stan Lee in 1963, entered the American popular consciousness during a period of crisis and rupture. Unlike Superman's clear, unambiguous connection with the citizen-soldier concept, Iron Man reflects the transformation that has underscored the rearticulation of the citizen-solider in recent history, in relation to the shifting complexion of warfare. Born amidst the climate of the Cold War and U.S. escalation in Vietnam, Iron Man represents a nexus point between "the country's fundamental ideals and its reality."[164] Lee explains his motivations for creating such a character:

> [readers] if there was one thing they hated, it was war, it was the military… So I got a hero who represented that to the hundredth degree. He was a weapons manufacturer, he was providing weapons for the Army, he was rich, he was an industrialist… I thought it would be fun to take the kind of character that nobody would like… and shove him down their throat and make them like him.[165]

Although Lee's character does not possess the enduring cultural capital and historical influence that Superman arguably does, Iron Man has come to evince a new articulation of the transforming relationships between civilians, private industry, and the military, in an age of total war. Iron Man's rejuvenation and rival within popular culture is consistent with the explosion of the superhero film genre that increasingly proliferated following the events of September 11. Jason Dittmer argues that the boom of the genre "results from the intersection of a variety of technocultural factors" that endow superheroes with the capacity to "articulate a particularly American geopolitical vision and sense of self, which is often shorthanded as American exceptionalism."[166] The destruction of urban environments commonly depicted in

[164] Ashley Sufflé Robinson, "We Are Iron Man: Tony Stark, Iron Man, and American Identity in the Marvel Cinematic Universe's Phase One Films," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 51, no. 4 (2018): 824.
[165] Stan Lee, as quote in Robinson, "We Are Iron Man," 824.
[166] Jason Dittmer, "American Exceptionalism, visual effects, and the post-9/11 cinematic superhero boom," *Society and Space* 29 (2011): 114.

superhero films produced during this era– destruction resulting from the high-octane battle action sequences between heroes and their villains – informs a kind of generic mise-en-scène: one characterized by rubble, pillars of smoke, and shattered glass. Karen Randell argues "there is now an iconography of this urban wreckage in film after film that has proximity to the 9/11 site, allowing a resonant memory to reemerge each time it is repeated.[167] This iconography – replicating the images of 9/11- shapes what Randell has termed a "9/11 aesthetic," effectively enabling audiences to experience the reworked, traumatic events of 9/11.[168] Jon Favreau's *Iron Man* was released in 2008, nine years after the attacks, yet Marvel's cinematic adaptation of the Vietnam-era character "allows audiences to explore, examine, and confront American national identity" in a post-9/11, post-heroic climate. [169]

Iron Man marks the first installment in the pantheon of superhero films that make up the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). Favreau's choice to cast Robert Downy Jr. as the "likeable asshole" Tony Stark/Iron Man, has arguably set the tone for a new articulation of the character – a controversial, arrogant and cynical "anti-hero." Tony Stark's cynicism reflected the contemporaneous attitudes of the American public at large.

Iron Man chronicles the story of Tony Stark, a billionaire industrialist who inherits his father's defense contracting company, Stark Industries. Stark is captured by terrorists in Afghanistan after demonstrating his company's new weapons technology, and sustains a critical injury from a rocket-propelled grenade (produced by his own company). To prevent shrapnel from entering his heart, Stark is implanted with an electromagnet by a fellow captive, and successfully engineers a powered suit of armor facilitating his escape. Once returning to America, Stark modifies his technology and creates a weaponized suit – informing his alter-ego identity as Iron Man. In his armor, Stark as Iron Man sets off to rescue Afghani villagers who are subject to terrorist rule. Iron Man unequivocally represents notions of American exceptionalism, yet Stark's "retrofitted body" and "fractured identity" creates a level of complexity that positions the character at the zenith of a technological frontier. Evdokia Stefanopulou argues

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[167] Karen Randell, ""It Was Like A Movie," Take 2: *Age of Ultron* and a 9/11 Aesthetic," *Cinema Journal* 56, no. 1 (2016): 139.

[168] Randell, " "It Was Like A Movie,"" 138.

[169] Robinson, "We Are Iron Man," 824-825.

that the "submergence of an individual into a technological sublime… brings a transcendence of human possibilities and boundaries."[170] Historically, frontier spaces have attended and defined American understandings of national identity. In this respect, Iron Man can be configured as an expression of the anxieties and exigencies that shape America's contemporary reality. Ashley Sufflé Robinson argues that Tony Stark "embodies an America characterized by unchecked capitalism, corporate greed, narcissism, stagnation, and a powerful military-industrial complex."[171]

Stark's connection to the citizen-soldier tradition is multifaceted. He is a private citizen who dons a suit when "duty" calls, yet unlike Superman, a savior who responds to a problem, Stark himself is a part of the problem. In the second installment to the franchise, *Iron Man 2* (2010), Tony Stark faces a hearing in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee, calling for him to surrender his suit to the American government, as it represents both an asset and a liability to the U.S. military. Stark refuses, as the suit remains the property of his private company. In a stunning moment of meta self-referentiality – which perhaps speaks more to the attitudes surrounding the use of PMCs – Tony Stark claims "I've successfully privatized world peace… What more do you want?"[172] *Iron Man 3* (2013), Stark manufactures a secondary suit worn by former Marine James "Rhodey" Rhodes (Don Cheadle), branded as the "Iron Patriot." The Iron Patriot is the technological product of the U.S. government's collusion with a fictional private military firm. Effectively, he is a mercenary for hire, contracted to hunt down terrorists, whilst wearing remote-controlled powered exoskeleton. His suit resembles Iron Man's robotic armor, whilst it is emblazoned with a star, and the colors red, white, and blue. The amalgam of the "patriot" moniker and Iron Man implies the "hero's" imperative to serve for his country. Iron Man, Tony Stark and his technology represent the shifting relationships between corporate, civilian, and military spheres – he is the nexus of the military-industrial-entertainment complex. Stark's defense contracting company – Stark Industries – creates and sells the weapons that raze regions abroad, and he is subsequently contracted to rebuild them. In this respect, Stark's actions and relationship to the way in which modern warfare is waged, is not unlike those of

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[170] Stefanopulou, "Iron Man as Cyborg," 25.
[171] Robinson, "We Are Iron Man," 825.
[172] Jon Favreau, *Iron Man 2* (2010).

PMCs like Halliburton, KBR, and Blackwater (Academi). The historical and cultural dynamics that have given rise to these conditions of modern "total war" have implications for how Americans experience war, as well as how the citizen-soldier identity continues to be recalled, contested, challenged, and reconfigured.

This chapter has explored how the ideal of the citizen-soldier has long persisted within the American public's historical consciousness. As a central political character, as a myth, and as a cultural phenomenon, concepts of the citizen-soldier have been informed by a diverse set of historical contingencies. In response to the transformations that have characterized the relationships between civilians and the military in recent history, the citizen-soldier continues to be reconfigured. Central to the idea of the citizen-soldier is the obligation of martial service as a constitutive element of masculinity and of citizenship. The war in Vietnam underscored a crisis in civil-military relations, and furthermore, the abolition of conscription transformed the culture of the military and the concept of the citizen-solider. The advent of the AVF, the Total Force Policy, and the burgeoning role of PMCs in American operations abroad, have all contributed to a fundamental shift in what has historically shaped the concept of the citizen-soldier. In light of the National Guard's transformed role in contemporary warfare, and in order to recruit a force amidst ongoing conflict abroad, the Guard made efforts to explicitly connect their history with Superman's symbolic currency. Historically, Superman has promoted "truth, justice, and the American way." An advertisement that appeared in *Variety* magazine in 1941, outlined the successes of Superman's sponsored partnerships – "case histories on bread, milk, retail stores, peanut butter, groceries, soft drinks, flour, and countless other products add up to one soldier fact… Superman is a super salesman."[173] The SoS campaign exemplifies Superman's endurance, not only as a salesman, but also as an iconic American monomyth whose universal quality has the capacity to service a variety of needs. Perhaps Superman stands for truth, justice, and the advertising way, in lieu of the "American way," although arguably, they are one and the same. Furthermore, the enormous popularity of cinematic superheroes in a "post-heroic" climate reveals a cultural impulse to comprehend and interpret the salient, contemporary anxieties that plague American conceptions of identity in an era of "total war."

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[173] Advertisement in *Variety Magazine,* Wednesday 26 November, 1946.

Chapter Two

The Predator, an accidental warrior – "You will never see it coming"

"There's something out there waiting for us, and it ain't no man. We're all gonna die." – Billy (*Predator*, 1987). [1]

"…It's an appropriate time to say thank you to the Predator for 20-plus years of selfless service… we can't say goodbye without saying thanks to the Predator for paving the way." - Air Force Times, 2018. [2]

In early 2018, the United States Air Force announced that by March of the same year it would officially retire the "workhorse" of its remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) program – the RQ-1/MQ-1 'Predator' – a 27ft, long-endurance, medium-altitude system. [3] The Predator (also referred to as a UAV – unmanned- aerial vehicle, or more colloquially, as a "drone") represented a turning point in the U.S. military's development and deployment of remotely piloted weapons technology during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Historian Tom Englehardt has claimed:

> if there are *zeitgeist* moments for products, movie stars, and even politicians, then such moments can exist for weaponry as well. The robotic drone is the Lady Gaga of this Pentagon moment.[4]

There are a variety of RPAs, including the more ominously named 'Reaper' (a model that is faster, less-cumbersome, highly-optimized for combat, and destined to succeed the retired MQ-1), yet the Predator holds a unique, unusual, and uneasy stronghold in the collective consciousness of the United States, and globally, at large. Although there is no official evidence to locate the origins of the colloquial designation of "Predator" to the RQ-1/MQ-1 crafts, such a name evokes an association with the titular character of the 1987 sci-fi horror *Predator* – a film that

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[1] *Predator*. 1987. Twentieth Century Fox.
[2] MEDAL: Thank you for your service, MQ-1 Predator," *Air Force Times*, January 10 (2018): https://www.airforcetimes.com/opinion/medals-misfires/2018/01/10/medal-thank-you-for-your-service-mq-1-predator/
[3] Stephen Losey, "Air Force announces official retirement date for iconic MQ-1 Predator drone," *Air Force Times*, February 16, 2018; James Thompson, "Sun setting the MQ-1 Predator: A history of innovation," 432nd Wing/432nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs, Creech Air Force Base, February 14, 2018.
[4] Tom Englehardt and Nick Turse, *Terminator Planet: The Fist History of Drone Warfare, 2001-2050*, Dispatch Books, 2012 (eBook): 52.

chronicles the unique and violent capabilities of a technologically attuned alien who hunts humans for sport.

The Predator drone's monopoly on the public's popular cultural imagination has manifested in bizarre and unsettling ways. During the 2010 White House Correspondents Dinner, in order to preempt any advances that might be made towards his daughters by the musical trio, the Jonas Brothers, former President Barack Obama joked about deploying the military arsenal at his disposal – "I have two words for you, 'predator drones.' You will never see it coming. You think I'm joking."[5] Obama's quip, according to Alex Pareene, was a "generic joke about the executive's unconstrained power that any postwar president could've delivered."[6] The Obama administration's drone program (operated by both the U.S. military and the Central Intelligence Agency) has since become notorious for the opaqueness of its execution, as much of the program's operations have been either classified, or entirely covert. Obama's comments at the Correspondents Dinner marked one of the only occasions in which the former president "acknowledged his direct role in drone strikes."[7] Furthermore, Obama's unsavory joke presaged the public controversy that would come to surround the legality of the administration's decision to use drone strikes in Yemen to target a U.S. citizen, Anwar Al-Awlaki, in 2011.[8] Adam Serwer writes that the "American people have really refused to cope with the human cost of using drone attacks against suspected terrorists… The president joking about drones just further justifies that numbness."[9] While Obama's intentions (or those of his speech-writers) may have been lighthearted, his comments demonstrated a normalization of both the threat of violence, the remoteness that has come to characterize the complexion of "total war," and the cultural primacy of the Predator in the nation's collective consciousness.

Michelle Bentley, a reader in International Relations, argues that:

> The meaning of drones goes far beyond the physical machine itself… The ways in which we think about drones – what they mean to us and how we

[5] Max Fisher, "Obama Finds Predator Drones Hilarious," The Atlantic, May 3 (2010).
[6] Alex Pareene, "Obama threatens Jonas Brothers with drone strikes," Salon, May 3 (2010).
[7] Arthur Holland Michel, "Drones in Popular Culture," Center for the Study of the Drone, September 4, 2015.
[8] Michel, "Drones in Popular Culture," 2015; Scott Shane, "The Lessons of Anwar al-Awlaki," The New York Times, August 27, 2015
[9] Adam Serwer, "Drone Jokes", The American Prospect, May 3 (2010).

understand what they do – is just as, if not more, important than drones as physical objects. [10]

Without discounting the very real, violent implications that "drones as physical objects" have in the era of post-heroic warfare, the fact that drones also hold a more abstract "meaning" in the public's consciousness warrants further analysis. This chapter thus asks: what do drones "mean" in the twenty-first century's configuration of "total war" and how do understandings of drones shape and constitute the experiences of warfare in an age of total war?

Although the concept of "remoteness" applies quite literally to understandings of how drones function operationally – that is, they are remotely piloted – there are "human" elements that accompany contemporary understandings of drones. Whether these factors represent the humans responsible for operating the drones, the humans targeted by the drones, or the humans fundamentally disconnected from the "reality" of drone warfare attempting to appreciate, comprehend, and record their impact throughout popular discourse, the concept of "remoteness" becomes problematized and complex. Political geographers Ian Shaw and Majed Akhter have captured this sentiment: "The open secret is that drones are always messier and fleshier than advertised."[11] The casualties of US drone strikes – whether intended targets or civilian "collateral" - highlight the human cost of drone warfare. Yet a gulf exists between the US official position on civilian casualties and independently conducted casualty estimates. Marred by the systematic underestimation of casualties, internal Department of Defense reports have failed to reflect the casualty data that sources such as the Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) have independently collated.[12] To date, estimates of civilian casualties from US drone strikes have not been formally published or acknowledged by the United States government or the Department of Defense.[13] In this respect, the official position to ignore the "fleshy" reality of drone strikes, contributes to the sense of "remoteness" that accompanies contemporary understandings of drones and the ways in which they are utilized.

[1010] Michelle Bentley, "Fetishized data: counterterrorism, drone warfare and pilot testimony," *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 11, no. 1 (2018): 104.
[11] Ian G. R. Shaw and Majed Akhter, "The Unbearable Humanness of Drone Warfare in FATA, Pakistan," *Antipode*, Vol. 44, no. 4 (2012): 1493.
[12] "Drones: Untangling the Data," *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2011-08-10/drones-untangling-the-data
[13] Chris Woods, "Understanding the Gulf between Public and US Government Estimates of Civilian Casualties in Covert Drone Strikes," in *Drones and the Future of Armed Conflict*, David Cortright, Rachel Fairhurst and Kristen Wall (eds.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015): 184.

In order to examine the "fleshiness" of drones – the human factors that constitute their operation and interpretation – and the ways in which the concept of "remoteness" is problematized, this chapter will reflect on three facets that constitute the material, operational, and cultural anatomy of the drone in recent history: the Predator, the pilot, and the public. First, this chapter will trace the historical contours of the Predator's evolution and deployment in modern conflict, within the historical context of American aerial warfare at large.[14] Second, while Predator drones may be unmanned vehicles, they are still "manned" remotely. A recent trend has seen the proliferation of drone operator testimonials published across a variety of online news-media outlets. This chapter will shift the focus to the experiences of RPA operational personnel, through an analysis of these accounts. As "pilot testimonials" ostensibly inform the dialogues between military and public spheres, new forms of drone-inspired "content" have begun to manifest in popular culture. Finally, a brief reflection on the pop-culture "drone phenomenon" allows for an exploration of how a public disenfranchised from the reality of drone warfare comes to understand, interpret, and reconfigure such a remote yet intimate facet of the post-heroic experience.

Not unlike the development of most influential weapons technologies, the humble beginnings of unmanned and remotely piloted systems development were synchronous with the outbreak of military conflict. In 1916, prior to the United States' entry into the First World War, American inventor Elmer Sperry pitched his idea for a type of "flying bomb" or "aerial torpedo" to both the United States Army and Navy.[15] Although Sperry's proposal garnered little attention before the war, the Army's interest was piqued in late 1917- soon after the United States entered World War Once - following a flight demonstration of an N-9 trainer floatplane rigged with his company's naval gyroscope stabilizer, which allowed for the "drone" to fly level for a short distance without human control.[16] Charles Kettering, another American inventor

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[14] Comprehensive and scholarly historical accounts of drone development are still relatively scarce. For a succinct, well-considered account of UAV historical development, see Thomas P. Ehrhard's *Air force UAVs: The secret history* (Arlington, Virginia: The Mitchell Institute for Airpower Studies, 2010).

[15] Konstantin Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11: What the History of Drone Technology Says About Its Future," in *Drone Wars: Transforming Conflict, Law, and Policy,* Peter L. Bergen and Daniel Rothenberg (eds.) New York: Cambridge University Press (2015): 362.

[16] Kenneth Werrell, *The evolution of the cruise missile*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press (1985): 13.

and entrepreneur, was tasked with forming a team in order to produce an unmanned prototype for the Army. The result was the "Liberty Eagle" (unofficially, the Kettering "*Bug*") – a "flying bomb" biplane, built by Orville Wright, fitted with a Sperry gyroscope, and a pneumatic control system developed by the Aeolian Company, a manufacturer of self-playing pianos.[17]

Tests of the Kettering-*Bug* were largely trial and error, and although the Army saw potential in the concept – at one point, envisioning an arsenal between 10000 and 100000 *Bugs* – only 20 were ever produced.[18] The historian Kenneth Werrell writes that limited knowledge of aerodynamics and a lack of resources during this period ultimately meant that the "theory remained more advanced than the technology of the day."[19] Although both Sperry's "flying bomb" and the Kettering-*Bug* are considered to be progenitors in the lineage of cruise-missile development, the experimentation with developing systems that could function remotely certainly informed the trajectory of future drone development. Despite the fact that remotely piloted systems would not come into the fore for quite some time, aerial technology in the broader sense would soon change the complexion of "modern" warfare.

Experiences of the First World War had demonstrated the utility of aerial weapons to play a variety of roles in conflict resolution, including reconnaissance, communication, offensive operations, and interdiction on the battlefield.[20] The horrors of trench warfare, which haunted both policymakers and the public at large, inspired the increasing use of airplanes in order to mitigate the devastating costs of land warfare. In some respects, the interwar period can be described as an era that was punctuated by an underlying militarization that stimulated the restructuring of industrial economies and societies in response to technological innovation.[21] Historian Conrad crane argues that during this period, "tactics and doctrine were developed to match the promise of aerial technology."[22] In 1921, the controversial Italian artillery officer Giulio Douhet, published "Command of the Air," a work that espoused his

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[17] John David Blom, "Unmanned aerial systems: A historical perspective," *Occasional Paper* 37 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010): 46.
[18] Werrell, "The evolution of the cruise missile," 16.
[19] Werrell, "The evolution of the cruise missile," 17.
[20] Tami Davis Biddle, "Strategic Bombardment: Expectation, Theory, and Practice in the Early Twentieth Centry," in *The American Way of Bombing: Changing Ethical and Legal Norms, From Flying Fortresses to Drones*, Matthew Evangelista and Henry Shue (eds). eBook: Cornell University Press, 2014: 30-31.
[21] Joseph Maiolo, *Cry Havoc: How the Arms Race Drove the World to War, 1931-1941*, eBook: Basic Books, 2010: 1; Philips Payson O'Brien, *How the War Was Won: Air-Sea Power and Allied Victory in World War II*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015: 97.
[22] Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in World War II: Bombs, Cities, Civilians, and Oil*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016: 101.

belief that airpower would become the most effective tool in a new era of warfare that he deemed to be both inevitable and "total."[23] Although his work would not be translated into English until 1942, his ideas significantly impacted future thinking and the dialogue that came to surround the role of airpower in war, as scholars consider his writing to be foundational in what has become recognized as the historiography of airpower theory and doctrine.[24] Another provocative figure, the American General William "Billy" Mitchell - who had been responsible for commanding all American combat air units in France during the First World War- declared in 1925:

> The world stands on the threshold of the "aeronautical era." During this epoch the destinies of all people will be controlled through the air.[25]

Mitchell's "Winged Defense," published during a time in which aerial technology was still in its infancy, and despite the fact that some historians have since found it to be repetitious and derivative, was remarkably prescient in identifying a new articulation of spatiality in modern warfare – a portent for how battlefields (and their targets) would be reconfigured during twentieth century conflicts:

> Aircraft have set aside all ideas of frontiers. The whole country now becomes the frontier and, in the case of war, one place is just as exposed to attack as another place.[26]

Through "Winged Defense," Mitchell argued that air power should not be considered as an appendage to the existing forces, but instead, should be organized as its own separate entity. Although this vision was not realized until the creation of the U.S. Air Force as a formal branch of the Armed Forces in 1947 following the Second World War, the burgeoning development of aerial technology had been set into motion.

Throughout the Second World War, aircraft manufacturing exploded globally, as both Axis and Allied forces were channeling over 70 percent of aluminum production into the construction of aircraft by 1944.[27] The United States focused

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[23] Phillip S. Meilinger, "The Historiography of Airpower: Theory and Doctrine," *The Journal of Military History* 64, no. 2 (2000): 471-472.
[24] Meilinger, "The Historiography of Airpower," 471.
[25] William Mitchell, *Winged Defense*: *The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power – Economic and Military* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009) Originally published (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons Press, 1925)
[26] Mitchell, *Winged Defense*, 4.
[27] O'Brien, *How the War Was Won,* 18.

heavily on developing and utilizing aerial weapons, and throughout the course of the war, American expenditure on aircraft constituted nearly a third of all total munitions output.[28] In 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt ordered both the War Production Board and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to "prioritize aircraft construction over all others."[29]

Such a reorientation of the industrial apparatus to manufacture aerial weapons had profound implications, shaping both experiences of the war on the domestic front, and the nature of how the war would be waged. First, the conscription of males into the United States Armed Forces created labor gaps in manufacturing sectors that were typically inaccessible to women. During the Second World War, many women were responsible for building and assembling military devices, including aircraft. [30] Throughout this period, Douglas Aircraft, one of the largest aerospace manufacturing companies employed 22 000 women in order to build bombers.[31] One photograph from the period in particular, depicts a young woman, Norma Jeane Dougherty, assembling a "Dennymite" (the OQ-2 radioplane, an early "drone" prototype produced for target practice) at a plant in Van Nuys, California in 1944.[32] The photograph of Norma Jeane (who would change her name to Marilyn Monroe) is representative of the shifting landscape of "total war" on the domestic front in which 2.5 million women worked in wartime industrial jobs.[33] Furthermore, the official narratives of personal sacrifice, necessity, and frugality propagated by the administration, led to the success of scrap metal drives in order to recycle resources to contribute to further industrial production of aircraft and associated munitions. [34] The military impulse to wage an air war from above was guided by the concept of strategic bombing.

Initially resistant to the bombing approach, the American public's support shifted throughout the war, as polling indicated that the "vast majority of Americans

[28] O'Brien, *How the War Was Won*, 58.

[29] O'Brien, *How the War Was Won,* 58.

[30] Lori Hale, "A Critical Analysis of Women in Manufacturing," *Race, Gender & Class* 20, no. 1/2 (2013): 285.

[31] Maria Cristina Santana, "From Empowerment to Domesticity: The Case of Rosie the Riveter and the WWII Campaign," *Frontiers in Sociology* 1 (2016): 4.

[32] Matt Novak, "Marilyn Monroe Assembled Drones During World War II," *Pale of Future*, 2013: https://paleofuture.gizmodo.com/marilyn-monroe-assembled-drones-during-world-war-ii-696681799?IR=T

[33] Santana, "From Empowerment to Domesticity," 4.

[34] Terrence H. Witkowski, "World War II Poster Campaigns: Preaching Frugality to American Consumers," *Journal of Advertising* 32, no. 1 (2003): 69.

favoured the strategic bombing campaigns against Germany and Japan."[35] Historian George E. Hopkins argues

> American attitudes toward bombing were a microcosm of the idea of total war. The logic by which Americans came to justify bombing enemy cities perfectly reflected the general psychology of World War II.[36]

The notion that the "American way" of bombing – as scientific and efficient – guided the U.S. military's use of aerial weaponry in extended strategic bombing campaigns, and although it can be argued that aerial technology of the period lacked the sophistication to execute precision bombing as intended, the "pursuit of accurate bombing remained a primary goal throughout WWII." [37] Experimenting with unmanned flight systems, in 1944 the U.S. Army Air Force and the U.S. Navy launched Operation Aphrodite and Project Anvil, respectively. B-17 and B-24 aircrafts were stripped of all unnecessary equipment, filled with Torpex – an explosive initially developed for use in torpedoes that was fifty percent more powerful than TNT – then manned by a crew who would fly the "bomb" into place and arm it before ejecting themselves from the aircraft. [38] These Torpex-laden aircrafts never successfully destroyed their intended targets and were often shot down by German anti-aircraft, or malfunctioned en-route. One particularly disastrous mission resulted in the death of pilot Lieutenant Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., when the aircraft detonated before he and his co-pilot were able to evacuate.[39]

Despite these unsuccessful attempts, it is evident that the Second World War "demonstrated an enormous shift in the technological capability of the United States to bring death and destruction to the civilian populations of its enemies through aerial attack."[40] The particularly aggressive aerial onslaught that the U.S. waged against Japan shifted the course of the war, and challenged the elastic definition of what could constitute a military target. In an effort to compel the Japanese to surrender,

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[35] George E. Hopkins, "Bombing and the American Conscience During World War II," *The Historian* 28, no. 3 (1966): 451.
[36] Hopkins, "Bombing and the American Conscience," 452.
[37] Crane, *American Airpower Strategy*, 5-6.
[38] P.W. Singer, "Drones Don't Die: Once Scorned As Little More Than Toys, Military Robots Now Play A Key Role On Modern-Day Battlefields," Military History Vol. 28, no. 2 (2011): 68.
[39] P.W. Singer, "Drones Don't Die," 68; Blom, "Unmanned aerial systems," 48.
[40] Sahr Conway-Lanz, "Bombing Civilians after World War II: The Persistence of Norms against Targeting Civilians in the Korean War," in *The American Way of Bombing,* Evangelista and Shue (eds.): 47.

conventional bombing of Japan continued as the United States dropped the atomic bombs on both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, resulting in destruction and carnage of an unprecedented scale. Tami Davis-Biddle describes the "crescendo of destruction" as the fullest extension of the "uniquely pernicious spiral of total war," in which the United States was fully mobilized.[41] Under the auspices of "total war" – the mentality to destroy or be destroyed- the doctrine of airpower that guided American aerial operations during the war had been altered in unsettling ways. Crane argues

> If an atomic bomb dropped on a city could be construed as a method of precision bombing, then that doctrine had evolved to the point where civilian casualties were no longer taken into consideration at all.[42]

Although the use of the atomic bombs did not incite any widespread protest on the United States home front, the "ramifications inherent in the nature of the terrible weapons they had produced" had created a sense of uneasiness within the American collective consciousness; the nation was thus cautious about employing such a weapon again.[43] These "pangs of conscience" fundamentally shaped the post-war climate, ushering in an era in which airpower would further reconfigure experiences of war. [44]

This new articulation of "total war" as manifested through extended American bombing campaigns, demonstrated Billy Mitchell's assumption that airpower would completely abolish the concept of the "frontier" in modern warfare. Airpower was successful and decisive during the Second World War because it "multiplied exponentially the physical space and conceptual possibilities of the area of battle."[45] Furthermore, the transformation of aerial weapons technology during this period fundamentally shaped the ways in which military institutions considered the impacts of war on civilians. Historian Sahr Conway-Lanz argues

> For Americans, the crucial dividing line between justifiable and unjustifiable

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[41] Biddle, "Strategic Bombardment," 45.
[42] Crane, *American Airpower Strategy*, 186.
[43] Biddle, "Strategic Bombardment," 45-46.
[44] Biddle, "Strategic Bombardment," 46.
[45] O'Brien, *How the War Was Won,* 3.

violence increasingly became whether their armed forces intentionally harmed civilians.[46]

Experiences of both the Second World War and the Korean War shaped the tenets of what would become official military policy concerning "collateral damage" in future military conflicts that punctuated both the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Although a "foundation for the sensitivity to civilian casualties" had been laid during this period– the theory ostensibly negating the practice – the desire to remove American pilots from aircraft had also increased, as new series of unmanned aerial technology testing continued to persist.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Army, Navy, and newly designated Air Force continued to conduct experimental UAV system tests. However, the majority of such programs never matured due to both technological and fiscal restraints. By the mid-1950s, the both the Army and the Air Force had begun experimenting with UAVs that would be fit to fly reconnaissance missions. [47] In 1962, Ryan Aeronautical was awarded a modest contract to manufacture unmanned reconnaissance aircraft to be tested, and a variety of high and low altitude drones became a part of the force's arsenal. By 1963, the "first drone reconnaissance unit in the Air Force became operational." [48] Army analyst John David Blom writes that "despite the progress being made, the Air Force continued to resist the development of unmanned reconnaissance drones… Some Airmen resisted out of a lack of confidence in the technology; others out of fear of being replaced."[49]

Regardless of the anxieties that were beginning to manifest around the introduction of unmanned aircraft, between 1962 and 1975 "Lightning Bug" drones flew 3,435 missions in the Vietnam conflict. [50] While the use of UAVs for reconnaissance across Southeast Asia during this period was not strictly classified, U.S. command never "acknowledged the use of drones," and it was not clear to "what extent they were operational."[51] In 1972, Alan Dawson reported that according to undisclosed U.S. sources, pilotless planes were being used "for the first time to drop

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[46] Conway-Lanz, "Bombing Civilians after World War II," 48.
[47] Blom, "Unmanned aerial systems," 56.
[48] Blom, "Unmanned aerial systems," 57.
[49] Blom, "Unmanned aerial systems," 57-58.
[50] P.W. Singer, "Drones Don't Die," 68; Carl Berger (ed.), "The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia: 1961-1973," Office of Air Force History: Washington D.C., (1977): 220.
[51] Alan Dawson, "U.S. Drones Drop Leaflets – Bombs Could Be Next," 24 February 1972; Blom, "Unmanned aerial systems," 59.

American produced propaganda over North Vietnam" in order to "determine whether to use them for bombing missions."[52] The title of Dawson's article, "U.S. Drones Drop Leaflets – Bombs Could Be Next," in many respects presaged the anxieties that would come to dominate public opinion concerning drones during the twenty-first century, yet the arming of drones would not be made a priority for quite some time.

Aside from reconnaissance use during the war in Vietnam, further development of UAV technology was not prioritized. High expectations for project developments yielded lackluster results, as many of the necessary technologies required to meet theoretical designs were either "immature, outrageously expensive, or yet to be invented."[53] In 1975, the Lockheed Corporation, an aerospace and defense company (now Lockheed Martin) was awarded an Army contract to develop a drone that could be used for artillery targeting. But by 1987, after $1 billion had been dedicated to the program, it was cancelled by the Pentagon.[54] Similarly, the DARPA funded UAV program - the Condor- awarded to the aircraft manufacturer Boeing in the late 1970s, was phased out.

These programs demonstrate the military's interest in UAV development, and despite their termination, they were springboards for further technological experimentation. Much of the emphasis on research and development can be attributed to the Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, a former statistician, Harvard Business School professor, and executive at Ford Motor Company, who played a key role in streamlining and managing military defense systems. Once described by the controversial Republican Senator Barry Goldwater as "an IBM machine with legs," McNamara brought the "rigor of statistical analysis" to the management of defense affairs, bolstered by assumptions about the superiority of American weapons technology.[55]

Such assumptions and doctrinal principles were consequently informed by American experiences in both the Second World War and Korea, particularly regarding the preeminence of airpower and accelerated bombing as a strategy that would ensure the enemy's capitulation. As an example, Operation Rolling Thunder – the longest strategic bombing campaign in the Air Force's history, lasting from March

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[52] Alan Dawson, "U.S. Drones Drop Leaflets – Bombs Could Be Next," 24 February 1972
[53] Richard Whittle, "The Man Who Invented the Predator," Air & Space Magazine, April 2013.
[54] Whittle, "The Man Who Invented the Predator," 2013; Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11," 370.
[55] Scoblic, J. Peter, "LOOKING BACK: Robert McNamara's Logical Legacy," *Arms Control Today* 39, no. 7 (2009): 58.

1965 until November 1968 – demonstrated the administration's predilection for employing technology with little consideration for the "human" dimensions of warfare.[56] Operation Rolling Thunder emerged from the doctrine of "graduated military pressure"- a concept that "initially intended to control the escalation of the military effort and improve the situation in Vietnam cheaply, efficiently, and without attracting undesired attention from Congress and the American people."[57]

Accompanying the administration's unabating faith in airpower dominance, was an assumption that the "conviction that the enemy would respond "rationally" to American action… in a fairly predictable and reasonable manner."[58] Ultimately, the disconnect between American assumptions and the realities of the conflict in Vietnam would become increasingly evident as the continued insistence on accelerated bombing campaigns during the course of the war failed to achieve both political and military objectives. Furthermore, the doctrine that rested fundamentally on the infallibility of American airpower, increasingly led to the disenfranchisement of civilian staff within the administration, and a broader disconnect with the public at large – informing the "civil-military gap" that has been extensively chronicled in retrospective scholarship. The deployment of American airpower during this period continued to shape the parameters of what – or "who" – constituted a military target, and within this context, conditions that shaped U.S. war making during the war in Vietnam, fundamentally underscore the evolution of post-heroic modes of drone warfare: in effect – "the Vietnam War was a crucible for the Predator Empire."[59]

Sociologist James Gibson argues that the war in Vietnam was history's first "technowar," in which U.S. military involvement was predicated on technical principles, models, and systems.[60] In addition to laying the technological foundation for the future development of drones, Ian Shaw argues that the war in Vietnam "created a series of important precedents for the Predator Empire of today."[61] According to Shaw, not only did the U.S. Department of Defense establish an "electronic battlefield" by creating systems that automated and computerized

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[56] Colonel John K. Ellsworth and Colonel Brian Moore, *Operation Rolling Thunder: Strategic Implications of Airpower Doctrine,* US Army War College: Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2003: 9; Fredrik Logevall, "Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2004): 101.

[57] H.R. Master, "The Human Element: When Gadgetry Becomes Strategy," *World Affairs* 171, no. 3 (2009): 34-35.

[58] Master, "The Human Element," 35-40.

[59] Ian G. R. Shaw," *Predator Empire: Drone Warfare and Full Spectrum Dominance,"* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016): 108.

[60] James W. Gibson, *The Perfect War: Technowar in Vietnam, 2nd ed.* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000).

[61] Shaw, *Predator Empire*, 71.

elements of military operations, but "multiple geographies and infrastructures of violence" including dominant airpower, ecological warfare, "man-hunting," and drone surveillance, were contingencies that laid the foundations of "atmospheric warfare" that have come to characterize drone operations in recent history. It is significant to note that during this period, the United States was not the only nation engaged in UAV development.

During the 1970s, other nations had begun conducting successful research and development into UAV technology. By 1982, reconnaissance drones had been deployed by the Israeli military to collect data on the Palestinian and Syrian forces during the war in Lebanon. [62] Israel's use of drones created an opportunity to fine-tune, modify, and develop operational tactics based upon their experiences in a combat environment – tactics that the United States would soon adopt. Inspired by the Israeli's use of UAV's in Lebanon, John Lehman, an investment banker and Secretary of the U.S. Navy, "impressed upon the Reagan Administration the need for the U.S. to devote resources to the development of UAVs for future contingencies."[63] Prior to the early 1980s, drone use exclusively sought to target either infrastructure or large groups of people. Journalist Konstanin Kakaes argues that Israel's deployment of drones during this period led to the accelerated development and maturation of constituent drone technologies that would enable the targeting of individuals. He writes:

> This capability was not an evolution of previous capabilities but… something fundamentally new. This capability made drones more akin to a preternaturally capable sniper than to any previous airplane, manned or unmanned. This is the moment when drones came into their own. This is when the machines that what we understand today as "drones" became a transformative military technology.[64]

By 1985, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corp were jointly engaged through the purchasing of Israeli-produced UAV systems, and a Joint Project Office initiated by Congress tasked the administrative control of the systems to the Department of the

[62] Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11," 371; Ahmed S. Hashim and Greogorie Patte, "'What is that Buzz?' The rise of Drone Warfare," Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses Vol. 4, no. 9 (2012): 9.
[63] Hashim and Patte, "What is that Buzz?," 9.
[64] Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11," 374-375.

Navy. Although UAV technology had still not been fully embraced by any of the force branches at this point, U.S arsenal was increasingly building. [65] Despite experience with utilizing drones for target practice and reconnaissance missions in previous combat environments, the U.S. Air Force had been the most hesitant to prioritize drones. But by the 1990s, shifting conditions had transformed the Air Force into the most active branch of the military tasked with the development and employment of a variety of UAV systems, that would soon transform America's role within the landscape of modern warfare and conflict resolution abroad.

The First Persian Gulf War in 1991 presented another opportunity for the United States military to employ drones for reconnaissance in combat conditions. During Operation Desert Storm, the U.S. Marine Corps, Navy, and Army flew RQ-2 Pioneer and FQM-151 Pointer UAVs over Kuwait in order to gather intelligence and assist the use of the Tomahawk missiles and other guided "smart bombs" that would come to dominate and define the media coverage of the war. UAV technology during the Gulf War was still in a period of infancy, and many craft were vulnerable to attack, bad weather, and prone to communications and systems failures. [66] Far from playing a "decisive or pivotal role in the war," UAV use during this period was limited, yet these experiences led to the "awakening in the mind of the military community of a realization of 'what could have been'."[67] Whilst the RQ-24 Pioneer – a reconnaissance craft- was deployed to assess damage from U.S. Naval gunfire to Iraqi targets on the small island of Failaka off the coast of Kuwait, several Iraqi soldiers spotted the low-flying aircraft and waved a white flag in order to signal their intention to surrender – marking the first recorded surrender to an unmanned aircraft.[68]

In this context, although drones were not the defining fixtures of U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf, they were beginning to enter the military's consciousness as a viable system justifying further development. Furthermore, and perhaps most significantly, drones were beginning to transform and rearticulate the relationships and boundaries between "humans" and "targets," as the Iraqi surrender

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[65] Paul Gerin Fahlstrom and Thomas James Gleason, *Introduction to UAV Systems,* John Wiley & Sons, Ltd: eBook, 2012: 6.
[66] Daniel L. Haulman, "U.S. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Combat, 1991-2003," *Air Force Historical Research Agency*, 9 June, 2003: 6.
[67] Fahlstrom and Gleason, *Introduction to UAV Systems*, 6.
[68] Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11," 377; Blom, "Unmanned Aerial Systems," 89; This particular Pioneer drone is now a part of the Smithsonian's collection and is on display in the Military Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) exhibition at the National Mall building of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum.

on Failaka unconsciously demonstrated. Such an incident, obscured from public memory, exists as a subtle yet powerful flashpoint that foreshadowed the role drones would play in future conflicts – the "arming" of the previously unarmed, and the asymmetrical nature of a remotely piloted "predator" seeking prey.

The Predator drone, the RQ-1 (R for Reconnaissance), came to the fore as the primary UAV used by American and allied forces to conduct nighttime reconnaissance and damage assessments during the crisis in the Balkans that culminated in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999.[69] Medium-range endurance drones were utilized by the United States for reconnaissance missions over the Balkans during the early 1990s, most notably, the Gnat-750, yet they were still prone to software glitches and connectivity issues.[70] The Pentagon and CIA were instrumental in developing an advanced version of the Gnat -which would eventually become known as the "Predator." The speed of the development, in part, can be attributed to the increasingly hostile climate of conflict that had spread throughout the Balkans, and the "pressing need" felt by the Clinton administration to deploy U.S. military support.[71] Predators were deployed between July and November of 1995, before being withdrawn after complications that had arisen from unfavorable weather conditions. Yet even in light of these operational 'hiccups,' Air Force Chief of Staff Ronald Fogleman recognized the Predator's utility and made "an all-out bid" for the Air Force to be made the "lead service" responsible for facilitating the Predator's use in the transforming climate of U.S. military intervention abroad. Fogleman stated:

> [the] Predator took on a life of its own… and I thought it best that airmen operated the system…If the Army took Predator, they would just screw it up and the program would go down the tubes; if anyone was going to make it work, we were.[72]

By 1996, the Air Force had become the military's leading force responsible for conducting drone operations, and the 11th Reconnaissance Squadron- a squadron of

[69] Fahlstrom and Gleason, *Introduction of UAV Systems,* 6.
[70] "CIA Sending 2 Drone Aircraft to Albania to Observe Bosnia," *The Washington Post,* January 29, 1994: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/01/29/cia-sending-2-drone-aircraft-to-albania-to-observe-bosnia/734a7e15-fd06-4122-8a0b-516a0c30b6d5/?utm_term=.976328c7afb0; David Fulghum and John Morrocco, "CIA to deployed UAVs in Albania," *Aviation Week and Space Technology,* June 6, 1994.
[71] Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11, 378.
[72] Thomas P. Ehrhard, *Air force UAVs: The secret history,* Arlington, Virginia: The Mitchell Institute for Airpower Studies, 2010: 50-51.

Predators- had become the first Air Force drone unit since 1979.[73] The Predator's use during the mid to late 1990s is also significant as it marked the first time a drone had been deployed with equipped with GPS (Global Positioning System) technology for navigation – a system that would become indispensable in the future development of technology for both the military and consumer markets. [74] As the Predator emerged during this climate, it is important to note that its primary task was to enable pilots to remotely conduct surveillance of hostile terrain – the RQ-1 was still unarmed. Within a few years, following the watershed of 9/11, that designation would change to MQ-1 (M for Multi-Role), as Predators would become equipped with missile-firing capabilities – completely transforming the nature of how the United States would wage war at the turn of the century.

In February 2001, just over six months before the events of September 11, the U.S. Air Force carried out tests resulting in the successful launching of a live missile from a UAV. [75] The test involved equipping a Predator with a laser-guided Hellfire-C missile and striking a stationary Army tank based at an auxiliary airfield near the Nellis Air Force base in southern Nevada. Although the U.S. military had sought to arm UAVs prior to 9/11 due to increasing concerns over the growing influence of al Qaeda throughout the Middle East, the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon prompted the acceleration of development. Within four days of the attacks, the first armed Predator was deployed to Afghanistan.[76] When President George W. Bush first declared his intention to wage a global "War on Terror," the United States military had only fifteen Predator drones within their arsenal.[77] Addressing the cadets of the Citadel Military College in South Carolina in December 2001, George W. Bush extolled the Predator's virtues, and outlined its utility in supporting ground troops:

> The conflict in Afghanistan has taught us more about the future of our military than a decade of blue ribbon panels and think-tank symposiums. The Predator is a good example… Before the war, the Predator had skeptics, because it did

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[73] Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11," 378.
[74] Kakaes, "From Orville Wright to September 11," 378; Ehrhard, *Air force UAVs: The secret history,* 28.
[75] Sue Baker, "Predator Missile Launch Test Totally Successful," *Air Force News Service,* February 27, 2001.
[76] Hasian Marouf, *Drone Warfare and Lawfare in a Post-Heroic Age,* Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2016: 108.
[77] Roger Connor, "The Predator, a Drone that Transformed Military Combat," *Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum,* March 9, 2018: https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/predator-drone-transformed-military-combat

not fit the old ways. Now it is clear that the military does not have enough unmanned vehicles. We are entering an era in which unmanned vehicles of all kinds will take on greater importance – in space, on land, in the air, and at sea.[78]

Less than three months into Bush's war on terror, the Predator had been embedded into the twenty-first century's unfolding war "story." Most significantly, Bush articulated the administration's increasing investment into UAV technology in tandem with traditional values:

> These past two months have shown that an innovative doctrine and high-tech weaponry can shape and then dominate an unconventional conflict. The brave men and women of our military are rewriting the rules of war with new technologies and old values like courage and honor. [79]

Writing for *Foreign Affairs* in 2002, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld acknowledged that, in a new era of warfare – one in which the battlefield parameters were imprecise and amorphous- the United States would have to develop an ability to adapt "in a world defined by surprise and uncertainty."[80] In his article, Rumsfeld likened the terrorist "threat" facing the nation to a home invasion:

> It's like dealing with burglars: You cannot possibly know who wants to break into your home, or when…You know it is better to stop them before they get in, so you need a police force to patrol the neighborhood and keep bad guys off the streets. [81]

The relative successes of previous reconnaissance missions and the wholesale maturation of UAV technology during the early 2000s led the Bush administration to increasingly recognize the viability for UAV systems (such as the Predator) to ostensibly become the tools of America's "police force" abroad – helping to wage

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[78] George W. Bush, "President Speaks on War Effort to Citadel Cadets," *Remarks by the President at the Citadel*, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, December 11, 2001: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/12/20011211-6.html
[79] Bush, "President Speaks on War Effort to Citadel Cadets," 2001.
[80] Donald H. Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 3 (2002): 22.
[81] Rumsfeld, "Transforming the Military," 24-25.

"riskless warfare." Hasian Marouf argues that the discourses of risk-aversion that bolstered support for the increasing use of UAVs operated in two ways:

> Riskless in a military sense because fewer personnel would die in combat, and riskless in a political sense because fewer observers could object to drones helping to "hunt" Osama bin Laden or protecting troops fighting in the treacherous terrain of Afghanistan.[82]

The Bush administration embraced the selective use of drones in order to "support" the "boots on the ground" that were deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom, yet in both popular and official discourses, the UAV has since been hailed as the "smart bomb" of the war in Iraq. [83] Within ten years of the first armed Predator's deployment, the U.S. military's inventory had swollen to include nearly 10,000 UAVs.[84] Although the Predator is not wholly responsible for such a dramatic increase in arsenal, the "cult" of the Predator undeniably "established the potential of the UAV to shape the battlefield and geopolitics in ways that no aircraft, manned or unmanned, had done before."[85] Furthermore, the rhetoric of "precision" and "efficiency" that permeated both public and official discussions about UAV utility during the Bush era, laid the contextual foundation for how the succeeding administration would govern the drone programs established by both the Department of Defense and the CIA. Rumsfeld's allusion to needing a police force in order to patrol foreign streets presaged the way in which drone use would be conducted under the new President-elect – in the words of investigative journalist Jeremy Scahill, "Drones are a tool, not a policy. The policy is assassination."[86]

Within the first week of Obama's administration assuming power, an "unsuccessful" drone strike in Pakistan had killed a pro-government peace committee elder and members of his family when their compound was struck.[87] President Barack Obama had "inherited a killing machine that was very much on the offensive," yet the President's own "willingness to back the drone program represented an early

[82] Marouf, *Drone Warfare and Lawfare,* 52.
[83] John Barry and Evan Thomas, "Up In The Sky, An Unblinking Eye," *Newsweek* Vol. 151, no. 3 (2008).
[84] Connor, "The Predator," 2018.
[85] Connor, "The Predator," 2018.
[86] Jeremy Scahill, "The Drone Legacy," in *The Assassination Complex: Inside The US Government's Secret Drone Warfare Programme,* Jeremy Scahill (Ed.) New York: Simon & Schuster Inc., 2016: 2.
[87] Daniel Klaidman, "Drones: The Silent Killers," *Newsweek*, 28 May, 2012: https://www.newsweek.com/drones-silent-killers-64909

inflection point in his war on terror."[88] Obama's open embrace (yet clandestine governance) of UAVs to conduct targeted strikes in a bid to "eliminate the cancerous tumor called an al-Qa'ida terrorist while limiting damage to the tissue around it" (in the words of John Brennan, Obama's chief counterterrorism advisor) became an enduring policy legacy, and transformed the way in which the war on terror would be fought. [89] During his two terms, the Obama administration conducted over 500 drone strikes targeting alleged terrorist operatives in Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen-countries in which no war had been declared.[90] In addition to these extended "battlefields," drone strikes continued in "active battlefields" such as Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and Libya.[91]

Consistent with Brennan's visceral equivocation of "terrorism" and "cancer," official rhetoric routinely positions drone use as the "surgical," "precise," and "clean" resolution to remedy terrorist extremism across the globe. While such rhetoric effectively dehumanizes the victims of drone strikes (whether intended or "collateral), it simultaneously removes the "human" element from the operation of drones themselves. Reflecting on the experiences of UAV operating personnel is critical in order to contextualize the ways in which "remoteness" mediates understandings of war in the post-heroic era.

In a 2014 interview, U.S. Army General Martin Dempsey forcefully emphasized the crucial distinctions between "drone" nomenclatures:

> You will never hear me use the word 'drone,' and you'll never hear me use the term 'unmanned aerial systems'… because they are not. They are remotely piloted aircraft.[92]

This clarification highlights the implications that such terminology propagates at large – that 'drones' and 'unmanned aerial systems' are perhaps considered by the public to

[88] Klaidman, "Drones," 2012.
[89] Robert Chesney, "Text of John Brennan's Speech on Drone Strikes Today at the Wilson Centre," *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC,* April 30, 2012: http://www.lawfareblog.com/text-john-brennans-speech-drone-strikes-today-wilson-center; Leonard Cutler, *President Obama's Counterterrorism Strategy in the War on Terror*, New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2017: 37.
[90] Micah Zenko, "Obama's Final Drone Strike Data," *Council on Foreign Relations,* January 20, 2017: https://www.cfr.org/blog/obamas-final-drone-strike-data
[91] Jessica Purkiss and Jack Serle, "Obama's Covert Drone War in Numbers: Ten Times More Strikes Than Bush," *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism*, January 17, 2017: https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2017-01-17/obamas-covert-drone-war-in-numbers-ten-times-more-strikes-than-bush
[92] Kevin McCaney, "A drone by any other name is … an RPA?" Defense Systems, May 23, 2014.

be autonomous or sentient, and do not require human control. In effect, the word itself "conjures images of brainless bots on autopilot," without acknowledging human input behind the controls. [93] To distinguish between being "remotely piloted" and "unmanned, places an emphasis on the human element of 'drone' operation. According to the investigative journalist Pratap Chatterjee, drones are, in effect, "hyper-manned."[94] He notes that a fully staffed operational drone patrol could have up to "59 individuals in the field doing launch and recovery, 45 doing mission control, and 82 working on the data gathered [during the mission]."[95]

Due to the exponential rate at which US drone operations have increased in recent times, both the U.S. military and the CIA have made efforts to develop a global network of air bases. Many of these bases abroad, embedded within locations that have long hosted U.S military operations, have been "quietly expanded" to reflect the growing needs of the American-led drone program. [96] Personnel stationed at these bases across the globe are responsible for the "launch and recovery element," which includes monitoring the take-off and landing procedures, loading and unloading munitions, and servicing the aircraft according to routine maintenance protocols.[97]

Consistent with the U.S. military's increasing propensity to outsource military operations to private contractors, companies such as *Xe* (formally Blackwater) have been similarly tasked with handling the drone operations that are carried out in geographically dispersed "launch and recovery bases." Private contractors have been employed to provide security at covert bases in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and furthermore, they have also been charged with assembling and loading Hellfire missiles and laser-guided bombs on Predator aircraft – a function previously undertaken by CIA and military personnel.[98] Many of the contractors involved with takeoff and landing operations are former-active duty pilots, who "left the Air Force and now earn twice as much in the private sector."[99]Although private contractors are not responsible for selecting targets or coordinating drone strikes, their inclusion in

[93] Elijah Solomon Hurwitz, "Drone Pilots: 'Overpaid, Underworked, and Bored," *Mother Jones* June 18, 2013: http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/06/drone-pilots-reaper-photo-essay/

[94] Pratap Chatterjee, "Killing by Committee in the Global Wild West: The Perpetrators Become the Victims of Drone Warfare," TomDispatch, July 12, 2015.

[95] Chatterjee, "Killing by Committee," 2015.

[96] Micah Zenko and Emma Welch, "Where the Drones Are: Mapping the launch pads for Obama's secret wars," *Foreign Policy*, May 29, 2012: https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/05/29/where-the-drones-are/

[97] Zenko and Welch, "Where the Drones Are," 2012.

[98] James Risen and Mark Mazzetti, "C.I.A Said to Use Outsiders to Put Bombs on Drones," *The New York Times*, August 20, 2009: https://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/21/us/21intel.html

[99] W.J. Hennigan, "Drone pilots go to war in the Nevada desert, staring at video screens," *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 2015: https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-drone-pilots-20150617-story.html

the opaque network of military operations adds a civilian dimension to the system of remoteness that governs the U.S. drone program. While drones may be housed in desert outposts across the Middle East, they are piloted remotely from ground control stations that are located within the deserts of the continental United States.

Working from air force bases such as Creech, Nevada, a drone crew – responsible for the offensive capabilities of the aircraft's operation consists of a pilot and a sensor operator.[100] Additionally, image analysts - often based in separate quarters across the U.S- work together with the pilot and operator by feeding through real-time data and intelligence that has been gathered by a ground-team on the battlefield.[101] The feedback loop that exists between drone operators, image analysts, and "boots on the ground," has created a set of conditions that has "reorganized military space by reconstructing the site of engagement" through the scope of a camera.[102] Lila Lee-Morrison argues that:

> the processes behind drone operations are indicative of a cultural shift in negotiating, participating and engaging in reality through the filter of its image.[103]

To this effect, the images that are used to inform drone operators, alongside the images that are captured by drones themselves, *become* the site of engagement, the battlefield itself, instead of a representation of it. These conditions have created an asymmetrical advantage in favor of those who possess "visual primacy," despite the fact that operators lack situational awareness because they are removed from the physical reality of what is taking place on the ground. Drone pilots and operators are wholly "dependent on devices to enable them to visualize their drone's context and exercise control over its behavior."[104] Morrison contends that:

> the electro-optical environment through which the combatant increasingly engages, is taking supremacy over physical space. The battlefield and the

[100] Hurwitz, "Drone Pilots," 2013; Dexter Filkins, "Operators of Drones Are Faulted in Afghan Deaths," The New York Times, May 29, 2010: https://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/30/world/asia/30drone.html

[101] Elisabeth Bumiller, "A Day Job Waiting for a Kill Shot a World Away," *The New York Times*, July 29, 2012: https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/30/us/drone-pilots-waiting-for-a-kill-shot-7000-miles-away.html

[102] Lila Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare: Visual Primacy as Weapon," *Trans Visuality: The cultural dimension of visuality* 2 (2015): 202.

[103] Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare," 202.

[104] Roger Clarke, "What drones inherit from their ancestors," *Computer Law & Security Review* 30 (2014): 259.

target have become embedded in this digital theater of war, from which the combatant participates from the position of an observer, at a distance.[105]

An example of these reconfigured conditions of warfare, and the consequences of such a dynamic transformation, is evident when considering a U.S. Predator drone strike that took place on February 21, 2010 in central Afghanistan. A convoy of over dozen Afghani civilians travelling in two SUVs and a pickup truck, were mistakenly identified as a threat by Predator drone operators stationed at a Ground Control Station (GCS) at Creech and by a team of screeners who were analyzing the live-video feed of the operation via satellite, while they were based at Hurlburt Field in Okaloosa County, Florida.[106] In the early hours of the morning, prior to the strike, a U.S. Special Operatives unit had been helicoptered in and positioned near a town named Khod, in order to search for insurgents and weapons on the ground.[107] The convoy, which included families with children, and people seeking medical treatment, were not aware that they were under surveillance, yet their "perceived visual proximity on the screen to the military unit, created a narrative, which translated the convoy's presence into an immediate target of suspicion."[108] The task of both the team of screeners and the operators of the Predator, was to positively identify (PID) weapons amongst the passengers in order to declare that the convoy was a threat to the ground force that was located nearby. A positive identification for weapons present was never made during the interactions between the drone and intelligence personnel, yet the visual narrative that unfolded through the constellation of satellite imagery and interpretative analysis, reinforced the operator's decision to strike. According to the U.S. military's count, "15 or 16 men were killed and 12 were wounded, included a woman and children." By contrast, Afghani elders interviewed after the strike said that twenty-three had been killed.[109]

David Cloud, a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times*, obtained formerly classified military documents through a Freedom of Information act, in order to investigate transcripts of the cockpit, messaging, and radio conversations that took place between the teams of drone personnel. In an April 2011 article, Cloud outlined

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[105] Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare," 204.

[106] David S. Cloud, "Anatomy of an Afghan war tragedy," *Los Angeles Times*, April 10, 2011: https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-afghanistan-drone-20110410-story.html

[107] Cloud, "Anatomy of an Afghan war tragedy," 2011.

[108] Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare," 205.

[109] Cloud, "Anatomy of an Afghan war tragedy," 2011.

the chronology of the strike operation, and shed light on the unsettling trajectory of misidentification that led to the deaths of civilians. Transcripts of military communication indicate that suspicions about the convoy were first raised when intelligence screeners observed flashing lights between the vehicles.[110] Identifying this behavior as a form of signaling, drone personnel continued to pursue a course of heightened surveillance with the intention of locating weapons as the pilot indicated when none were immediately identifiable, "I was hoping we could make a rifle out, never mind."[111] Lee-Morrison argues that in drone warfare, "anticipation of a threat can quickly commit events to a false narrative."[112]

Much of the communication between the drone pilot, sensor, and screeners demonstrates this symptom of "remoteness," as personnel make pre-emptive decisions based on what may result in the absence of situational awareness. For example, as screeners relayed to the drone operators that they believed they "may have a high-level Taliban commander" present within the convoy, the pilot and sensor responded:

> (Pilot): wouldn't surprise me if this was one of their important guys, just watching from a distance, you know what I mean?
> (Sensor): yea he's got his security detail. [113]

The language used throughout the communication during this particular strike operation typifies the unsettling way in which assumptive analysis was relied upon to confirm the perceptual standpoint of drone personnel, in effect, committing observations to a false narrative. On observing movement in the vehicles, identified by the sensor and screeners as "wrestling," the pilot commented, "they probably are really using (expletive deleted) human shields here, that's probably what that is."[114] Even when screeners relayed that they may have identified children amongst the convey, the sensor expresses frustration as such an observation challenged the narrative that was being constructed – "I really doubt that children call, man I really (expletive deleted) hate that."[115] After a few hours of surveillance, analysts observe

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[110] David S. Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," *Los Angeles Times,* April 8, 2011: http://documents.latimes.com/transcript-of-drone-attack/
[111] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.
[112] Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare," 207.
[113] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.
[114] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.
[115] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.

that members of the convoy are dismounted from the vehicles and praying. The sensor and screeners interpret this behavior as consistent with their narrative, in order to justify a pre-emptive strike – "This is definitely it, this is their force. Praying? I mean seriously, that's what they do," "They're gonna do something nefarious."[116] Following hours of visual analysis from the drone, army commanders ordered two Kiowa helicopters to attack the convoy, with the Predator drone in position to target any survivors. Yet as the drone crew observed the attack unfold, a "contrasting" narrative began to reveal itself."[117]

No weapons could be identified in the wreckage that the Hellfire missile had generated, and furthermore, women and children were emerging from the strike in an attempt to surrender – "We looked at all of them and I don't think that any of them have weapons," "Now they're calling 3 females and 1 child. 1 possible child."[118] The "remoteness" that enabled personnel to anticipate a threat through the ostensible asymmetrical advantage of visual primacy, simultaneously became the defense through which the pre-emptive engagement was justified. Both the safety observer and sensor took a position that absolved those responsible of any accountability, based on the fact that the very distance impeded their judgement – "No way to tell, man," "No way to tell from here."[119] The pilot's final communication in the transcript subtly articulates the both the limits of the contemporary "kill chain" structure in drone warfare, and the disturbing consequences of such a network facilitated through "remoteness" – "Since the engagement we have not been able to PID any weapons."[120]

The contingencies of drone warfare have eliminated the "individual" within the landscape of contemporary conflict. Drone targets, referred to as "squirters" or "bug splats" – due to the grainy screen resolution – are stripped of their agency through the single lens perspective through which they are viewed. The identities of drone personnel too, are complicated through the processes of remoteness that mediate their participation warfare. The classified nature of U.S. drone operations has led to a paucity of "official" data available detailing the experiences of drone operators. Furthermore, the existing data can be contradictory. In contrast to the

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[116] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.
[117] Lee-Morrison, "Drone Warfare," 208-209.
[118] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.
[119] Cloud, Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.
[120] Cloud, "Transcripts of U.S. drone attack," 2011.

availability of official data, a variety of online articles and interviews with current and former drone operators discussing their personal experiences have begun to proliferate, offering a new source of evidentiary "testimonial" data. These sources offer unique and intimate accounts that illuminate the operational experiences of RPA personnel, and according to Bentley, "access to this testimony has the potential to influence cultural understandings of remote warfare." [121] Yet Bentley also notes that the nature of the delivery- Internet news media websites – may not be an "appropriate space in which to publicize and engage with this evidence," as instead, such dissemination has caused:

> these personal accounts to become fetishized – to the extent [that] this undermines the cultural, political, and informative value of the data and even reinforces the narratives of remote warfare this testimony frequently seeks to reverse. [122]

The fetishization of the "pilot experience" is a phenomenon that occurs separately to the technology "fetish" that accompanies the public's obsession with drones. Drone operator testimonials allow for the "abstract concepts of personal experience and emotion" to become fetishized, in effect, reducing the communication of their experiences to an act of voyeurism.[123] The fetishizing of personnel experience is most acutely registered in the rhetorical tone of article titles that have multiplied online. Not unlike a tabloid headline, titles such as, "She Kills People From 7850 Miles Away," "Life as a drone operator: 'Ever step on ants and never give it another thought?'," and "Drone Strikes: A Candid, Chilling Conversation With Top U.S. Drone Pilot," often sensationalize testimonies by promising readers an "insider account" that likely focuses on the most lurid details of an operator's experience.[124] The investigative tone of interview questions can also fetishize and manipulate operator experiences and testimonies, by exploiting the dynamic between the

[121] Bentley, "Fetishized data,"88.

[122] Bentley, "Fetishized data," 88.

[123] Bentley, "Fetishized data," 102.

[124] Kevin Maurer, "She Kills People From 7850 Miles Away," *The Daily Beast*, 18 October 2015: http://www.thedailybeast.com/she-kills-people-from-7850-miles-away; Ed Pilkington, "Life as a drone operator: 'Ever step on ants and never give it another thought?'," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2015: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/18/life-as-a-drone-pilot-creech-air-force-base-nevada; David Wood, "Drone Strikes: A Candid, Chilling Conversation With Top U.S. Drone Pilot," *Huffington Post*, 16 May, 2013: https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/drone-strikes_n_3280023?ec_carp=8592353570274344886

interviewer and the interviewee. For example, Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez's 2013 article, "A Drone Warrior's Torment: Ex-Air Force Pilot Brandon Bryant on His Trauma From Remote Killing," questions a former drone sensor, whistleblower, and vocal critic of the U.S. drone program about his experiences at Creech Air Force Base. The questions that are posed to Bryant are often sensational and bluntly framed:

> "Place us in the room in 2007 with your first strike. Describe what happened."
> "What did the room look like?"
> "So, you watched this guy bleed out for how long?"
> "…you've written that you thought you killed a child, as well… Could you talk about that particular day?"[125]

Such framing positions Bryant as an object of spectacle, and in this manner, his responses become fetishized. As an object of fetish, operator testimonies are shaped by the tone in which they are reproduced, and in effect, they become sensationalized for consumption. The tagline of Kevin Maurer's article about a female sensor operator reads – "Her name is 'Sparkle.' She operates a drone. She is sick of whiny boys. And she is perfectly OK with dealing out death."[126] The framing that Maurer employs not only fetishizes the subject as a *woman* who happens to operate drones, but also creates an exaggerated narrative for the benefit of readers seeking to consume the testimonies of drone operators – a phenomenon that is otherwise clandestine and obscured. An example of such framing follows:

> She pulled her chestnut hair into a bun and slipped on her olive green flight suit… Over the next 24 hours she would track an insurgent, watch as he was killed by a Hellfire missile, and spy in his funeral before ending her night with a breakfast beer and a trip to the dog park.[127]

Maurer combines the extraordinary with the banal, the incomprehensible with the relatable, in order to re-package Sparkle's testimony and fetishize her experiences. Bentley argues that "there exists a fetishized construction of the evidence that goes

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[125] Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez, "A Drone Warrior's Torment: Ex-Air Force Pilot Brandon Bryant on His Trauma From Remote Killing," *Democracy Now*, October 25, 2013:
http://www.democracynow.org/2013/10/25/a_drone_warriors_torment_ex_air
[126] Maurer, "She Kills People," 2015.
[127] Maurer, "She Kills People," 2015.

beyond the idea that the pilots' description of events is horrific in of itself."[128] This is evident through exploitative framing that dramatizes such descriptions, shaping and informing a voyeurism of remote warfare - "Sparkle's fingers started to tingle as she kept the crosshairs on the target. It always happened when she was about to strike."[129] Recounting his experience reporting from a drone training classroom, Corey Mead noted a "discord between trainers' rhetoric about how much they disliked killing people – and their unabashed excitement… about the times they were able to launch strikes to kill 'bad guys'."[130] Mead recognized that although such "competing impulses may have seemed irreconcilable," they were ubiquitous.[131] The multitude of "online" drone operator testimonies also reflect conflicting experiences that both reinforce and challenge dominant narratives of drone warfare that persist in the popular consciousness. The following analysis outlines some of the ways in which the operational experiences of drone personnel are consistently reinforced and complicated by their relationship to the "remoteness" that informs and prefigures drone use in contemporary warfare.

Bill "Sweet" Tart, a decorated Air Force colonel and drone pilot, insists that drones should be referred to as Remotely Piloted Aircraft, as the "word drone is a negative with respect to the skill and effort that the men and women individually put into flying and executing a mission."[132] Although Tart's testimony echoes the crusade that the military has undertaken – to rename the aircraft- in order to "rebrand" the drone's "official" narrative within popular discourse, the testimonies of other operators diverge and are not as readily consistent. "Ryan," an operator whose name was withheld, comments that he is "overpaid, underworked, and bored."[133] "Brad," who formerly flew B1 bombers during a tour in Afghanistan, but has since become an RPA instructor at the Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, comments that his transition from flying to operating drones is comparable to "being transferred from marketing to the accounting department."[134] Brad's comment reflects the sentiments of other drone operators who feel like a "lost generation" of landlocked pilots, who previously flew aircraft in combat before transferring to the RPA program.

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[128] Bentley, "Fetishized data," 102.
[129] Maurer, "She Kills People," 2015.
[130] Corey Mead, "A Rare Look Inside the Air Force's Drone Training Classroom," *The Atlantic*, June 4, 2014: http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/06/drone-pilots-reaper-photo-essay/
[131] Mead, "A Rare Look," 2014.
[132] Wood, "Drone Strikes," 2013.
[133] Hurwitz, "Drone Pilots," 2013.
[134] Hurwitz, "Drone Pilots," 2013.

Prior to the burgeoning role of the drone program in recent U.S. military affairs, the Air Force sought to temporarily re-assign pilots from other areas of service in order to fill the growing demand.[135] As the demand for drone operators continued to increase, the U.S. Air Force began training enlisted service members who had no prior flight training in either a military or commercial aircraft.[136] By 2010, more pilots had been trained to fly drones than to pilot aircraft, resulting in a force that is younger, smaller, and under significant stress.[137] In a press briefing in 2015, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James acknowledged that the U.S. Air Force was attempting to meet its growing demands globally with the "smallest Air Force in our history."[138] Secretary James addressed the human toll that the "unrelenting pace of operations" was creating, and further stressed the crisis that the RPA force was directly facing:

> The crisis right now is with the pilot force, because they are reaching the end… we are reaching the point where some of them can go. And it is the most stressed part, because it is the lowest manned, percentage wise, part of the RPA fleet.[139]

Coupled with the fear of remaining permanently "grounded" by never flying an aircraft, and the unique stresses that are fostered by remote drone operation, many drone pilots are choosing to not re-enlist. Pratap Chatterjee noted that in 2015 although there were approximately 1000 drone pilots operating within the Air Force, and that while 180 pilots would annually graduate from their training program, 240 trained pilots had left the Force within the same year.[140]

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[135] Scott Maucione, "How does the Air Force create a new community for the next generation of drone pilots?" *Federal News Network*, September 20 2018: https://federalnewsnetwork.com/air-force/2018/09/how-does-the-air-force-create-a-new-community-for-the-next-generation-of-drone-pilots/

[136] Tim Wright, "Do Gamers Make Better Drone Operators Than Pilots?" *Air & Space Smithsonian*, August 29, 2017: https://www.airspacemag.com/daily-planet/could-video-gamers-make-better-drone-pilots-180964653/

[137] Roger Stahl, "What the drone saw: the cultural optics of the unmanned war," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 67, no. 5 (2013): 660; David Hastings Dunn, "Drones: disembodied aerial warfare and the unarticulated threat," *International Affairs* 89, no. 5 (2013): 1239; Pratap Chatterjee, "Killing by Committee in the Global Wild West: The Perpetrators Become the Victims of Drone Warfare," *TomDispatch* July 12, 2015: http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/176022/

[138] State of the Air Force Press Briefing by Secretary James and General Welsh in the Pentagon Briefing Room, *Department of Defense*, January 15, 2015: http://www.dod.defense.gove/News/Transcripts.Transcript-View/Article/606995

[139] State of the Air Force Press Briefing, 2015.

[140] Pratap Chatterjee, "Are Pilots Deserting Washington's Remote-Control War?: A New Form of War May Be Producing A New Form of Mental Disturbance," *TomDispatch*, March 5 (2015): http://www.tomdispatch.com/blog/175964/tomgram%3A_pratap_chatterjee%2C_is_drone_warfare_fraying_at_the_edges

One of the unique stresses that informs the experience of drone operators, is the "compression of time and space" that differentiates their experiences from those physically deployed in traditional combat theaters of war.[141] John Williams developed the phrase "distant intimacy," in an attempt to highlight and articulate the "special and ethical distinctiveness of the relationship between drone operators and their targets," amid a constructed landscape that can be conceived of as "dronespace."[142] There is a paradox between the remoteness that separates drone personnel from the reality of the combat theater, and their proximity to the screens that mediate and facilitate their participation in waging war. For large portions of their shift, drone personnel are engaged in reconnaissance and surveillance monitoring vast expanses of pixelated landscape, and in turn, "operators are prone to extreme boredom due to numerous hours spent viewing primarily innocuous terrain."[143] Staff Sgt Kimi, an analyst who is responsible for monitoring war-zone feeds in order to relay intelligence to drone pilots, admits that her experience behind the screen did not match her initial expectation:

> Since I wanted to go to art school for photography, the recruiter told me that this was like working with photography. But…it's not.[144]

Surveillance often includes monitoring a particular individual or group for an extended period of time. Many personnel have remarked that they come to feel a sense of "eerie intimacy" with their targets, as they follow them and observe their daily activities.[145] Cian Westmoreland, a former drone technician who has since become an outspoken critic of the drone program, commented on his experience of daily surveillance:

> you're confronted with a screen where you watch people day in, day out- you might even start to realize they're not bad people. Some start to feel a

[141] Alaa Hijazi, Christopher Ferguson, F. Richard Ferraro, Harold Hall, Mark Hovee and Sherrie Wilcox, "Psychological Dimensions of Drone Warfare," *Current Psychology*, September (2017): 4.
[142] John Williams, "Distant Intimacy: Space, Drones, and Just War," *Ethics & International Affairs*, 29 no.1 (2015): 93.
[143] Hijazi et. Al, "Psychological Dimensions," 4.
[144] Sarah McCammon, "The Warfare May Be Remote But The Trauma is Real," *National Public Radio*, April 24, 2017: htpp://www.npr.org/2017/04/24/525413427/for-drone-pilots-warfare-may-be-remote-but-the-trauma-is-real
[145] Wood, "Drone Strikes," 2013.

connection to the people they're pursuing and start to understand their humanity.[146]

Others, like Colonel Bill "Sweet" Tart, configure their relationship to their targets by justifying their role in the "kill chain" command:

I would couch it not in terms of an emotional connection, but a … seriousness…. The seriousness of it is that I am going to do this and it will affect his family. But that individual is the one that brought it upon himself.[147]

"Mike," an anonymous drone operator based at Holloman, New Mexico, acknowledges that it is necessary to reconcile the complexity of these symptoms of remoteness – "whether it gives me empathy or sympathy or just familiarity, I'm not sure. We compartmentalize the job like anyone else."[148]

Whilst undertaking surveillance, drone operators are often confronted with disturbing imagery, rendering them as silent, remote witnesses to the events of war. Colonel. Jason Brown, the commander of the 480th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing at the Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Virginia, recognizes that drone personnel face such challenges daily: "They're exposed to the most gruesome things that you can think about that could happen on a battlefield… They find mass graves; they witness executions."[149] A study conducted by the U.S. Air Force records that "nearly one in five had witnessed a rape" with some operators reporting that they had personally observed "more than 100 incidents of rape or torture."[150] The vacillation between surveilling monotonous terrain, and witnessing atrocities of war, creates a condition that forces personnel to become accustomed to "rapid psychological switches or "whiplash" between fighter and civilian roles."[151]

[146] Norma Costello, "Confessions of a former US Air Force drone technician," *Aljazeera*, 13 April 2016: https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/04/confessions-air-force-drone-technician-afghanistan-160406114636155.html
[147] Wood, "Drone Strikes," 2013.
[148] Hurwitz, "Drone Pilots," 2013.
[149] McCammon, "The Warfare May Be Remote," 2017.
[150] McCammon, "The Warfare May Be Remote," 2017.
[151] Hijazi et. al., "Psychological Dimensions," 2017.

Due to staff shortages, drone operators are often placed on shift rotations that may last from ten to twelve hours.[152]

Such stresses that arise from the structure of a typical workday, impact the experiences of drone personnel; as Cian Westmoreland puts it, "It's a schizophrenic way to live. You have to go home after a mission like everything is normal."[153] Additionally, the classified nature of drone operations prevents personnel from discussing such details with friends and family.[154] In this context, the ability to compartmentalize trauma sustains the relationship between drone personnel and the unique nature of the "remoteness" that characterizes their participation in contemporary warfare. Furthermore, this symptom of remoteness complicates the configurations of "military" and "civilian" identities – a distinctive ramification of drone warfare that scholarship is increasingly beginning to acknowledge.

Considering that details of who operates the drone are not readily accessible due to the restricted nature of the program, studies assessing the experiences of personnel have been limited. Yet a sample of recent military and academic studies has established that drone operation can adversely affect the mental and physical health of personnel.[155] Furthermore, in conjunction with such studies, an increasing number of operator testimonies highlight that their experiences have impacted and challenged the perception of what it means to be a "real warrior" within the context of recent military culture. For Colonel Bill "Sweet" Tart, the physical distance between operators and their targets does not significantly alter or complicate the identities of RPA personnel as "warriors." Insisting that since "the beginning of warfare, man has been trying to put distance between himself and the enemy," Colonel Tart suggests that RPA are merely an extension of that impulse, allowing military personnel to make critical decisions in warfare without risking their lives – "That's the best of both

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[152] Elisabeth Bumiller, "Air Fore Drone Operators Report High Levels of Stress," *The New York Times,* December 18, 2011: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/19/world/asia/air-force-drone-operators-show-high-levels -of-stress.html?_r=1

[153] Costello, "Confessions of a former US Air Force drone technician," 2016.

[154] Hijazi et. al., "Psychological Dimensions," 2017; S. L. Fuller, "A Day in the Life of a US Air Force Drone Pilot," *Aviation Today,* March 16, 2017: http://www.aviationtoday.com/2017/03/16/day-life-us-air-force-drone-pilot/

[155] Rachel Martin, "Report: High Levels of 'Burnout' In U.S. Drone Pilots," *National Public Radio,* December 18, 2011: http:// www.npr.org/2011/12/19/143926857/report-high-levels-of-burnout-in-u-s-drone-pilots; James Dao, "Drone Pilots are Found to Get Stress Disorders Much as Those in Combat Do," *The New York Times,* February 22, 2013: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/23/us/drone-pilots-found-to-get-stress-disorders-much-as-those-in-combat-do.html?_1=0; Jean L. Otto and Bryant J. Webber, "Mental Health Diagnoses and Counselling among Pilots of Remotely Piloted Aircraft in the US Air Force," *Medical Surveillance Monthly Report* 20, no. 3 (2013): 3-8.

worlds right there."[156] Other operators, however, express how their removal from physical combat has shaped their experiences of warfare and challenged their identity as a "warrior." Cian Westmoreland argues that being removed from the combat zone made his task particularly difficult:

> There's no physical danger from the enemy and that's what makes the job so tough, if someone is pointing a gun at you, you can justify – in your own mind – shooting someone. [157]

Major Bryan Callahan also expresses how operating via distance challenges his conception of sacrifice:

> The other guys are exposing themselves, and that to me is still quite an honorable thing to do. So I feel like I'm cheating them. I'm relatively safe… I wish it was me down there, not them. Sometimes I feel like I left them behind.[158]

Both Westmoreland and Callahan's testimonies articulate a sense of dislocation from their identities as "warriors." The nature of shiftwork and the means by which drone operators conduct warfare, coupled with the removal of their bodies from the "warzone," leads to the deprivation of "individuals from acting in accordance with the hegemonic militarized masculine role." [159] A fusion of "masculinity" and militarism has long informed conceptions of soldier-identity, and the role of the "warrior" has continued to be aggressively reinforced during the post-heroic era. Despite the fact that drones – as an apparatus of military power – have come to symbolize the fullest extension of American exceptionalism, aggression, and dominance in warfare, the qualities that are traditionally attributed to "warriors" are increasingly problematized.

The controversy surrounding the introduction (and subsequent cancellation) of the Distinguished Warfare Medal (DWM) in 2013, demonstrates how traditional notions of sacrifice, courage, and bravery, still inform warrior identity in this

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[156] Wood, "Drone Strikes," 2013.
[157] Costello, "Confessions of a former US Air Force drone technician," 2016.
[158] "Interview with a Drone Pilot," 2010.
[159] Sofia Tyrberg, "Hegemonic bodies in robotic warfare: A critical discursive analysis of drone warfare through a feminist perspective," *Swedish Defence*, 2017: 28.

reconfigured era of total war. In early February 2013, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta announced the he had approve the creation of a new medal that was designed to recognize service members who had a direct, yet remote, role in combat operations.[160] Awarded to service members post 9/11 who had demonstrated "exceptional acts" in combat despite being removed from the battlefield, the introduction of the DWM, the first honor to be introduced by the Department of Defense since the creation of the Bronze Star in 1944, articulates the scope of the transformation that attends the conception of total war in recent American military operations.[161] Panetta outlined the intentions of the DWM, suggesting that it would provide "distinct, department-wide recognition for the extraordinary achievements that directly impact on combat operations, but that do not involve acts of valor or physical risk that combat entails."[162] Prior to Panetta's official proposal, journalist and commentator Glen Greenwald sharply decried the motions towards the creation of the DWM:

> Justifying drone warfare requires pretending that the act entails some sort of bravery, so the U.S. military is increasingly taking steps to create the façade of warrior courage for drone pilots… it's one of the least "brave" or courageous modes of warfare ever invented… Killing while sheltering yourself from all risk is the definitional opposite of bravery.[163]

In his open ridicule of the efforts to create such an award suggesting that the impulse to recognize drone warfare as brave was "Orwellian in the extreme" – Greenwald argued that the act of "collectively venerating" drone use would only work to "shield it even further from critical scrutiny and challenge."[164]

Following Panetta's official announcement, the medal was immediately met with continued hostility from the veteran community and the public at large, some suggesting that the award should be stylized as a "gold-plated X-Box controller,"

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[160] Jim Garamone, "Panetta Announces Distinguished Warfare Medal," *American Forces Press Service, Department of Defense,* Washington, February 13, 2013:
http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=119290
[161] Charles Cooper, "Cyber, drone operators now eligible for 'Distinguished Warfare' medal," *C/Net Sci Tech*, February 13, 2013: https://www.cnet.com/news/cyber-drone-operators-now-eligible-for-distinguished-warfare-medal/
[162] Garamone, "Panetta Announces Distinguished Warfare Medal," 2013.
[163] Glenn Greenwald, "Bravery and drone pilots: The Pentagon considers awarding war medals to those who operate America's death-delivering video games," *Salon*, July 11, 2012:
https://www.salon.com/2012/07/10/bravery_and_drone_pilots/
[164] Greenwald, "Bravery and drone pilots," 2012.

consistent with the prevailing attitudes that equate (and conflate) drone operations with video games.[165] The veteran organization, Veterans of Foreign Wars, expressed their outrage that the proposed DWM would outrank both the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart, vocally articulating their "total disagreement" with the Department of Defense's motion. John E. Hamilton, a combat-wounded Marine-Corp rifleman who served in the Vietnam War argued:

> Medals that can only be earned in direct combat must mean more than medals awarded in the rear. The VFW urges the Department of Defense to reconsider the new medal's placement in the military order of precedence.[166]

For Hamilton and other veterans opposed to the introduction of the DWM, the military order of precedence is fundamentally connected to, and automatically granted by the precedence of direct combat. Engagement and immersion in the physical battlefield – combat experience as boots on the ground – is an inherent characteristic that informs the identity of "warrior" that is fostered within the military's culture. The volume of public outcry over the DWM in many respects demonstrates the implicit acknowledgement of the distinction between what does and does not constitute a "warrior." Within the month, three Republican congressmen – veterans themselves – introduced a bill that would prohibit the DWM from ranking either on par with or above the Purple Heart. Congressmen Tom Rooney, an architect of the bill, declared:

> There is no greater sacrifice than risking your own life to save another on the battlefield… and the order of precedence should appropriately reflect the reverence we hold for those willing to make that sacrifice. [167]

In response to this motion, coupled with the negative backlash, newly appointed Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel called for a review of the medal's proposition in

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[165] Patrick Dickson, "New medal for modern warfare sparks strong reaction," *Stars and Stripes*, February 14, 2013: https://www.stripes.com/news/new-medal-for-modern-warfare-sparks-strong-reaction-1.208025; Chris Carroll, "Hagel eliminates 'drone medal,' creates device for existing medals," *Stars and Stripes,* April 15, 2013: https://www.stripes.com/hagel-eliminates-drone-medal-creates-device-for-existing-medals-1.216722

[166] "VFW Wants New Medal Ranking Lowered: VWF believes Distinguished Warfare Medal Should not outrank the Bronze fsfStar, Purple Heart," *Veterans of Foreign Wars*, February 14, 2013: https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2013/2/vfw-wants-new-medal-ranking-lowered

[167] Joyce Tsai, "Lawmakers introduce bill to demote Pentagon's new medal," *Stars and Stripes*, February 27, 2013: https://www.stripes.com/news/lawmakers-introduce-bill-to-demote-pentagon-s-new-medal-1.209925

late February, and made the decision to replace the DWM with a "device" that could instead be affixed to an already existing medal by April of 2013.[168] With explicit terms for the device's conferment, the "R" (for "remote") shaped pin can only be applied to specific existing medals – in effect, not disrupting or challenging the traditional notions of bravery and sacrifice that accompany the conferment of other awards. [169] The controversy that defined the suggestion of the DWM and its placement within the spectrum of existing medals highlights the potency of ideas of "sacrifice" and "bravery" even within the transformed context of modern war. Furthermore, the short-lived existence of the "Nintendo Medal," or "Purple Buttocks" (as nicknamed by detractors within the Department of Defense) underscores the conflict between notions of sacrifice and morality and the dissonance that attends the overwhelming public perception – drone operators are not considered "brave" and therefore do not fit the hegemonic mold of "warrior," yet they are perceived as "trigger-happy" snipers that cold-heartedly strike via remote. Such perceptions contribute to a crisis of "morality" that some drone personnel articulate through their testimonies.

Many interviewees note that their "personal lives are" often "marred by cultural assumptions of drone pilots as heartless killers."[170] Westmoreland says "the public image of the [drone] program is so awful that you have guys trying to explain to their kids that they're not monsters."[171] Brandon Bryant uses the term "moral injury" to describe his experiences of the battle "wounds" that are inflicted despite his distance from the warzone:

> My deal is more moral injury… think how you would feel when – if you were part of something that you felt violated the Constitution… I paid a spiritual and mental price for that. And I think that's something people really discount, because I didn't take any physical injury through it.[172]

[168] Jim Garamone, "Hagel Replaces Distinguished Warfare Medal With New Device," *American Forces Press Service*, *Department of Defense*, April 15, 2013.
[169] Andrew deGrandpre and Charlsy Panzino, "12 military awards now eligible for new 'C' and 'R' devices and 2 no longer rate a 'V'," *Military Times,* March 30, 2017: https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2017/03/30/12-military-awards-now-eligible-for-new-c-and-r-devices-and-2-no-longer-rate-a-v/
[170] Bentley, "Fetishized data," 95.
[171] Costello, "Confessions of a former US Air Force drone technician," 2016.
[172] Goodman and Gonzalez, " A Drone Warrior's Torment," 2013.

The context of "combat" – either via remote or in the "flesh"- is unique in the respect that otherwise inadmissible behaviors, like the act of killing, are in fact "sanctioned and even celebrated when performed in accord with rules of engagement, and validly punished when those rules are violated."[173] After combat, some drone operators recall that they experience a period of reflection in which they come to question their actions and participation in combat operations. For a number of years, both researchers and clinicians have attempted to define the scope and nature of such symptoms that do not fall easily within the parameters of traditional definitions of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The criteria that determines PTSD diagnoses fails to "encompass the inflictions of trauma within its definition," and so, researchers have developed the term "moral injury" to describe the "damage or harm received to one's moral center as a result of experiences, seen, and done in the war zone."[174]

Considering the remote nature of a drone operator's participation in combat, the concept of moral injury is particularly appropriate as it becomes an ideational means for personnel to express the "harm" that they feel in the absence of physical injury – a "soul" wound.[175] Empirical psychological research examining the impacts of drone warfare on personnel is still limited, yet studies are increasingly suggesting that RPA operators are reporting elevated levels of what the Air Force has termed "high operational stress."[176] Higher levels of burnout and emotional exhaustion have been reported to effect RPA personnel more so than other service people in the Air Force, largely due to the long hours and the fatigue of shiftwork, alongside the sustained exposure to images of combat.[177] Researchers have suggested that such emotional exhaustion as is caused by sustained experiences of warfare, contribute to "psychological morbidity," a type of "existential conflict" that emerges from feelings of "guilt or remorse over their perceptions of themselves as aerial snipers, witnessing collateral damage following their strikes, and being psychologically attached to the

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[173] Kent D. Drescher and David W. Foy, "When They Come Home: Posttraumatic Stress, Moral Injury, and Spiritual Consequences for Veterans," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 28 (2008): 91.
[174] Drescher and Foy, "When They Come Home," 91.
[175] Johnathan Shay, "Moral Injury," *Intertexts* 16, no. 1 (2012): 58.
[176] Elisabeth Bumiler, "Air Force Drone Operators Report High Levels of Stress," *The New York Times*, December 18, 2011.
[177] Hijazi et al. "Psychological Dimensions of Drone Warfare," 2; Agata Blaszczak-Boxe, "Drone Pilots Suffer PTSD Just Like Those in Combat," *Live Science*, August 20, 2014: http://www.livescience.com/47475-drone-operators-develop-ptsd.html; Wayne Chappelle, Tanya Goodman, Laura Reardon, William Thompson, "An analysis of post-traumatic stress symptoms in United States Air Force drone operators," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 28 (2014): 481.

combatants."[178] Reflecting on feelings of remorse and guilt following his experience as an operator, Westmoreland explains that he suffered from a number of "unresolved mental issues":

> I had nightmares about bombing villages, about being bombed, about killing children and trying to save them… And that's just one part – there's also an insidious part – the moral injury side of things, where the more you learn, the worse it gets… That's what brings you to a real point of hopelessness.[179]

In contrast, Sparkle's testimony highlights a radically difference experience, one which highlights how conceptions of "masculinity" underpin and reinforce warrior culture within the military at large. Sparkle describes the images that she has become accustomed to viewing:

> I watched a guy crawl away from the wreckage after one shot with no lower body. He slowly died. You have to watch that. You don't get to turn away. You can't be that softy girly traditional feminine and do the job. Those are the people who are going to have the nightmares.[180]

Sparkle conflates "femininity" with weakness and vulnerability, suggesting that those who experience trauma do not perform in accordance with the hegemonic "masculinity" that fundamentally underscores military culture and conceptions of the "warrior." Sophia Tyrberg argues that drone operators may experience a form of "gender anxiety" as their identities as warriors are questioned and challenged, and in order to combat these perceptions, drone operators "act in accordance with the hyper masculine hegemonic role, to avoid being excluded from the community within the Armed Forces."[181] For Sparkle, the pressure to "act masculine" is particularly reinforced – her inclusion into the "brotherhood" and her identity as a warrior (as a woman) is contingent upon her ability to perform "masculinity." Sparkle's comment

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[178] Marek S. Kopacz, April L. Connery, Todd M. Bishop, Craig J. Bryan, Kent D. Drescher, Joseph M. Currier, and Wilfred R. Pigeon, "Moral injury: A new challenge for complementary and alternative medicines," *Complementary Therapies in Medicine* 24 (2016): 29; Hijazi et. al. "Psychological Dimensions of Drone Warfare," 3.
[179] Costello, "Confessions of a former US Air Force drone technician," 2016.
[180] Maurer, "She Kills People From 7850 Miles Away," 2015.
[181] Tyrberg, "Hegemonic bodies in robotic warfare,"38.

also highlights the harmful attitude that persists within military culture to disregard symptoms of PTSD for fear of being perceived as weak, resulting in the artificial underreporting of PTSD cases. Within the armed forces, mental health diagnoses can have "detrimental career ramifications," and a mental health diagnoses within the Air Force could lead to the removal of flight status.[182] The personal testimonies of drone operators offer valuable insights into the contemporary experiences of warfare waged via remote. Such intimate accounts provide civilians with a platform to access a realm of military affairs that has consistently obscured from public view. As drone use has intensified under the Obama administration, official "information" concerning the drone program, however, has been carefully sculpted according to a set of strategic and rhetorical frames.

In October 2009, the Nobel Committee awarded President Barack Obama the Nobel Peace prize, in recognition of his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples."[183] Only nine months into the first term of his presidency, his nomination came as a shock, with commentators interpreting the Nobel Committee's decision as aspirational, and a reflection of improved European-American relations following the era of George W. Bush's administration.[184] Many perceived Obama's acceptance of the award as a liability, as *TIME* magazine's Nancy Gibbs commented – "the last thing Barack Obama needed at this moment in his presidency and our politics is a prize for a promise."[185] The Committee's choice came with a caveat of sorts – that Obama would continue to strengthen channels of multilateral diplomacy and curb American exceptionalism abroad. Yet Obama's receipt of the award highlighted a glaring paradox – he was the "commander-in-chief of a military currently engaged in two wars, one of which many felt was unjustified," and in the process of further escalating a troop surge in Afghanistan by 30 000.[186] Furthermore, by the time of his acceptance, Obama had

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[182] Otto and Webber, "Mental Health Diagnoses and Counseling Among Pilots of Remotely Piloted Aircraft in the United States," 6.

[183] *The Nobel Peace Prize for 2009*: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2009/press-release/

[184] Jeff Zeleny, "Accepting Peace Prize, Obama Offers 'Hard Truth'," *The New York Times*, December 10, 2009: https://web.archive.org/web/20120210122241/http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/11/world/europe/11prexy.html

[185] Nancy Gibbs, "Obama's Nobel: The Last Thing He Needs," TIME, October 9, 2009: http://content.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1929395,00.html?xid=rss-politics; Garance Franke-Ruta, "Reaction: Obama Wins Nobel Peace Prize," *The Washington Post*, October 9, 2009: http://voices.washingtonpost.com/44/2009/10/09/reaction_obama_wins_nobel_peac.html

[186] Robert E. Terrill, "An Uneasy Peace: Barack Obama's Nobel Peace Prize Lecture," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 14, no. 4 (2011): 761.

"authorized more drone strikes that George W. Bush had approved during his entire presidency."[187] In his acceptance speech for a peace prize, Obama was preoccupied with war:

> We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth: we will not eradicate violent conflicts in our lifetimes… There will be times when nations – acting individually or in concert – will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified.[188]

Obama's rhetoric served a blend of realism and idealism, ultimately describing war and peace in relation to each other as "an interdependent coupling fundamental to a realistic view of human relations."[189] Yet most significantly, Obama's lecture articulated the endurance of ideas of American exceptionalism and the justification of American martial force abroad:

> Where force is necessary, we have a moral and strategic interest in binding ourselves to certain rules of conduct. And even as we confront a vicious adversary that abides by no rules, I believe the United States of America must remain a standard bearer in the conduct of war. That is what makes us different from those whom we fight.[190]

In many respects, Obama's articulation of American exceptionalism at such an early juncture portended the "exceptional" way in which his administration would come to conduct the drone program that has ostensibly become a defining feature of both Obama's presidency and the 21st century configuration of total war. How Obama has chosen to craft and shape the escalation of drone use throughout his terms (and on his terms), has dually informed his own legacy, and the public's perception of drone warfare.

Scholars have argued that the strategic and rhetorical use of "culturally resonant frames" has been necessary in order for Obama and his administration to shape the

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[187] Klaidman, "Drones," 2012.
[188] Barack Obama, "Nobel Lecture delivered by Barack H. Obama," Oslo, December 10, 2009: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2009/obama/26183-nobel-lecure-2009
[189] Terrill, "An Uneasy Peace," 768.
[190] Obama, "Nobel Lecture," 2009.

news coverage of drones.[191] Military, White House officials, and Obama himself have employed issue-specific frames to public discussions of drone policy, as a means of managing the media environment, and in effect, shaping the public's own understandings of American-led drone warfare. Analyzing "official" drone commentary during the first five years of the Obama presidency, researchers have identified four specific framing techniques that have consistently attended coverage of drones: strategic value as it applies to the "overall effectiveness [of drones] in combatting terrorism"; international legality of drone use; technological capability; and the instances of collateral damage. [192] Between January 1 2009, and December 31 2013, data analysis shows that Obama emphasized these key rhetorical frames in over half of his public statements concerning drones, most commonly focusing on the strategic value of drones as an efficient tool, operating within the bounds of the law, "whilst downplaying the collateral damage caused by such strikes."[193] A Pew poll taken in 2015 indicated that "58% of Americans supported drone strikes on extremists abroad," in comparison to over 70% of citizens polled in 39 other countries, who were opposed to UAV strikes when polled the previous year. [194] The Obama administration's framing, echoed by Congress, "presented a unified official picture of drone policy," which in many respects successfully positioned the American public to accept the legality, efficiency, and effectiveness of signature drone strikes.[195]

American exceptionalism, in this context, partially functions to obscure the human cost of using drone attacks. The opacity with which the Obama administration has conducted drone warfare abroad has since been vigorously questioned challenged by researchers and journalists, including Jeremy Scahill, Pratap Chatterjee, and Nick Turse. While Obama's role in transforming the drone program will continue to be analyzed and shaped by commentators as more data becomes available, it is clear that the deliberate abstruseness and lack of transparency fostered a sense of disconnection between the processes of warfare and the American public at large. Furthermore, this sense of "remoteness" has paradoxically contributed to the normalization of UAV use within the broader scope the "drone phenomenon." Aside from their military

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[191] Charles M. Rowling, Penelope Sheets, William Pettit and Jason Gilmore, "Consensus at Home, Opposition Abroad: Officials, Foreign Source, U.S. News Coverage of Drone Warfare," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (2017): 3.
[192] Rowling et. al., "Consensus at Home," 4.
[193] Rowling et. al., "Consensus at Home," 17.
[194] Rowling et. al. "Consensus at Home," 19-20.
[195] Rowling et. al. "Consensus at Home," 19-20.

applications abroad, drones have been increasingly employed in domestic policing and surveillance operations, consistent with the assertion that a "dronification of state violence" emerged in the post-9/11 period.[196] By 2014, Predator drones were patrolling nearly half the U.S. and Mexican border, and as of 2017, 347 U.S. agencies actively use drones in a variety of operations.[197] Ian Shaw argues that:

> The drone, with its ability to swarm in the streets of densely packed urban environments, crystallizes a more intimate form of state power. The project of an atmospheric, dronified form of policing not only embodies the technologization of state security but also entrenches the logic of a permanent, urbanized manhunt.[198]

To revisit Obama's joke at the Correspondents Dinner within this context, the normalization of state violence (and the apparatuses which deliver it) has unsettlingly entered the popular consciousness, and the cult of the "drone" manifests in a variety of ways.

Sara Brady argues that, "where the drone exists and where the drone goes there is drone culture."[199] The concealed nature of the U.S. drone program renders drones "invisible" to the public at large, yet the cultural texts that have increasingly proliferated indicate an impulse and desire to restore "visibility" to drones, and to reconcile the "remoteness" that innately attends understandings of them. Artistic representations of the drone are continually reproduced in popular culture, through film and television, theater, fiction, and fine art. Typically, the image of the "Predator" is most commonly represented, and in many respects, its distinctive image has become the ubiquitous interpretation for UAVs at large. Artist John Teschner documents his experience seeing a Predator drone:

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[196] Ian G.R. Shaw, "The Urbanization of drone warfare: policing surplus population in the dronepolis," *Geographica Helvetica* 71 (2016): 19.
[197] "Half of US-Mexico border now patrolled only by drone," *The Guardian*, 14 November, 2014: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/13/half-us-mexico-border-patrolled-drone; Marco Margaritoff, "Drones in Law Enforcement: How, Where and When They're Used," *The Drive*, October 13, 2017: http://www.thedrive.com/aerial/15092/drones-in-law-enforcement-how-where-and-when-theyre-used
[198] Shaw, "The Urbanization of drone warfare," 19.
[199] Sara Brady, "God, the Pilot, and the Bugsplat: Performance and the Drone Effect," *BEHEMOTH: A Journal on Civilisation* 8, no. 2 (2015): 34.

It had the simple lines of a balsa-wood-glider, and a Hellfire anti-tank missile tucked below each twenty-five foot wing. Where a cockpit should have been, there was only a smoothly amputated swelling. The longer I looked at the drone, the less it seemed to have in common with the war planes, space capsules, lunar rovers…[200]

This description articulates an evocative expression of unfamiliarity that underpins the public's fascination with the Predator – an alien, unknown body that "triggers feelings that the World War II fighter planes one gallery over do not."[201] Artist and geographer Trevor Paglen similarly attempts to articulate these expressions of remoteness and unfamiliarity through his work. Paglen's photography captures unseen political and geographical landscapes, and despite his claim that "there is very little evidentiary material in the images that I create."[202] In the absence of tactile evidence, Paglen's images of blurry Reaper and Predator drones taken from a distance "captures exactly what it is about drones which has taken such a firm hold of our imaginations."[203] Even an abstracted image of a Predator is recognizable as a drone, and in this respect, Paglen's work articulates the competing expressions of ubiquity and remoteness – the "space that drones inhabit in the public imagination."[204]

Drones have increasingly become the subject of a small cycle of films that, in their own ways, have attempted to familiarize viewers with drone technology, whilst addressing the myriad of moral and ethical complications that attend their use. Two films in particular, *Good Kill* (2014) and *Drone* (2017), endeavor to acknowledge the concept of "moral injury" that is present in some drone operator testimonies. Yet, despite the public's demonstrable desire to engage with drone narratives, these films have often been met with limited theatrical releases, and have failed to garner widespread critical acclaim. *Good Kill*, directed by Andrew Niccol (and funded in Euros as it did not receive the "blessing of the U.S. government), chronicles the story of Major Thomas Egan (Ethan Hawke) as he increasingly questions the ethics of his role as a drone pilot.[205] *Drone,* directed by Jason Bourque, follows the story of Neil

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[200] John Teschner, "On Drones," *The Iowa Review* 43, no. 1 (2013): 75-76.

[201] Teschner, "On Drones," 79.

[202] Lenny Simon, "Interview: Trevor Paglen," *Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College*, December 12, 2013: http://www.dronecenter.bard.edu/interview-trevor-paglen/; Tim Adams, "Trevor Paglen: art in the age of mass surveillance," *The Guardian*, 26 November, 2017: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/nov/25/trevor-paglen-art-in-age-of-mass-surveillance-drones-spy-satellites

[203] Simon, "Interview: Trevor Paglen," 2013.

[204] Simon, "Interview: Trevor Paglen," 2013.

[205] Brady, "God, the Pilot, and the Bugsplat," 42.

Wistin (Sean Bean) a privately contracted drone operator, who comes into contact with a Pakistani businessman claiming he is responsible for the deaths of his wife and child as a result of a drone strike. These films do not fetishize the "drone" itself as an object – the action sequences that typify war films are suppressed – yet they fetishize the experiences of the operators. Stefen Hankte argues that as such films

> fantasize about drone strikes as the most technologically advanced form of warfare, they return to the key image of the cycle: a man sitting motionless in a locked room. [206]

Both *Good Kill* and *Drone* emphasize the personal tolls suffered by the antagonists as a result of their operational roles in the drone program. In *Drone*, Wistin is tracked down and threatened by the victim of a strike – reversing the narrative of asymmetrical warfare by placing the antagonist in direct threat as a result of his actions. Confronted by his "target," viewers are positioned to privilege Wistin's experience, as *he* becomes the target – and such framing has been met with mixed responses. Responding to *Drone,* one viewer commented:

> While some of the drone footage was good, the story followed the liberal playbook. US behavior in our fight against Jihadism is bad according to the left. They seem to forget 9/11 and all the terrorist incidents following. If you have a bleeding heart, you'll love this movie. The left loves to demonize the people that are protecting us.[207]

In contrast, another viewer expressed their disappointment with the film's focus:

> This movie shows only one side of the issue, leading the viewer to sympathize with the antagonist… If you want a drama about the collateral damage involved in US actions against Terrorism lets have it out on screen about the whole story.[208]

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[206] Stefen Hantke, "Armchair Adventurers: Technology on the Global Battlefield in Films about Drone Warfare," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 51, no. 6 (2018): 1403.
[207] bendakafka, "liberal tripe," *Internet Movie Database,* 30 August, 2017: https://www.imdb.com/review/rw3793738/?ref_=tt_urv
[208] johnptomai, "Political Propaganda, One Sided Point of view of Critical Issue," *Internet Movie Database*, 24 August 2017: https://www.imdb.com/review/rw3788508/?ref_=tt_urv

Good Kill's depiction of the antagonist in many respects is consistent with filmic representations of Vietnam War veteran's narratives that highlighted the impacts of trauma sustained by veterans of that war. Films like Hal Ashby's *Coming Home* (1978) and Oliver Stone's *Born On The Fourth Of July* (1989), attempted to represent veterans struggles with alcoholism and PTSD once returning from the site of conflict, providing a context in which the veterans themselves (and the nation at large) could reflect and heal. In *Good Kill*, Egan's role in the drone program *is* the site of conflict, as the film depicts his increasing dependence on alcohol – a remedy to alleviate the daily tolls sustained by the nature of his shift work. Furthermore, Egan becomes paranoid and violent towards his wife and questions her fidelity – a theme that is similarly addressed in *Drone* (Wistin becomes aware of his wife's affair with a colleague) and too, in *Coming Home*.[209] Within this context, the antagonists are framed as "damaged" men – they become victimized as the actions of women challenge the foundations of hegemonic masculinity that underpin their identities as men, and as warriors. Susan Jeffords argues:

> The Vietnam veteran is taken to be the emblem of a more widely based victimization of "man and the idea of manhood," in which men, veterans in particular, paid the price of women's equality, both in their careers and in their self-definition.[210]

In the context of modern warfare, and a war that is ongoing, *Good Kill* echoes this anxiety, whilst fetishizing the experience of drone operators and positioning them as victims through their implication with the U.S. drone program. Egan's increasing disillusionment with his role, exists not only as a critique of U.S. drone operations, but also as a signifier to suggest that "the battlefield is now a mental state."[211]

The unprecedented reliance on and utilization of UAV technology during the twenty-first century has transformed the concept of the battlefield, and the introduction of the Predator has further transformed the ways in which warfare is waged and understood,

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[209] In the case of *Coming Home*, this narrative fixation can also be understood within the wider context of the Vietnam War and the women's movement.
[210] Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War*, 119.
[211] Alex Pasternack, "On Pixels and Moral Injury: A Conversation with the Makers of 'Good Kill'," *Center for the Study of the Drone*, Bard College (2015).

by both civilians and the military alike. This chapter has explored the unsettling presence of drones within the public's popular cultural imagination, and the ways in which contemporary experiences of a war waged via remote are shaped. Despite the conditions that constitute the "remoteness" of UAV, a distant intimacy – a human element – still attends their operation and interpretation at large. The material, operational, and cultural anatomy of the drone craft a new kind of "total war" story – one that is underscored by a paradox of ubiquity (visibility) and absence (invisibility), remoteness (machine) and "fleshiness" (human). The development of weapons technology has historically sought to distance combatants from their enemy on the battlefield, yet the asymmetrical reality of the UAV removes participants entirely. The removal of drone personnel from the spatial reality of combat has reconfigured their experiences of war, as well as shaped the ways in which personnel configure their identity in relation to it. Furthermore, as civilians are increasingly disenfranchised from the substantive processes of waging war, the "drone phenomenon" as manifested in popular cultural, circumvents the "invisibility" of the drone program by creating cultural products that seek to understand, interpret, and reconfigure the facet of distant-intimacy shaped by the post-heroic experience.

Chapter Three

Simulating boots on the ground: military games and the spectrum of war experience

"After Pearl Harbor, the "sleeping giant" of America jumps full force into the war effort. General MacArthur fought the Japanese all over the Pacific, fighting from island to island. Bringing this variety of action to the PS2, EA gives us a whizbang tour of the battles that's perfect for a Saturday afternoon." - IGN review of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* (2003).[1]

Following the release of Infinity Ward's *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* in 2007, one reviewer declared that the "World War II first-person shooter genre is officially dead and buried… relegate[d] to history's dustbin."[2] The *COD* game franchise has long-used the backdrop of historical war campaigns to situate the plots and gameplay of its publications, yet *Modern Warfare* promised the player an experience that was based in a modern war setting with modern weapons – a far cry from the WWII-themed games that had previously saturated the commercial gaming market. In the same year, seven out of the top ten games ranked for their online activity (indicating the total number of global players who accessed the game over the internet) were military-themed, and out of those seven, five of them were specifically concerned with campaigns of the Second World War.[3] But despite the reviewer's assertion that WWII shooters (and indeed, any game that utilized historical settings) were a passé genre soon to be a thing of the past, game developers continued to publish titles that focused on historical conflicts – their popularity, in fact, often surpassing that of games with a "contemporary" bent to warfare. An example of this is demonstrated with the 2016 release of two separate titles, Infinity Ward's *Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare*, and EA Dice's *Battlefield 1*. The promotional trailer for *COD: Infinite Warfare*- set in a post-humanist future that envisions the inhabitants of Earth forced to colonize space in order to survive- was met with an underwhelming response,

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[1] Ed Lewis, "Medal of Honor: Rising Sun," November 10, 2003 http://au.ign.com/articles/2003/11/11/medal-of-honor-rising-sun

[2] Will Tuttle, "Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare Review (Xbox 360)," November 5, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20080430150954/http://reviews.teamxbox.com/xbox-360/1421/Call-of-Duty-4-Modern-Warfare/p1/

[3] Reina Y. Arakji and Karl R. Lang, "Digital Consumer Networks and Producer-Consumer Collaboration: Innovation and Product Development in the Video Game Industry," *Journal of Management Information Systems* 24, no. 2 (2007): 200.

becoming the "eighth most disliked" video on the online video platform YouTube.[4] In stark contrast, the trailer for *Battlefield 1*, set during World War I, garnered an overwhelmingly positive reaction, becoming the most "liked" YouTube trailer (including film and television trailers) within four days of its release. [5] The implications of these responses are significant and profound. Trends in first-person shooter (FPS) games to create nostalgia for "boots on the ground" combat experiences – amidst an age characterized by the increasing use of drones – highlight larger pressure points within the cultural experiences of war within the United States.

It is evident that artifacts of popular culture are often shaped by the external socio-political climates that foster their production. Indeed, these artifacts have the ability to "reveal key dynamics underpinning contemporary politics that might not normally register properly if expressed through the formal conventions of academic or political argumentation, even as it is complicit in reducing them." [6]

Historian Joanna Bourke's work, *Wounding the World: How Military Violence And War Play Invade Our Lives*, attempts to frame an understanding the role of videogames, yet her work is ultimately a treatise on the social effects of military violence. Bourke unpacks notions of "aestheticized ultra-violence" and the "fetishization of authenticity" in visual culture. However, her underlying conclusion – "obviously, though, computer games are just entertainment" – is reductive. [7] Roger Stahl's work, *Militainment Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture,* seeks to interpret the changing civic experience of war, by connecting the integration of these experiences with established genres of entertainment. Stahl argues that for many scholars, Operation Desert Storm in 1991 "represented a moment where the event of a war became a fixture in the entertainment landscape, a feature of popular culture, and an object of consumption."[8] In order to interpret this phenomenon, the prevailing trend in scholarship has been to position representations of war in the terms of "the spectacle," arguing that "these discourses tend to function to control public opinion by

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[4] http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2016/05/09/battlefield-1-is-the-most-liked-trailer-in-youtube-history-infinite-warfare-the-most-disliked/#649c165e35c2 - a ranking significant to consider, out of a pool of over 81 million videos in circulation.

[5] http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2016/05/09/battlefield-1-is-the-most-liked-trailer-in-youtube-history-infinite-warfare-the-most-disliked/#649c165e35c2

[6] Kyle Grayson, "How to Read Paddington Bear: Liberalism and the Foreign Subject in A Bear Called Paddington," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 15, no. 3 (2013): 380.

[7] Joanna Bourke, *Wounding The World: How Military Violence and War-Play Invade our Lives,* (Great Britain: Virago Press, 2014): 192-193.

[8] Roger Stahl, *Militainment Inc.,*3.

distancing, distracting, and disengaging the citizen from the realties of war." [9] Stahl proposes instead that an "interactive mode" can be applied to assess how the relationships of the citizen to the soldier have been rewired in the context of the twenty-first century. Aside from Stahl's contention that focuses on the ways in which videogames invite citizens to participate in an interactive form of war making as a "virtual soldier," videogames have also articulated those shifting relationships in other complex ways. The trajectory of this chapter is guided by the premise that "military games are best seen as a new kind of dialogue between military and civilian spheres." [10] Military games and gameplay extend across a spectrum of "total war" experiences, and furthermore, they function on several levels of engagement. This chapter will explore how experiences of war during the twenty-first century have been informed by these various engagements.

Experiences of "total war" – via the videogame – are simultaneously similar, and unique, to both those within military institutions (including former and enlisted soldiers) as well as civilians who participate in commercial gameplay. Within the military, gameplay has functioned as a form of training for those enlisted, and in recent history as a form of therapy for many veterans returning from active duty. For civilians, experiences of "war" have been, in part, informed by games that have sought to recruit, demonstrating how these complex functions and engagements can overlap between military and civilian spheres. Furthermore, commercial games – games that have been developed by civilian companies– have certainly informed the ways in which "war" has been experienced by civilian consumers. Observable within the extensive catalog of military video game titles, are narrative trends that operate on distinct levels that fundamentally shape contemporary experiences of war, alongside the construction of historical memory. Both military and civilian experiences, and the ways in which they overlap, demonstrate the pervasive militarism that shapes and defines American cultural experiences of war in the twenty-first century. The nature of military and civilian collaboration fundamentally underscores this chapter, as the notion of collaboration applies to the broader assertion that "militainment," as shaped

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[9] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle,* Translated by Ken Knabb, (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2014): 2; Stahl, *Militainment Inc., 3;* Paul Virilio, *desert screen war at the speed of light*, (New York: Continuum, 2002): 57.
[10] Marcus Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army: Military Games and the Civil-Military Divide," *Journal of Applied Security Research* 8 (2013): 257.

by the socio-political contexts of its production, is a symptom of the "remoteness" as articulated across experiences of "total war" in the twenty-first century at large.

In order to advance the analysis of video games as artifacts of popular culture, it is imperative to make some crucial distinctions. For the purposes of this chapter, a "video game," is an electronic game that requires player interaction and displays visual feedback on a monitor or screen. Video games are pieces of software that are developed, published, and distributed, and they require hardware in order to be played. "Hardware," in this context, refers to the platform on which the game is interacted with - a personal computer (PC), or a console that has been specifically developed by the gaming industry (Sony's *PlayStation*, and Microsoft's *Xbox,* are examples). Unlike broader studies of video gaming within scholarship, which distinguish the unique elements of various consoles, this chapter will not differentiate between the hardware on which the game is played, instead focusing on an analysis of the game itself. Within the discourse of academic gaming studies there exists a perennial debate between the efficacy and value of two distinct methodological approaches- "ludology" versus "narratology." While ludological perspectives privilege the technological mode of gaming as uniquely positioning players to "experience" gameplay, naratology places the narrative content of the game at the forefront of analysis. [11] While it is not necessary to engage at length in these debates for the purpose of this analysis, this chapter acknowledges that video games are unique to other modes of popular culture (such as literature or film) in that they require a different form of engagement from the user. To be able to observe how video games shape cultural experiences of war, the primacy of narrative will be analyzed, whilst acknowledging that *engagement* must be considered in order to understand the various functions of gaming and the experiences that they create. This chapter will first briefly outline the origins of videogames in order to historically situate their connection with military institutions, and highlight the complex nature of military/civilian collaboration within the videogame industry.

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[11] Matthew Thomas Payne, Playing War: Military Video Games After 9/11, New York: New York University Press, 2016: 6-7;Espen J. Aarseth, Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature, Maryland: John Hopkins University Press, 1997: 1.

The Cold War climate of contest bore the first game to be created specifically for use on a computer. The early moments of the Space Age saw the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in an increasingly charged race to create superior weapons technology. In the final months of 1957, the Soviet Union succeeded in their test of the world's first intercontinental ballistics missile (ICBM), and shortly after also successfully launched the first artificial Earth satellite, Sputnik 1. [12] In the hopes of avoiding being caught again by surprise, and with a "sense of national urgency," a Department of Defense Directive was issued on February 7, 1958 that authorized the creation of the Advanced Research Projects Agency (now known as DARPA). [13] DARPA was given the authority to "enter into contracts, and agreements with individuals, private business entities, educational, research or scientific institutions," in order to direct and conduct research and development projects. [14] DARPA's creation effectively facilitated the collaboration between the Pentagon and universities – an "incubator of innovation" - and many projects focusing on advancing computer technology were largely underwritten by the Department of Defense. [15]

In 1962, several years after the Sputnik 1 satellite launch, a group of programming students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology developed *Spacewar!* – a space combat video game initially designed to demonstrate the technical capabilities of the PDP–1 (Programmed Data Processor–1) minicomputer. [16] *Spacewar!* allowed two players to each control a spaceship avatar on the screen, the goal being to destroy the opponent's ship with a barrage of torpedoes, whilst conserving fuel, and navigating around the gravitational pull of a "star" - a collection of flickering white pixels – placed at the center of the screen's field, in contrast against the black void of the game's background. Designed only to run on the PDP-1, *Spacewar!* was not a commercially viable piece of technology, yet the lead programmer Steve Russell, chose to share the game's code with other student programmers. Access to the coding

[12] Mahmut Durmaz, "Defense technology development: does every country need an organization like DARPA?" Innovation: Management, Policy & Practice, 18 no. 1 (2016): 2-12; https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/timeline/where-the-future-becomes-now
[13] https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/timeline/where-the-future-becomes-now
[14] Department of Defense Directive Number 5105.15, February 7, 1958, 1.
[15] Matthew Gault, "Play the Pentagon-Funded Video Game That Predates Pong," *War is Boring,* July 24, 2014. https://warisboring.com/play-the-pentagon-funded-video-game-that-predates-pong-2/; https://www.darpa.mil/about-us/timeline/where-the-future-becomes-now
[16] Corie Lok, "The Start of Computer Games," Technology Review 106, no. 6 (2005): 88; Peter Mantello, "Playing discreet war in the US: Negotiating subjecthood and sovereignty through Special Forces video games," *Media, War & Conflict* 5, no. 3 (2012): 273.

spread to other institutions across the country, and in 1972, a former student from the University of Utah named Nolan Bushnell (having previously developed his own game resembling *Spacewar!*) founded Atari, a company that would successfully transform "computer games" from pieces of software confined to campus laboratories, into a cultural phenomenon that would spearhead a new commercial industry. [17] Military funding continued to stimulate the development of certain technologies during the 1960s, as private companies oversaw many projects in the hopes that they might secure a lucrative military contract on completion. The first home video games console to be released on the consumer market, the 1972 Magnavox Odyssey, was in fact developed by a U.S. defense contractor, Sanders Associates. [18]

Tracing such beginnings to the creation of *Spacewar!* in the 1960s, Peter Mantello suggests that these origins illustrate the "spirit of the times" – an "open source, collaborative effort between the new field of academic computing and a blossoming private electronics industry both largely underwritten by military research grants." [19] Such an origin demonstrates the nature of collaboration that still attends and continues to be fostered in the field of game development, but it also highlights the intimate connection that has always existed between videogames and the military – indeed, the very first game was one concerned with "war."

In many respects, *Spacewar!'s* birth as the first video game was secondary to its original intention as a faux-military simulation. By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, high-end computer simulations were being developed for the explicit purpose of military training. These developments in technology were largely facilitated through the collaborative networks that had flourished between military, entertainment, and academic institutions. "Distributed Interactive Simulations" (DIS) were built, which created virtual theaters of war that were able to link participants across multiple networks. [20] The most notable DIS produced in this era was known as SIMNET, a real-time distributed networking project for combat simulation that was sponsored by

[17] Lok, "The Start of Computer Games," 88.

[18] Alex Rayner, "Are video games just propaganda and training tools for the military?" The Guardian, 19 March, 2012.

[19] Mantello, "Playing discreet war in the US," 273.

[20] Tim Lenoir & Henry Lowood, "Theaters of War: The Military-Entertainment Complex," 2003
http://www.stanford.edu/class/sts145/Library/Lenoir-Lowood_TheatersOfWar.pdf

DARPA. SIMNET allowed for hundreds of individual simulators to be connected simultaneously, in order to facilitate a collective training experience for entire units of troops.[21] By January 1990, SIMNET was fully operational, and the first several hundred units were purchased by the Army for use on the Close Combat Tactical Trainer system (CCTT) that was already employed for training purposes. Within a year, the value of SIMNET as a training tool would become apparent almost immediately, as the United States entered into the First Gulf War. [22] Within three days of the ground war, the Battle of 73 Easting took place, in which the U.S. 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment succeeded in destroying hundreds of Iraqis vehicles, and killing over 600 Iraqi soldiers. [23] Prior to the battle, U.S. crews had spent hundreds of hours training SIMNET, and as the battle itself was considered such a significant victory, military leaders capitalized on the real-life experience by replicating it as a model for future training. Corey Mead writes that "the goal was to provide a much more rounded experience of battle… one that emphasized the stresses and fears, the emotional experience of war." [24] In order to enhance future training simulations for these purposes; interviews were conducted with troops who had participated in the conflict, alongside tape records that had been made during the battle, and "even a step-by-step recreation on the actual battlefield by soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry."[25] SIMNET was certainly not a video game, yet the military's efforts to manufacture a complex and immersive digital replication of the Battle of 73 Easting, demonstrates the trend towards focusing more on the "content" – a move that gradually began to bring training simulations closer to the basic form of video games that already existed in the commercial market. Indeed, as the Gulf War began to be hailed as the "techno war," with much credit being given in particular to the success of simulation training, DARPA's research and development in the field continued to grow in the postwar period.

By the 1990s, commercial gaming had continued to expand significantly, and new titles boasting superior graphics and unique styles of gameplay were beginning to proliferate the market. One of these titles was a game called *DOOM*, developed by id

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[21]Corey Mead, "War Play: Video Games and the Future of Armed Conflict," (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston, 2013): 19-20.
[22] Lenoir & Lowood, Theaters of War, 16.
[23] Lenoir & Lowood, Theaters of War, 17.
[24] Mead, War Play, 20.
[25] Mead, War Play, 20.

Software and released in December 1993. Timothy Lenoir and Henry Lowood, both historians of science, maintain that *DOOM* was the game to change everything – "it changed the direction of almost every aspect of personal computer-based gaming, from graphics to networking technology, to styles of play, notions of authorship, and public scrutiny of content."[26] Thematically inspired in part by the successful sci-fi/horror film franchises *Evil Dead* and *Alien*, *DOOM* gameplay sets the player as an unnamed space marine (colloquially referred to as *Doomguy*) who is sent to a research development facility on Mars, tasked with killing off waves of demons and the undead in order to survive.[27] What made *DOOM* particularly innovative from the onset was the way in which the game was marketed and distributed. As a first-person shooter (FPS), all game play is observed through the player's point of view, and not through an avatar. The lead designer John Romero suggested "there was never a name for the *DOOM* marine because it's supposed to be YOU."[28] Although *DOOM* was not the first FPS shooter available on the market, its early success quickly saw it become the most influential title in the genre, leading to the explosion of FPS games during the 1990s. Most significantly, however, was that *DOOM* existed as the first FPS not to be sold at retail, but to be networked and made available as a shareware trial version, leading to over 10 million downloads in its first two months.[29] *DOOM* also included a package of modification capabilities (mods), which enabled tech-savvy users the ability to customize elements of the game and create new playable levels, separate to the game's engine.[30]The inclusions of mod packages exemplified the unique culture of collaboration that underscores, and has been pioneered by, the commercial video gaming industry, and furthermore, led to the eventual appropriation of commercial gaming forms by the United States military.

During the 1990s, the Marine Corps Modeling and Simulation Office (MCMSO) trawled the commercial game video game market with the intent to find titles that

[26] Lenoir & Lowood, Theaters of War, 30.
[27] DOOM, id Software and GT Interactive, 1993; Mantello, "Playing Discreet War in the US," 276-277.
[28] John Romero, "Doom Marine's Name" Reply #5 on: July 8, 2002
https://web.archive.org/web/20140203112006/http://rome.ro/smf/index.php/topic%2C1521.msg31827.html
[29] Mantello, "Playing Discreet War in the US," 276-277.
[30] Mead, "War Play," 21; Mantello, "Playing Discreet War," 276-277; P.W. Singer, "Meet the SIMS… and shoot them," *Foreign Policy* 178 (2010): 92 – In the production of "Marine DOOM," Singer suggests that the developers "hacked" the game engine *DOOM*. His choice of the word "hacked" incorrectly frames the creation of the mod, as it implies that the developer's access to the game was unauthorized. Wad files were openly made available to users in order to create custom levels – this was a conscious choice by the developers that exemplifies *DOOM*'s innovation during this period. The inclusion of these "mods" was hugely popular, and it fundamentally changed the culture of gaming communities, the FPS genre, and the industry of commercial gaming at large.

might be adapted for training purposes. [31] In 1997, for example, the Marine Corps was allotted 4.1% of the Department of Defense budget – a portion significantly smaller than other force services– and such stringent fiscal constraints throughout the 90s had led the corps to seek out creative, cost-effective training alternatives. [32] In an interview with *Wired Magazine's* Rob Riddell, Lieutenant Scott Barnett effectively outlined the Marine's 'state-of-the-union':

> "Unlike in the army, the navy, and the air force… every marine is a rifleman. The problem is that with budget cuts, we don't have the money to pay for the ammo and field time we need… So for a few years now, the corps has had to scramble to find cheaper, more efficient ways to train marines and keep them in fighting trim."[33]

Lieutenant Barnett and his colleague Sergeant Dan Snyder, identified *DOOM's* potential as a viable option – if every marine is a rifleman, what could be more suitable than first-person shooter? Both marines were avid programmers, and in 1996, they began to transform *DOOM's* Martian landscape into an arid Middle Eastern desert, the game's dungeons into military bunkers, and the demons and undead aliens into enemies the Marine Corps might face upon deployment. [34] Barnett and Snyder's "mod" was quickly dubbed *Marine Doom*, and the total cost of its production was the price of the *DOOM II* CD-ROM - $49.95. [35] The nature of *DOOM* as a networked multiplayer game meant that civilians also had access to the *Marine Doom* mod, creating a unique feedback loop between civilian and military spheres, as civilian players and Marine enlistees competed against, played alongside, and communicated with each other. [36] In terms of its direct training application, Marine *Doom* gameplay was intended to teach marines how to co-operate and make split second decisions in combat. Barnett argued, "the way you get through a *Marine Doom* scenario and survive is through teamwork and listening to your fire team leader and doing what you're supposed to," with Snyder adding that the object of the exercise was to "get these things ingrained by doing them over and over, with variations. A real firefight is not a good time to explore new ideas."[37] The success of *Marine Doom* further

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[31] Mead, "War Play," 21; Stahl, "Militainment Inc.," 96.
[32] Rob Riddell, "Doom Goes To War," Wired, April 1, 1997.
[33] Rob Riddell, "Doom Goes To War," Wired, April 1, 1997.
[34] Mantello, "Playing Discreet War," 276-277.
[35] Rob Riddell, "Doom Goes To War," Wired, April 1, 1997.
[36] Mantello, "Playing Discreet War," 276-277.
[37] Rob Riddell, "Doom Goes To War," Wired, April 1, 1997.

encouraged the Pentagon to embrace simulation technologies as training tools, as well as the use of "commercial-off-the-shelf" (COTS) technologies. Prior to the 1994 Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act, the military was effectively unlimited in its capacity to underwrite the research and development projects of defense contractors, yet with this new limitation, appropriate and adaptable COTS technologies were necessary to consider. Corey Mead suggests that this dynamic fostered a symbiotic relationship: "defense contractors would spin their technologies off into the commercial game industry and the commercial game industry would spin its technologies right back." [38] *Marine Doom* articulates the updated version of Eisenhower's historical formulation, first termed by Bruce Sterling as the "military-entertainment complex," yet it also demonstrates the ways in which enlistees have experienced "war" in the post-heroic era.[39] Similar to SIMNET in its ability to simulate activities of warfare, yet more sophisticated in its ability to immerse players via gameplay, *Marine Doom* facilitated the pre-deployment experiences of war for new enlistees. Although *Marine Doom* (and the use of other simulators) was never intended to displace traditional methods of weapons and combat training, its use contributed to informing the expectations, capabilities, and understandings of military action that shaped the "pre-war" experiences of newly minted post-heroic "warriors." Put another way, military video games mediate experiences of war in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

In 1999, the University of Southern California Institute of Creative Technologies (ICT) was established with direct funding from the Department of Defense. The ICT has since been tasked with advancing high-tech training and simulation applications for the military, in conjunction with entertainment and games industries. Following the U.S. military invasion of Baghdad in 2003, a frustrated Army officer expressed to the executive director of the ICT that he and his fellow troops had been unprepared for the conditions that arose in the aftermath of Baghdad's fall – "We need SimCity."[40] The officer was referring to the open-ended city building video game series, *SimCity* – a simulator that allows players to construct and develop a virtual city environment from a blank map and a given budget. By 2010, officers in the Army's

[38] Mead, War Play, 23.
[39] Bruce Sterling, "War is Virtual Hell," Wired Magazine, January 1, 1993.
[40] Brian Mockenhaupt, "SimCity Baghdad: A new computer game lets army officers practice counterinsurgency off the battlefield," The Atlantic, January/February, 2010.

School for Command Preparation at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, were training on a simulator named *UrbanSim* (dubbed "SimCity Baghdad" due to its similarity with *SimCity*) developed by the ICT. [41] Replicating the commercial model, which requires players to supply citizens' services and amenities in order to keep the city "running," *UrbanSim* requires trainees to consider how "their goals for a region are affected by the situations there." [42] The *UrbanSim* model has proved a cost-effective and adaptable alternative to traditional methods of readiness and preparation training – "hugely expensive and logistically complex" exercises that saw "Arabic speakers play the parts of mayors, police chiefs, and townspeople." [43] In order to achieve a positive outcome in the simulation, trainees must take a tactful approach, unlike one trainee whose demonstration "ended up with 70 percent of the town against him… He thought the only way to increase civil security was to go bust down people's doors." [44] The "pre-deployment" experiences of war that *UrbanSim* shapes can be misleading in representation, as trainees have assumed the simulator's ability to "predict" the likelihood of certain outcomes. Brian Mockenhaupt reported that some "students have asked if the game can be loaded with real data for areas to which they'll be deploying so they can use it as a tool for planning operations." [45] As enlistee experiences are demonstrably shaped via remote prior to deployment in the post-heroic era, troops on active duty also have experiences of war mediated via gameplay.

In a piece for the online magazine *PrimeMind*, reporter and Army veteran J.P. Lawrence wrote of his experiences as a deployed solider:

> My buddy really wanted to kill someone. When he couldn't, he bought a nice TV. He and I were both privates on a quiet deployment to a safe and massive base in southern Iraq. He spent his days watching contractors clean bathrooms. Then, at night, he and I would stack our weapons in the corner of the hooch and kill hundreds of terrorists in high-definition. [46]

Lawrence's observation simultaneously articulates both the frustration of deployed soldiers unable to experience and utilize the culmination of their pre-deployment

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[41] Mockenhaupt, "SimCity Baghdad," 2010.

[42] Owen Good, "US Army Trains With 'SimCity Baghdad'," Kotaku, January 19, 2010.

[43] Mockenhaupt, "SimCity Baghdad," 2010.

[44] Good," US Army Trains With 'SimCity Baghdad'," 2010.

[45] Mockenhaupt, "SimCity Baghdad," 2010.

[46] J.P. Lawrence, "Simulating War: Soldiers Play Video Games Overseas – The blur between fighting on and off screen." PrimeMind, March 14, 2016.

training skills, and the bizarre phenomenon of mediating those frustrations remotely through simulated "experiences" of gameplay. Lawrence recognized the incongruence, and wrote:

> We were soldiers playing "soldiers" as people died outside the walls of our base…If you stood among my unit's endless banks of screens – some recreating our outside world, others showing aerial footage of human targets – you might, indeed, think war has become a game.[47]

But while Lawrence finds the notion of 'life imitating art' (and vice versa) to be peculiar and unsettling, other's have understood the role of videogames to function as a mechanism for coping with the real horrors of war. Former veteran Stephen Machuga founded "Operation Supply Drop" (OSD) in 2010, a grass-roots non-profit organization that sought to assist and support troops through their deployment, and their transition to civilian life upon returning from service. [48] Focused on delivering "Video Game Care Packages Downrange," OSD provided "generationally relevant gear" (i.e. video games) to troops who were deployed in combat zones, or recovering in military hospitals.[49] Although a significant body of research and scholarship has attended the use of video games and virtual simulations to treat and alleviate post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Machuga's efforts to supply active-duty troops with video games were born out of a desire to provide an outlet to escape the notion that they are "at war 24 hours a day, seven days a week."[50] OSD's "Games to Grunts" program has distributed over 500 000 games in over 200 titles within six years of operation, and some of those titles include popular military FPS games like *Call of Duty* (COD). [51] Machuga says:

> When you get the guys… having a COD tournament, it keeps them involved with one another, talking smack, having a good time, and just being guys or gals. It keeps them happy, keeps them smiling. And that makes all the difference. [52]

[47] Lawrence, "Simulating War," 2016.
[48] Katy Goodman, "How Video Games Help Soldiers Deal With the Horrors of War," Kotaku, October 3, 2013.
[49] Operation Supply Drop website: Our Story: https://operationsupplydrop.org/about/
[50] Goodman, "How Video Games Help," 2013.
[51] https://operationsupplydrop.org/games-to-grunts/
[52] Goodman, "How Video Games Help," 2013.

PTSD is arguably a controversial disorder, "whose legitimacy is at times disputed, particularly in U.S. military contexts."[53] During the period of Afghanistan and Iraq eras of conflict, researchers have estimated that the prevalence of PTSD among returning service members falls between 5 and 20 percent.[54] These numbers are particularly unreliable, as many service members choose not to be screened or report symptoms, and there is evidence to suggest that the U.S. Army has intentionally underreported cases of PTSD in the past, in order to save costs.[55] In his survey of the use of virtual reality (VR) in PTSD treatments, John Derby argues:

> As an example of representational discourses on mental disability, discourse of PTSD in the military is profoundly invested in the visual culture of war, particularly war video games. War video games do not cause PTSD, but they do inculcate, enact, and reinforce the masculine virtues that precipitate voluntary enlistment in the military and inhibit treatment for PTSD caused by military service. Ironically, war video games are the foundation for virtual reality exposure therapy (VRT), arguably the most effective therapy for treating PTSD in veterans.[56]

Clinicians who specialize in VRT guide veterans through a process that helps them recount traumatic incidents or triggers through *imaginal* exposure – eventually aiming to desensitize veterans to the "emotional violence caused by PTSD triggers."[57] In 1999, the efficacy of VRT was proven through a case study in which a combat-related PTSD Vietnam veteran, failing all other forms of therapy, demonstrated positive results after completing a program called "Virtual Vietnam."[58] The experiment led to the creation of "Virtual Iraq," – a program developed by ICT as a cost-effective VTR application for treating veterans diagnosed with PTSD following deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan.[59] "Virtual Iraq" repurposed graphics from *Full Spectrum Warrior*, a real-time tactical video game available on the commercial market, originally developed by ICT to facilitate infantry training for the U.S. Army.[60] During a VRT

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[53] Michael P. Fisher, "PTSD in the U.S. military, and the politics of prevalence," *Social Science & Medicine* 115 (2014): 1.
[54] Fisher, "PTSD in the US military," 1.
[55] John Derby, "Virtual realities: The use of violent video games in U.S. military recruitment and treatment of mental disability caused by war," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2016): http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4704/4209
[56] Derby, "Virtual realities," 2016.
[57] Derby, "Virtual realities," 2016.
[58] Derby, "Virtual realities," 2016.
[59] Singer, "Meet the SIMS," 94; Derby, "Virtual realities," 2016.
[60] Full Spectrum Video Games: USC Institute For Creative Technologies http://ict.usc.edu/prototypes/full-spectrum/

session of "Virtual Iraq," a licensed therapist controls the simulation in order to introduce the veteran to "triggers" that have been specifically tailored to replicate traumatic experiences. By 2010, "Virtual Iraq" was operational in 40 clinics and military hospitals across the United States, and has proven to be an effective program, particularly for veterans who are reluctant to pursue more traditional methods of PTSD therapy.[61] Researchers suggest that a culture of discrimination stigmatizes diagnosis of PTSD within the military, creating a barrier that may prevent veterans from seeking treatment in military contexts.[62] One marine who successfully completed the "Virtual Iraq" program expressed

> I didn't want to have it on my military record that I was crazy… Infantry is supposed to be the toughest of the tough. Even though there was no punishment for going to therapy, it was looked down upon and seen as weak. But VR sounded pretty cool. They hook you up to a machine and you play around like a video game.[63]

This marine's attitude demonstrates the masculinized re-articulation of "warrior culture" that attends martial service in the post-heroic era.[64] Furthermore, the use of VRT technology in order to treat returning veterans highlights the complex way in which simulation continues to mediate the post-war, or post-deployment experiences of veterans in the twenty-first century – a relationship to war facilitated via remote. Military simulations span across the entire spectrum of war experience. Derby underscores the paradoxical nature of employing video game technology as a tool for therapy – "the military simultaneously promotes a culture of violence and ableist stigma regarding mental disability, while attempting to remedy the disabling consequences that result from its culture."[65]

Among all military video game titles, *America's Army* has perhaps received the most attention from scholars across the disciplinary spectrum. Released in 2002, a direct descendant from *Marine Doom* mod, *America's Army* was the first game to be produced by the military and released on the commercial gaming market for civilian use.[66] *America's Army* was launched at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) in Los

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[61] Singer, "Meet the SIMS," 94.
[62] Fisher, "PTSD in the US military," 6.
[63] Derby, "Virtual realities," 2016.
[64] See Chapter One re: the re-articulation of the "citizen-soldier" myth
[65] Derby, "Virtual realities," 2016.
[66] Singer, "Meet the SIMs," 92-93.

Angeles, the largest trade event for the video games industry, and within five years of its release, it had become one of the top ten most played video games. Most academic discussion surrounding *America's Army* has decried the game as a subversive propagandistic tool developed by the military in order to indoctrinate civilian audiences – the video game companion to Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series. Yet *America's Army* is all but subversive - recruitment has always been the game's explicit and primary intention. In line with similar strategies undertaken by the National Guard to connect and insert their "brand" within popular culture, the Army's decision to create the game "exists as part of the larger military strategy to move from television ads to more cost-effective methods of recruiting, such as games and NASCAR sponsorship." [67] One of the most interesting aspects of the game's appearance in the commercial realm is the way in which it functions as a tool that effectively mediates civilian experiences not only of military activity, but also of the military itself. Marcus Schulzke suggests that military games have the potential to bridge the gap between the military and civilian population, and argues that *America's Army* "provides information about military life, some insight into the experience of combat, cultural, and institutional information about the military, and information about weapons systems."[68] Central to most scholarship concerning the "civil-military gap" is the acceptance that most Americans in recent history have fewer connections to the institutional military than in the past, and therefore, have a limited understanding of its culture. Schulzke further argues that as a result of this dynamic, "the public's perception of the military and its operations is shaped primarily by civilian media which often reinforces the epistemic gap because of its inaccuracies."[69] To this effect, Schulzke interprets *America's Army* not as a product of the wider process of social militarization that has been observed in recent history, but instead, as the Army's opportunity to "inform the general public" about the military's institutional culture, and to "give potential recruits a glimpse of Army life."[70]

During the late 1990s, the United States Army had failed to meet its recruitment target, and researchers were tasked with discovering the myriad of reasons as to why

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[67] Stahl, "Militainment Inc.," 107; See Chapter One for a discussion of the National Guard's post-heroic advertising and recruitment efforts.
[68] Marcus Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army: Military Games and the Civil-Military Divide," *Journal of Applied Security Research* 8 (2013): 247.
[69] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 248.
[70] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 252.

this might be. The U.S. Army Strategic Corps Strategies Institute published a report in 2010 that expressed the difficulties that in the age of an all-volunteer force, it was imperative for the military to understand the market place in which it competes. In order to attract the best recruits, therefore, the Army must "know how to communicate with prospects and understand how they may respond to information."[71] The report identified that the bulk of the "prospect market" comprised of those of the millennial generation, whose genesis in the Information Age had shaped their view of the military:

> These young people have much less direct exposure to the military than previous generations of young people, most of whom had vicarious contact with millions of World War II or Cold War-era service veterans. In the absence of such direct connections, they must rely on popular culture, movies, television, or the Internet for information regarding Army officer service.[72]

The Army was cognizant of what would be required to pique the interest of their target demographic (adolescent males between the ages 13 and 17), and early studies of the game's effectiveness suggested that 40 percent of recent enlistees had played *America's Army* before joining.[73] Within a year, "one fifth of West Point's freshman class said they had played the game" and by 2008, an MIT study reported that "30 percent of all Americans age 16 to 24 had a more positive impression of the Army because of the game."[74] The game itself was made available to download, takes the form of an FPS, and is divided into two parts: training missions, and online multiplayer combat simulations. The training mission portion of the game is modeled on the Army's own Basic Combat Training (BCT) program, and gameplay through this section allows the player to "learn about the Army's weapon systems, its culture and its values."[75] Once the training missions have been successfully completed, the player is then able to participate in online combat, taking on the role of an American Army soldier fighting against terrorists.

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[71] C. Wardynski, D.S. Lyle and M.J. Colarusso, "Accessing talent: The Foundation of a US Army officer corps strategy," 4: Strategic Studies Institute (2010): 21.
[72] Wardynski, Lyle & Colarusso, "Accessing talent," vii-viii.
[73] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 251-252; John Martino, War Play: Video Games and the Militarization of Society (Peter Lang Publishing: New York, 2015): 105.
[74] Singer, "Meet the SIMs," 92.
[75] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 252.

Significantly, *America's Army* makes use of a particularly innovative game mechanic that stylizes all players as soldiers, and all opposing teams as terrorists, regardless of which team a player has joined – this means that it is impossible to play as a "terrorist," as the player will always appear as a soldier, ensuring that the U.S. Army is "always the 'good guy' in a conflict."[76] Central to the multiplayer combat modes of gameplay, are the Army's "Rules of Engagement" (ROE), the explicit directives that dictate how the use of force is to be enacted. An example of this presents itself if a player disobeys the ROE – if a player attempts to shoot another soldier or a civilian, they will be locked up in a virtual rendering of the Fort Leavenworth Military Correctional Facility.[77] Repeated attempts to violent the ROE can lead to a player being entirely banned from the game. The centrality of the ROE demonstrates the Army's intent to engage players with the values that in part constitute institutional military culture. Another way that *America's Army* reinforces military culture, perhaps more subtly, is through the depoliticization of playable missions and objectives. A player's performance in the game can only be judged according to how successfully their objectives are carried out, yet players cannot decide which objectives to participate in. In this respect, "the missions are decontextualized and lack any clear sense of who the enemy is… Like real soldiers, players are ordered to take part in conflicts chosen by political leadership."[78]

In other ways, *America's Army* is selective and conditional in the way that it "represents" and simulates the reality of service in the U.S. Army. The game's sole emphasis on combat operations clearly overlooks the variety of roles that enlistees occupy, giving "the misleading impression that the Army only engages in conventional military operations." [79] Furthermore, *America's Army* fails to acknowledge the presence of women in the armed forces – there are no female avatars present in the game. This conscious decision to erase women from the *virtual* representation of the army is congruent with the increasingly masculinzed tenor that attends the re-articulation of the "warrior" ethos in the post-heroic era. It is not an oversight, but rather a choice for the "Official Game of the U.S. Army" to completely overlook the role that more than 200 000 women in 2013 (or 14.5 percent of the

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[76] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 252.
[77] *America's Army,* United States Army (2002).
[78] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 256.
[79] Schulzke, "Serving in the Virtual Army," 254-255.

active duty force) have in the armed forces.[80] A thread on the game's online forum titled 'Lady Soldiers?' generated a discussion about the inclusion of a female "skin" (a graphic that alters the appearance of an object) in the game. Most participants objected to the proposition for fear that having the option to choose a "smaller" avatar would be an unfair advantage – "I have zero problem with women in the military or with female characters in the game. I just don't want to see their introduction bring an exploitable difference."[81] The function of *America's Army* as a recruitment tool unmistakably shapes the "pre-enlistment" experiences of civilians and their perceptions of the military, however conditional, in the post-heroic era. Simulating "official" Army training modules effectively mediates the player's relationship to joining in the armed forces, and in effect, informs the cultural experiences of "war" in the twenty-first century.

The historian Richard Slotkin argued that violence has crucially shaped that national narrative of the United States. The archetype of the "heroic warrior" has been central to that narrative, whose triumph over the enemy (at any given period in history) symbolically reinforces the notion that American military victories are morally justified, and in fact, deserved. The national narrative becomes "regenerated through violence," but following America's unequivocal failure in the war in Vietnam, it is clear that U.S. exceptionalism was decidedly challenged. Historian Tom Engelhardt traced the "slow-motion collapse of a heroic war ethos" from the immediate post-war period of the Second World War, to the definitive end of "victory culture" in 1975. Both Slotkin and Engelhardt maintain that America has always needed an "enemy" in order to sustain the exceptionalist narrative of defeat and victory. Yet, after declaring that the "loss of the enemy" in the post-Cold War climate of the 1990s had left American culture in a state of crisis that raised "profound questions about national purpose and identity," Engelhardt could not have anticipated the profound ruptures that would punctuate American culture in the period following the events of 9/11, 2001.[82] In an address delivered to congress on September 20, President George W. Bush articulated a sentiment that would soon guide the trajectory of U.S. foreign

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[80] "By the numbers: Women in the US military," CNN, January 24, 2013.

[81] Lady Soldiers? In: General Discussion, https://forum.americasarmy.com/discussion/3813/lady-soldiers - In response to the posts on the thread, a developer of the game commented "We are not getting into the 'women in combat roles' debate here,' and responded to the question with a 'maybe eventually.' Although the developer's response cannot be interpreted as a reflection of the Army's official position, it does underscore the general unwillingness (or disinterest) in providing representations of women in the Army.

[82] Tom Engelhardt, "The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation" (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995): 10.

policy in conflict abroad – "Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done."[83] Most significantly, throughout his address, Bush had declared that the United States now faced a new "enemy," one who followed in "the path of fascism, Nazism, and totalitarianism," and declared too that any nation who would not support American endeavors would also be labeled as enemies of "freedom," – "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."[84] With new enemies in sight, the archetypal figure of the "warrior" was ready to be invoked and reinvigorated. James Gibson argues that the culture of the "post-Vietnam warrior" is guided by two fundamental stories – "one celebrating the individual gunman who acts on his own (or in loose concert with other men); the other portraying the good solider who belongs to an official military…and serves as a representative defender of national honor."[85] These "mythologies" may overlap or compete with each other, yet in various periods they have both been instrumental in "define[ing] the martial mentality of the country."[86] Both of these stories are equally represented in military video game titles that have been released in the post 9/11 period, and the nature of gameplay as constructing the player as a participant, allows gamers in to assume the various roles of the archetypal warrior. Stahl maintains that "games hold a primary place in the media landscape, and that within this new landscape, the thematic of the War on Terror is front and center." [87]

When analyzing the narrative elements of military video games from this period, one of the observable characteristics appears to be the ways in which broader narratives of the "War on Terror" are reinforced and legitimized through gameplay. In particular, these game titles offer insights into the "relationship between American exceptionalism and the discussion of historical events."[88] The release of EA's *Army of Two* in 2008, threw gamers straight into a plot line that could have been "ripped from current day headlines," as the narrative follows the exploits of two former Army

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[83] September 20, 2001, Address to the Join Session of the 107th Congress, United States Capitol, Washington D.C.
[84] September 20, 2001, Address to the Join Session of the 107th Congress, United States Capitol, Washington D.C.
[85] James Wilson Gibson, "Warrior Dreams: Paramilitary Culture in Post-Vietnam America" (Harper Collins: Canada, 1994): 17.
[86] Gibson, "Warrior Dreams," 17.
[87] Stahl, "Digital War and the Public Mind, 144.

[88] Nick Robinson, "Have You Won the War on Terror? Military Videogames and the State of American Exceptionalism," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 2 (2015): 450.

rangers who join the private military sector and become "mercenaries for hire."[89] The two contractors engage in contemporary conflicts, not dissimilar to those characterized by the U.S. military's incursions into Iraq and Afghanistan, and begin to notice that their missions coincide with various leaks and collusions that are eventually made apparent to them. For example, they discover that there *were* "weapons of mass destruction" being harbored in Iraq, and furthermore, that Bin Laden's network organization of terrorists was highly sophisticated and supported by extensive military facilities.[90] *Army of Two* succeeds in reflecting some of the characteristics that have come to define contemporary military conflict, that is, the extrajudicial exercise of military force, and the prevalence of Private Military Contractors engaged in active duty abroad. For each mission that is completed, players earn "cash" which enables the purchase of upgraded weapons throughout the game – thus the focus of the narrative is not only on clearing the objective, but also on getting paid. Furthermore, *Army of Two*'s impulse to confirm that such weapons existed (at least in the game), reiterates the position that many American media outlets held in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, and further justifies U.S. military actions in the region. Nick Robinson argues that *Army of One* "is typical of many military combat games, not only in its depiction of scenarios that we now know to be untrue but also in its portrayal of the view that the only solution… is through the use of force."[91]

On September 20, 2002, the Bush administration released a renewed national security strategy that outlined a shift from the Cold War doctrine of deterrence in American foreign policy, to a position that advocated the principle of "preemptive" war. The document stated:

> While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right to self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country.[92]

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[89] http://au.ign.com/games/army-of-two; Jeff Haynes, "Army of Two Review," IGN, March 4, 2008, http://au.ign.com/articles/2008/03/05/army-of-two-review
[90] Army of Two, Electronic Arts, 2008.
[91] Robinson, "Have You Won The War On Terror?," 466.
[92] The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002: 6.

This position reflected the belief that the United States had a right and an imperative to attack before such a threat could materialize. While critics noted the aggressive shift in tone, and supporters used the example of the 9/11 attacks to justify a preemptive defense strategy, others argued that instead, the position outlined by the document was a continuation of "one of the nation's most enduring political and cultural doctrines," that of American exceptionalism."[93] Central to notions of exceptionalism are the beliefs that America's "unique" political origins, reverence for personal liberty, economic dominance, and military preeminence, justify the conditions to maintain perpetual U.S. supremacy. One example that offers insight into the ways in which military video games of the post-heroic era mediate the relationship between American history and exceptionalism, can be observed through the gameplay of Treyarch and Activision's seventh installment in the *Call of Duty* franchise – *Call of Duty: Black Ops* (2010).

Black Ops represented a departure in *COD*'s repertoire of World War II themed games, and instead situates the player within the Cold War context of the 1960s. The player assumes the role of Alex Mason, a former Special Forces operative tasked with recalling certain memories in combat in order to uncover a plot that unfolds as government secrets are discovered. Throughout the single-player campaign, playable characters are Special Operatives that are authorized to conduct "black" covert operations behind enemy lines. What distinguishes *Black Ops* from military titles that epitomize the "total victory" mentality of WWII in popular culture, is how it "deals" with periods of American history that are considered morally ambiguous or problematic – such as the Bay of Pigs Invasion and the war in Vietnam.[94] Underscoring the game's plotline is the existence of a chemical weapon named "Nova-6," which will be put into use once sleeper agents across the United States are activated. The existence of such a chemical weapon and a vast network of "secret" sleeper agents are connected to the game's broader narrative that portrays the Soviet Union working directly alongside the Vietnamese. Such a depiction justifies the McCarthyite methods of political "witch-hunting" by insinuating that there were in fact networks of Communist agents the United States with the potential to pose a

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[93] Matthew Thomas Payne, "Playing War: Military Games After 9/11," New York: NYU Press (2016): 96; Samuel Weber, "Targets of Opportunity: The Militarization of Thinking," New York: Fordham University Press (2015)
[94] Robinson, "Have You Won The War On Terror?," 465.

serious threat to national security, and furthermore, this alternative version of "history" supports American invention in Vietnam as a necessary exercise of military power. [95] Stahl argues that such narratives as advanced by *Call of Duty: Black Ops* "rely on the promise that the game will reveal the hidden truth of history," and that ultimately, such a narrative structure "disavows the usefulness of searching for the political causes of conflict and instead automatically promotes the notion that the only reasonable response to a problem is military action."[96] As these plotlines continue to reinforce the "War on Terror" narratives that position unilateral and preemptive military action as a necessary response, cultural experiences of war in the post-heroic era are mediated by the player's participation in relation to enacting and reconstructing history. Commercial military video games have the ability to close off history and instead invite and inform new constructions of historical memory.

The fifth installment in the EA's *Medal of Honor* franchise, *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* (2003), begins gameplay by immediately inserting the player into the chaos and disorder of Japan's "secret" bombing attack of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Similarly, other titles in the extensive WWII video game catalog, such as *Call of Duty* (2003), and *Battlefield 1942* (2002), situate the player within the context (without providing the context) of America's entrance and participation in the Second World War. These games have been praised for their impressive visuals and "cinematic quality," and in this respect, such games play more as an extension of the "war movie" genre promoted by Hollywood, than as representations of the historical conflict itself – indicating that "video games operate with a clear – and a clearly mediated – relationship to the past."[97] The popularity of films such as *Saving Private* Ryan (1998), *Enemy At The Gates* (2001), and the miniseries based on Stephen Ambrose's book of the same title, *Band of Brothers* (2001), demonstrates the desire to consume nostalgic narratives that recreate the "good war" and locate WWII as the last moment of "total victory" within the public's historical memory. The impulse of video games to represent American experiences of WWII in this manner highlights the "funhouse-mirror effect of postmodern culture in which representations represent other

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[95] Robinson, "Have You Won The War On Terror?," 466.
[96] Stahl, "Digital War and the Public Mind," 149
[97] Zach Whalen and Laurie N. Taylor (eds.) Playing the Past: History and Nostalgia in Video Games, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press (2008): 1-2.

representations to such an extent that the original reality becomes inaccessible."[98] Representation, however, is only one aspect of how military video games function to recreate narratives of nostalgia. Crucial to gameplay is the simulation of combat, and therefore, the act of interpreting a game's ability to shape the experience of "war" (and of history) is contingent upon playing it.

In relation to the representations of historical conflicts that video games depict, one way to configure this concept is to consider that "playing" the war corresponds to "remembering" the war – "enactment is akin to remembrance."[99] EA Dice's release *Battlefield 1* was highly anticipated and immediately garnered an overwhelmingly positive reception. The game's stunning visuals were particularly praised, with one prominent game reviewer declaring, as he entered the first battle of the game – "I've never seen a game look this pretty. I feel like I'm in a movie."[100] This reviewer's comment highlights the connection between the game's graphics and filmic depictions of war, yet such detail to replicating the aesthetics of historical periods also works to legitimize video game representations as "accurate" and "historical." Hank Kiersey, a former veteran who was employed as a military advisor for the *Call of Duty* franchise, admits that during the process of his collaboration with the developers, he began to form "a real grudging respect for the games industry guys," – "I saw that the developers were paying such close attention to the detail…and they were kind of teaching history through that. And that's why I bought in."[101] Kiersey connects the desire to replicate "authenticity" as a function of historical education, as he comments:

> Here's the deal. The developers have an enormous amount of passion to get the authenticity of the weapons, the authenticity of the scenarios, the authenticity of brick and mortar structures spot on. They'll spend hours and hours just working on it.[102]

[98] James Campbell, "Just Less Than Total War: Simulating World War II as Ludic Nostalgia," in Playing the Past (2008): 187.

[99] Andrew Yip, "Friday essay: video games, military culture and new narratives of war," The Conversation, March 10, 2017.

[100] the RadBrad, "BATTLEFIELD1 Walkthrough Gameplay Part 1 – Survive (BF1 Campaign)," YouTube review published October 13, 2016 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acXXyruMtaY&t=196s

[101] Mark Serrels, "Black Ops And The History Of Violence," Kotaku, November 10, 2010.

[102] Keshav, "Retired Lt. Colonel Hank Keirsey talks about his role as military advisor on Call of Duty," E3, July 26, 2013.

These examples of reproducing the graphic minutia of a battle's setting, demonstrates the emphasis that game developers place on simulating "visual fidelity," which in turn, informs the experience of "war" that the gameplay invites the player to participate in. Often, despite the fact that military video games are increasingly expected to maintain high standards of visual fidelity, they are often "low" on representing socio-historical realities. As a player enters the first chapter of the *Battlefield 1* campaign mode, the screen reads:

> Battlefield 1 is based upon events that unfolded over one hundred years ago.
> More than 60 million soldiers fought in "The War to End All Wars."
> It ended nothing.
> Yet it changed the world forever.
> What follows is frontline combat. You are not expected to survive.[103]

Following these credits, the player immediately assumes the role of an American Infantry troop from the U.S 369th regiment, also known as the Harlem Hellfighters. Within this context (or lack of), the player enters the mêlée – the first experience of simulated combat. One reviewer commented on their experience of *Battlefront 1*:

> "… the campaign never delves too deeply into the political complexities of the Great War. But interesting storytelling prevents it from feeling superficial – these vignettes are more interested in telling the human stories of World War I than delivering a bombastic history lesson, and they do so with mostly effective power and grace." [104]

The reviewer's comment highlights the function that is unique to gameplay, as it fundamentally shapes the experiences of the player – enactment is akin to remembrance. Remembering the "human stories" is congruent with *playing* them, not of having an understanding of the historical contingencies that lead to war or its context. The player *is* a Harlem Hellfighter, but the player is not given any context that informs them of the existence of segregated regiments, or the wider implications of Black and Puerto Rican men serving in the First World War. Historical memory, in the case of *Battlefield 1* and similar titles, is shaped by the gaps in historical context, allowing players to construct historical memories and understandings that are, in essence, incidental. Aaron Hess argues that in this way, games create "an experience

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[103] Battlefield 1, EA Dice (2016)
[104] Chloi Rad, Battlefield 1 Review, IGN, October 21, 2016.

of public memory" when "gamers come for entertainment, and walk away with selective memories of past conflicts."[105] Through narrative and gameplay, military video games mediate the relationship between simulating "experiences" of war and the shaping of historical knowledge. Furthermore, gameplay reinforces the notion that enactment is akin to remembrance, as players are invited to "experience" and reflect upon simulations of historical conflicts, yet this form of "remembrance" is conditional

From 2006 to 2011, the media artist Joseph DeLappe attempted to transform *America's Army* into temporary site of memorial.[106] His statement reads

> I enter the online US Army recruiting game, "America's Army," in order to manually type the name, age, service branch and date of death of each service person who has died to date in Iraq. The work is essentially a fleeting, online memorial to those military personnel who have been killed in this ongoing conflict. My actions are also intended as a cautionary gesture. I enter the game using as my login name, "dead-in-iraq" and proceed to type the names using the game's text messaging system. I stand in position and type until I am killed. After death, I hover over my dead avatar's body and continue to type. Upon being re-incarnated in the next round, I continue the cycle. As of 12/18/2011, the official withdrawal date of the last U.S. troops in Iraq, I completed the input of the last 200+ names into the game, for a total of 4484 names.[107]

DeLappe's project was met with mixed response, with many online participants reacting in confusion, openly mocking, or abusing his efforts to re-contextualise the virtual space with the politicized names of the dead. Some players responded: "what's your point?"; "who cares?"; "ok ok enough we get the idea"; and "do that somewhere else or have DC make a memorial."[108] Since the U.S. incursions into Iraq and Afghanistan, information regarding the deaths of servicepeople in action has tightly controlled by successive administrations. Wasinski argues that the United States government and military "have applied rigorous social control over the visibility of the military mortality," the aim of which is "either to make these ghosts invisible in

[105] Aaron Hess, "You Don't Play, You Volunteer: Narrative Pubic Memory Construction in Medal of Honor: Rising Sun," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24, no. 4 (2007): 355.
[106] Rebecca Clarren, "Virtually dead in Iraq," *Salon*, Saturday, September 2006. http://www.salon.com/2006/09/16/americasarmy/
[107] Joseph DeLappe, http://www.delappe.net/project/dead-in-iraq/
[108] dead-in-iraq: game based performative intervention, 2006-2001: http://www.delappe.net/project/dead-in-iraq/

the political arena… or, control their words by 'ventriloquating' them in accordance with some political interests."[109] In effect, these bodies become politicized, as their visibility is manipulated and coded with specifics meanings. DeLappe's attempt to insert the names of real soldiers who had been killed in combat, disrupted experiences of combat simulation that players of *America's Army* expected. The "dead-in-iraq" project highlights how "bodies" of veterans can be recoded with meaning, and memorialized remotely.

This chapter has explored the notion that military experiences are shaped "via remote" in a variety of ways. Pre-experiences of war for soldiers are rendered virtually, through simulated training. Paradoxically, clinical therapy in order to treat the disabling effects of war, are similarly mediated through simulation. Civilian experiences, too, are shaped "via remote" in that the introduction to military culture and values is in part mediated by a videogame developed specifically for recruitment. The commercial military video games that are marketed to consumers also shape civilians relationship to war. Narrative functions of gameplay perpetuate the "War on Terror" narratives that were prevalent in socio-political media discourse. Furthermore, these narrative functions reinforce and legitimize notions of American exceptionalism and the nature of asymmetrical, unilateral, and preemptive military actions that have characterized modern warfare in the post-heroic era. An analysis of military video games also demonstrates how "representations of representations" (the war film) are simulated in order to produce an "enactable" experience of war. The stories of the "heroic individual" and the "institutional soldier" both surface in military videogames of this period. They both effectively shape and inform the public's construction of historical memory – in the respect that their representations are largely "high" in visual fidelity and "low" in historical reality. For the most part, the military video games discussed in this chapter essentially ignore the complex conditions and contingencies that led to the historical conflicts that they seek to simulate. If "enactment is akin to remembrance" as a function of military video games, this "remembrance" is conditional – when "real" 'boots on the ground' interrupt the simulated 'boots on the ground,' the function of memorialization in the twenty-first

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[109] Wasinski, "Post-Heroic Warfare," 115.

century is highlighted and experiences of "war" (via remote) are disturbed and ruptured.

Chapter Four

Bodies of war cast complicated shadows: ventriloquism, memorialization and visibility of military bodies in an age of total war.

"The were always telling you that you mustn't forget the dead, and they were always telling you that you shouldn't let yourself think about them too much."- Michael Herr[1]

"I was a normal guy who got sent to Iraq and became crazy, so they sent me back to America to become sane, and now it's America that's driving me crazy." – Army Staff Sgt. Adam Schumann[2]

The bodies of the military dead have long been politicized, and the power of such encoded symbolism is observable even when the "body" itself is absent. In late 2017 and early 2018, two images of American widows mourning the loss of their military spouses went viral across social media platforms Facebook and Twitter. The pictures themselves – one of Jenn Budenz lying on a blanket in front of the grave of her husband, Maj. Andrew Budenz, taken in 2014 at the Miramar National Cemetery; the other, of Seana Arrechaga holding the hand of her husband Army Sgt. Ofren Arrechaga as he lies in a casket in Tennessee, eight days after he was killed in a firefight in Afghanistan in 2011 – had been shared across social media without any context.[3] Instead, these images became reconfigured as "memes," and were codified with a new meaning through the addition of bold white text that read "THIS IS WHY WE STAND."[4] The text makes reference to the actions of a wave of NFL football players who, following former quarterback Colin Kaepernick's initial act of nonviolent protest in 2016, have chosen to kneel during the playing of the national anthem in order to protest police brutality against black Americans within the United States. [5] U.S. President Trump, his supporters, and a host of conservative commentators have proclaimed that kneeling during the anthem is an act that is "disrespectful to American servicemen and women," in an attempt to "rebrand the protest as a protest of the American flag," and in turn, as a protest of those who serve

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[1] Herr, *Dispatches*, 202.
[2] David Finkel, *Thank You For Your Service* (Australia: Scribe, 2013): 247.
[3] Alex Horton, "'Learn his name first': The politicizing of military widows is touching a nerve," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 2018.
[4] Piia Varis & Jan Blommaert, "Conviviality and collectives on social media: Virality, memes and new social structures," Journal of Language and Politics , Paper 108 (2014): 8.
[5] Clark Mindock, "Taking a knee: Why are NFL players protesting and when did they start to kneel?" *The Independent*, 24 May, 2018.

it.[6] On January 4 2018, Trump reposted the altered image of Budenz lying in front of her husband's grave, with the caption "So beautiful…. Show this picture to the NFL players who still kneel!".[7] The trend of exploiting and re-contextualizing "emotionally charged" images of grieving military families and of the military dead, highlights a disconnect between perceptions of "common experience and understanding between the military and the rest of the public."[8] In this light, the reconfigured "meme" images of Budenz and Arrechaga, posted and shared most visibly in conservative media channels, demonstrates the transmutable quality of images of the military dead, and their inherent potency.

As noted, the post-heroic conditions of warfare have been characterized by comparatively low rates of military mortality. Fewer Americans are serving in their military forces, and fewer are dying in conflicts abroad, largely due to the asymmetrical nature of warfare that has come to define American intervention in recent history. Just over 6000 Americans have died during the decade of wars from 2001 and 2011 in both Afghanistan and Iraq.[9] Furthermore, an increased vigilance to police the visibility of the dead has created conditions that have rendered the "bodies" of those that do return as especially coveted and sacrosanct. Despite the relative "lack" of bodies and the tight, official restrictions that have come to govern them, the military dead are present in many forms. In his article "Post-Heroic Warfare: The Social Control of Dead American Soldiers in Iraq," Christophe Wasinski adopts the neologism "hauntology," coined by post-structuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida, in order to give a designation to, and interpret the impacts of the presence of the "dead" Wasinski contends that

> even immaterial specters can nonetheless become social actors when the living gives them a voice. Every time someone living speaks in the name of the dead, every time a discourse or practice refers to a deceased solider, a ghost is taking form in the social sphere. A community is composed not only of living persons but also of the dead.[10]

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[6] Mindock, "Taking a knee," 2018.

[7] Horton, "'Learn his name first," 2018.

[8] Horton, "'Learn his name first," 2018.

[9] Benjamin Medea, *Drone Warfare: Killing By Remote Control* (New York: Verso, 2012) 151.

[10] Christophe Wasinski, ""Post-Heroic Warfare" and Ghosts – The Social Control of American Soldiers in Iraq," *International Political Sociology* 2 (2008): 114-115.

The cases of Budenz and Arrechaga underscore the ways in which, in the absence of "military bodies," images of the dead are politically charged and "haunt" the public sphere. These examples also demonstrate the nature of "control" (both official and unofficial) that accompanies the visibility of the military-dead in recent history. Wasinski further claims that such "rigorous social control over the visibility of the military mortality" creates a dynamic that allows for the bodies of the dead to be "ventriloquated" in accordance with the interests and agendas of those parties that govern them.[11] As a ventriloquist gives voice to the inanimate, so too, do those that "re-animate" and shape the meanings of military-bodies in the twenty-first century.

In order to explore Wasinki's assertion that military bodies "haunt" and are ventriloquated, this chapter will be underscored by the fundamental question: how is the "body" reconfigured and understood in the context of modern warfare? Furthermore, how do these configurations shape and influence experiences of total war, in both civilian and military spheres? To address these questions, this chapter will survey how the "visibility" (or invisibility) of military bodies is shaped by the conditions that have characterized the sense of "remoteness" that this thesis illustrates. For the purposes of this analysis, the "body" is conceived of as: the military dead- the presence of dead service members in the living sphere; private bodies – those of contractors that continue to serve and are deceased; and forgotten bodies – the bodies of veterans that return from recent conflicts. First, this chapter will trace the contours of memorial practices within the United States – traditional and "vernacular"- in order to examine the significance and transformation of such practices in recent history. The Vietnam War represents a moment of rupture within the American historical consciousness, and the ways in which it has been remembered – through the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Solider- also represent a moment of rupture from traditional conceptions of memorial. Their creation fundamentally informs the ways in which the military dead endure in the public realm. These shifts in popular understandings of the military dead – how they are brought into the "living sphere"- have continued to transform throughout the twenty-first century, and in effect, have shaped a reconfiguration of

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[11] Wasinski, ""Post-Heroic Warfare" and Ghosts," 115.

memorialization in a post-heroic era. Memorials to the military dead are prevalent in visual culture, and the practice of tattooing has enabled both civilians and veterans to "curate" and "embody" their experiences of war. The notion of visibility also applies to military bodies that do not readily align with ideas of military "sacrifice" – the "private bodies" of military contractors who are increasingly performing outsourced military and security operations in America's wars. Despite the fact that the post-heroic conditions underpinning "remoteness" have fostered a climate in which there are less "boots on the ground," the rate of bodies that survive modern warfare is increasing. In contrast to the low rates of military mortality, the rate of returning veterans – the "forgotten bodies" of war – is burgeoning. More than 95% of troops that have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan have survived.[12] The challenges that many returning veterans face exemplify the tolls sustained by military bodies in an age of total war.

Understandings of military bodies – both alive and deceased – are immediately connected to conceptions of sacrifice. Historically, the culture of war that has underpinned American ideas of national consciousness within the United States has continued to communicate the necessity of sacrifice, and in effect, sacrifice "functions as the hinge between war-culture and national self-identity."[13] In their book *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation,* Caroline Marvin and David Ingle argue that American patriotism is a civil religion based upon a sacrificial imperative, which periodically requires the "blood sacrifice" of members of the national community to ensure group stability and cohesion. Marvin and Ingle contend that a cycle of "sacrifice, feast, and rebirth" facilitates warfare, so that a blood sacrifice may be made to "stop time and re-create the group."[14] Acknowledging that a periodic "creation-sacrifice" carries high cost and is therefore rare in occurrence, Marvin and Ingle argue that "apostolic missions and commemorative remodeling must substitute for blood sacrifice… to a degree."[15] As this thesis has argued previously, the object of sacrifice has shifted. Warfare in the post-heroic era is characterized by an aversion to

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[12] Marilynn Marchione, "U.S. vets' disability filings reach historic rate," *The Associated Press*, May 28, 2012: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/health/story/2012-05-28/veteran-disability/55250092/1

[13] Nick Turse, *The Complex: How The Military Invades our Everyday Lives* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008) 187.

[14] Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999): 248.

[15] Marvin and Ingle, *Blood Sacrifice,* 248.

sustaining American casualties and extensive drone use which has reconfigured the "warrior," and as such, continued "blood sacrifices" have not been essential to sustain or reinvigorate the nation as a whole. Although Marvin and Ingle's concept is historically bound, the significance of memorialization, coupled with the visibility of military dead, has been reconfigured in the post-heroic era of total war. The rhetoric of "blood sacrifice" still persists in political and public discourse. During the 2012 Presidential campaign, journalist Robert M. Merry commented that the "intertwined elements of American interests and American blood" were absent from both candidates' debates concerning foreign policy.[16] Even though the nature of post-heroic warfare has led to a sharp decrease in American casualties, the "stark decoupling of U.S. interests from calculations about expenditures of blood," further demonstrates the ways in which the concept of remoteness fundamentally shapes how warfare is waged by the military, understood by the public, and covered by the media.[17] The powerful, haunting persistence of Vietnam war memories and the impetus to reverse them, led to the transformation of how the military dead have been controlled in twenty-first century conflicts.

Historians and academics have long hailed the war in Vietnam as the first "television war," due to the nature of reporting and broadcast that brought the war "home" for millions of Americans, and such an understanding of the war in those terms has since become commonplace. By the end of the war in 1975, over 58 000 American troops were dead, and the unique and "authentic" televisual coverage that had characterized war-reporting throughout the conflict had highlighted the reality of the body count, often capturing images of body bags and close-ups of the dead.[18] The screening of causalities during the conflict marks a unique moment of the war in Vietnam, one which Tony Maniaty argues was "burned into the dispirited American soul," yet such a moment also exists as an anomaly.[19]

Following the war, many Americans were convinced that the negative television coverage was "largely responsible for the US defeat in Vietnam."[20] Such a belief

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[16] Robert W. Merry. "American Interest, American Blood, *The National Interest* no. 112 (2012): 7.
[17] Merry, "American Interest, American Blood," 7
[18] Tony Maniaty, "From Vietnam to Iraq: Negative trends in television war reporting." *Pacific Journalism Review* 14, no. 2 (2008): 89-91.
[19] Maniaty, "From Vietnam to Iraq," 2008.
[20] Jacqueline E. Sharkey, "The television war," *American Journalism Review*, May 25, no. 4 (2003): 22-23.

persisted, and as the "spectre" of Vietnam continued to haunt the national consciousness, officials and policymakers were determined to transform the ways in which the media would cover future conflicts.[21] During the 1980s, the Pentagon implemented a strategy that sought to control media access to the battlefield, which facilitated restricted access to information. For the first forty-eight hours of the U.S. invasion of Grenada in October of 1983, the Department of Defense prohibited journalists and news-media teams from entering the island, and instead "provided the press with casualty-free visuals of the conflict, and Reagan administration officials offered optimistic statements about the operation's progress."[22] By restricting independent press coverage and supplying censored footage, the administration effectively controlled the flow of information by "constituting the only evidence of the first two days" of the operation in Grenada.[23] The media blackout set a precedent and succeeded in establishing a relationship between U.S. administrations and the news media that would dictate the ways in which subsequent conflicts would be covered by the press, in essence – "the media would work with the military, or not work at all."[24]

During the 1991 Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush declared that it would "not be another Vietnam."[25] This sentiment, echoed by administration officials and commentators, implied that American victory would be swift and decisive. By avoiding the protracted frustrations that characterized the "spectre" of the Vietnam era, the American consciousness would finally atone for the lessons hard-learned in Vietnam. But Bush's comment should also be understood within the context of information control and the media's coverage of conflict in the post-Cold War climate – the war in the Gulf would not another Vietnam. Robert Jay Lifton has explained, "censorship arrangements were the tightest ever applied in an American war, as were the extreme restrictions imposed upon television and print journalists concerning access to the human consequences of the war."[26] Such restrictions were also placed on those within the military. Referring to the level of restriction as a "gag order,"

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[21] Howard Tumbler, "Journalism and the Invasion of Grenada 30 Years On: A Retrospective," *The Round Table* 103, no. 1 (2014): 57.
[22] Sharkey, "The television war," 22-23; Phil Gailey, "U.S. Bars Coverage Of Grenada Action; News Groups Protest: Administration Limits News of Grenada," *The New York Times*, October 27, 1983: pg. A1.
[23] Tumbler, "Journalism and the Invasion of Grenada," 58.
[24] Maniaty, "From Vietnam to Iraq," 92.
[25] Robert Jay Lifton, *Home From the War: Learning from Vietnam Veterans,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1992: x.
[26] Lifton, *Home From the War,* xi.

Anthony Swafford chronicles his experiences during a Marine "press junket" in which he and his platoon were instructed to give scripted responses to the team of print reporters that were visiting their base. [27] Swafford details the orders of his commanding sergeant:

> Basically, don't get specific. Say you can shoot from far away. Say you're highly trained, that there are no better shooters in the world than marine snipers. Say you're excited to be here and you believe in the mission and that we'll annihilate the Iraqis. Take off your shirts and show your muscles.[28]

Gulf War scholarship commonly centers around the notion that the conflict was a "TV war," in a way that the war in Vietnam was not – a 24/7 televised war that replaced the reality of "bodies" with the fantasy of fetishized technology. Bodies were routinely eliminated from the realities of warfare not only by their lack of visibility, but through an intercession of jargonistic-language that obfuscated the conflict and reconfigured experiences of warfare – a "rhetoric of cleanliness, efficiency, and high-tech hardware."[29] Cutting-edge technology was constructed in the public-view as an extension of American exceptionalism, and as a new, clinical and proficient mode of warfare – a superior nation waging a superior form of war with superior technology. Officials stressed the capabilities of weapons technology – Apache helicopters, precision-guided missile "smart bombs," tanks – yet evidence to support the claims of such technology's efficiency was absent, there were no images of bloodshed.[30] Coverage of the conflict was mediated through a screen – screens that governed the new mode of technological warfare – to an aesthetic effect that created a "television memory" based in virtual reality.[31] Donald Pease argues that

> the state's aestheticization of this display of force enabled [the public] to participate in the war as an extension of the technology through which it was visualized. The televisual record of the war did not represent the action. It produced a fantasmatic structure that embedded US citizens in the project of war.[32]

[27] Swofford, *Jarhead*, 17.
[28] Swofford, *Jarhead*, 16.
[29] Jeffery Walsh, "Remembering Desert Storm: Popular Culture and the Gulf War," in *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, Martin Evans and Ken Lunns (eds.). Berg: New York, 1997: 210-211.
[30] Donald E. Pease. *The New American Exceptionalism*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota, 2009: 55.
[31] Walsh, "Remembering Desert Storm," 209-210.
[32] Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism*, 40.

"Bodies" were replaced by the fantasy of weapons technology, and essentially, the televised construction of the Gulf War, one that premised the conflict as an exercise of "elegant technology," reconfigured the weapons themselves as the "heroes of the war."[33] The elimination of bodies from official constructions of the Gulf War conflict contributed to widening a gap between public perceptions of military engagement, and a burgeoning sense of remoteness that characterizes the disconnect between civilians and the military. Furthermore, the absence of bodies in news-media coverage throughout such periods of conflict, created conditions that imbued any bodies that were visible with an increased sense of symbolism and meaning. Bodies of war become symbolic of the national imagined community, becoming a physical representation and embodiment of such a community's ideologies and systems. Possession and ownership of those meanings is directly connected to the ways in which military bodies are policed, withheld from view, and ventriloquized by officials.

A powerful example of how these dynamics are observable was the footage of an American soldier who was captured, killed, and dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, during the U.S. military's engagement in Somalia in October 1993.[34] The footage shocked and horrified thousands of Americans, who immediately began to petition Congress to demand the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Somalia. [35] Journalist Marvin Kalb suggests that the footage represented a "symbol of American power being dragged through the Third World, unable to master the new challenges of the post-Cold War era."[36] The nation's response to the incident clearly exemplifies the notion that presence of military dead, when visible, powerfully shapes public conceptions of warfare. Popular public support of U.S. military engagements abroad has been directly connected to the visibility of American military dead.[37] As war reporting and coverage of military conflict has transformed in the post-heroic era –

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[33] Lifton, *Home From the War,* xi-xii.
[34] Jacqueline E. Sharkey, "When Pictures Drive Foreign Policy," *American Journalism* 15, no. 10 (1993): 14; Sledge, *Soldier Dead,* 26.
[35] Sharkey, "When Pictures Drive Foreign Policy," 14.
[36] Sharkey, "When Pictures Drive Foreign Policy," 16.
[37] Christopher Gelpi, Peter D. Feaver and Jason Reifler," Success Matters: Casualty Sensitivity and the War in Iraq," *International Security* 30, no. 3 (2005/2006): 7

"transmuted into a surreal and near-seamless form of home entertainment" – so too has the coverage of returning military dead.[38]

Repatriation refers to the retrieval of military dead from spheres of conflict, and their return to and interment on American soil. In this context, the otherwise-semantic distinction between the words 'return' and 'repatriate' in reference to the posthumous handling of American military-dead is significant and should be explicated. Michael Sledge notes that although both terms have been frequently employed by officials, 'return' has "more of the connotation of getting back that which was lent," whereas 'repatriate' "conveys the meaning that the desired object is subject to another's control and must be "freed" in order to be returned."[39] In this context, the act of repatriating bodies for internment on U.S. soil is fundamentally and intrinsically shaped by the mechanics of ventriloquism – the ability to control the visibility of military "bodies" of war. The history of soldier-repatriation reflects the relationship of exchange that exists between the military the state, and the civilian public.

Following the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War in the late 1890s, the United States made efforts to locate, retrieve, and return the bodies of several thousand American servicemen who were killed during the conflicts. [40] Despite the fact that these military engagements were small in scale, the foundations for repatriation policy were established, namely, the expectation that American military-dead would be returned from abroad. In 1921, the United States Congress passed Public Law No. 389 which gave provisions for recovering the military-dead of the First World War. [41] The allocation of funding for repatriating American bodies indicates the desire to return the dead, whilst also highlighting the symbolic power that military "bodies" inherit innately, even posthumously. Repatriation during this period was significantly hindered by a number of factors, most evidently, the difficulty of identifying a soldier's remains and the logistics of transportation. Although the use of military "dog tags" had become standardized during the First

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[38] Maniaty, "From Vietnam to Iraq," 94-95.
[39] Michael Sledge, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Fallen,* Columbia University Press: New York, 2005 (143).
[40]Sledge, *Soldier Dead,* (135).
[41] Sledge, *Soldier Dead,* 136.

World War, timely identification of bodies was rendered difficult under the hostile conditions of warfare on the battlefield.[42] Furthermore, the costs associated with the retrieval and returning of military dead prevented the automatic repatriation of casualties – the lack of resources and shipping space available to realize such a task resulted in a policy that only honored the "explicit requests for repatriation by next of kin."[43] The conditions that encumbered the repatriation process during this period have since transformed, and by the 1970s, throughout the war in Vietnam, the bodies of soldiers could be identified, retrieved, and returned to their families within seven days of their death.[44] In the recent past, the United States government and wartime mortuary service have made increasing efforts to locate, identify, and retrieve American soldiers who were killed in combat – repatriating bodies from Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf.[45] Repatriation of the war dead has provided a social context for mourning, whilst also conferring "sacrificial" status onto the bodies that return. [46] In light of the post-heroic conditions that favor casualty-aversion, and the reality that fewer Americans are dying abroad, the bodies that are repatriated become especially coveted, sacrosanct, and contentious, and the modes of their public visibility have been transformed.

Historically, symbolically rich ceremonies functioned to connect notions of sacrifice and service to the nation. During the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, and the war in Vietnam, repatriated remains were covered by the press - photographed as they were removed from the battlefield and transported home.[47] Open to the media, the arrival ceremony attending the returning of military dead constituted a "Fallen Soldier" military detail that accompanied bodies as they arrived at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.[48] Yet following the Gulf War, the taking of pictures at Dover was prohibited.[49] Under the Clinton administration, a policy

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[42] Leo P. Hirrel, "The Beginnings of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service," *Army Sustainment* July/August 2014 (66); Edward Steere, "QMC Historical Studies: The Graves Registration Service in World War II," *Historical Section Office of the Quartermaster General* no. 21, 1951 (13-14).
[43] Robin, ""A Foot hold in Europe,"" 56; Sledge, *Soldier Dead*, 140-141; Dan Baum, "Two Soldiers: How the dead come home," *The New Yorker*, Annals of War, August 9, 2004.
[44] Sledge, *Soldier Dead*, 141.
[45] Keene, "Bodily Matters," 61.
[46] Derek Summerfield, "Raising The Dead: War, Repatriation, And The Politics of Memory," *British Medical Journal* 311, no. 7003 (1995): 495; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture,* (New York: Random House, 1993): 687.
[47] Sledge, *Soldier Dead*, 177.
[48] Sledge, *Soldier Dead*, 177-178.
[49] Sledge, *Soldier Dead*, 177.

directive extended the ban to other all military bases across the United States, a decision that then-Joint Chief of Staff Army General Henry H. Shelton acknowledged was in part due to the belief that the use of military force had become contingent upon passing "the Dover test" – in light of the nation's reaction to visible military mortality.[50]

Although the Clinton administration's directive had been in place prior to President George Bush's declaration of war in both Afghanistan and Iraq, such policies were not strictly enforced, as images of caskets returning from abroad were appearing in a variety of news media outlets up until early 2003.[51] The belief that public support for war efforts are significantly diminished when the "body bags" become visible, strongly persisted within the Bush administration, and under the jurisdiction of his administration, the media ban was soon upheld in full force, strictly prohibiting the dissemination of images of dead American soldiers or their coffins.[52] The manipulation of information has created a unique opportunity for bodies of the war dead to be ventriloquized according to the agendas of those who possess them.

A bizarre example of this type of ventriloquism is demonstrated by the series of Pentagon led repatriation ceremonies held in Hawaii, honoring the arrival of flag-shrouded coffins, and commemorating the sacrifice of fallen service members from previous conflicts. In 2013, it was reported that "the ceremonies did not involve newly repatriated victims from foreign battlefields" and that the planes involved in events "were towed into place before the ceremonies."[53] In response to the public's negative reaction, the name of the ceremonies were amended – they are no longer referred to as "arrival" ceremonies, but now have been rebranded as "honor" ceremonies.[54]

The allocation of places to inter American war-dead, and cemeteries especially, hold a crucial and emblematic place in the American national consciousness.[55] President

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[50] Dana Milbank, "Curtains Ordered For Media Coverage of Returning Coffins," *The Washington Post,* October 21, 2003.
[51] Milbank, "Curtains Ordered," 2003.
[52] John Miller, "The Iraq Syndrome," *Foreign Affairs,* 84 no. 6 (2005): 46.
[53] Phillip Sherwell, "Pentagon faked repatriation ceremonies of US war dead," Telegraph. 12 October 2013.
[54] Sherwell, "Pentagon faked repatriation ceremonies," 12 October 2013.
[55] Jose Santiago, "From Civil Religion to Nationalism as the Religion of Modern Times: Rethinking a Complex Relationship," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 2 (2006): 396; Judith Keene, "Bodily Matters

Abraham Lincoln's remarkable address at Gettysburg, not only sought to dedicate the national cemetery that was established on a portion of the battlefield, but to define and underscore the meaning and purpose of war cemeteries as national institutions.[56] President Lincoln declared:

> We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live… In a larger sense, we cannot dedicate- we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. [57]

Lincoln's address simultaneously "articulated one of the most enigmatic paradoxes of national identity: namely, that it is strengthened by the lives that are lost in its name."[58] Following the Civil War, Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Arlington estate was sequestered and transformed into a burial ground. The unidentified remains of over two thousand Union soldiers were interred in a crypt that was placed in General Lee's garden – rendering the grounds uninhabitable and reflecting the animosity that continued to persist between Union and Confederate factions following the end of the conflict.[59] The creation of a public space to honor the war dead is a tangible and powerful expression of the impulse to acknowledge the "blood sacrifice" expended for the nation, intimately connecting the notion of sacrifice and the state. Michael J. Allen argues that

> Arlington and the national cemetery system that emerged from the war represented an imagined community at once more inclusive and more exclusive than earlier iterations. The orderly rows of individual yet uniform grave markers… emphasized national identity over other forms of belonging.[60]

Above and Below Ground: The Treatment of American Remains from the Korean War," *The Public Historian* 32, no. 1, *Where Are The Bodies? A Transnational Examination of State Violence and its Consequences* (2010): 60.

[56] Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet, "War and National Renewal: Civil Religion and Blood Sacrifice in American Culture," *European journal of American studies* 7, no. 2 (2012): 4.

[57] Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" 19 November, 1863: http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/lincoln-gettysburg-address-speech-text/

[58] Monnet, "War and National Renewal," 4.

[59] Philip Bigler, *In Honored Glory: Arlington National Cemetery, The Final Post*, Arlington: Vandamere Press, 1999: 28; Michael J. Allen, "'Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind'": The Unknown Soldier and the Imagined Community after the Vietnam War," *History and Memory* 23, no. 2 (2011): 97-98.

[60] Allen, "Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 98.

War cemeteries provide a public place for the community to make sense of death and loss, whilst tapping into the domains of national collective memory, both in the United States and abroad. [61] Across Western Europe, over 100 000 American casualties of both the First and Second World Wars are interred in more than twenty military cemeteries, or "silent cities" - "monuments to an enduring result of global conflict; a forceful American presence in the cultural and political landscapes of other countries."[62] Following the First World War, President Warren Harding signed into effect the creation of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), an agency made responsible for the construction of monuments abroad in order to honor the American war dead. The ABMC was tasked with ensuring that gravesites and tombstones were to be devoid of "any sense of individual expression and idiosyncrasy… thereby elevating the event of death in national service to the purely abstract level."[63] This level of uniformity ensured that cemeteries represented the ostensibly indiscriminate nature of American sacrifice in warfare.

John Hutchinson argues that a "shift from a cult of individual heroism to the celebration of the national people," became evident and embodied by the establishment of tombs dedicated to the Unknown Solider at the end of the First World War.[64] Following the example of both Britain and France, and other allied nations who conducted ritualized interments of unidentified remains, U.S. Congress passed a bill that provided for the establish of a tomb that would honor an anonymous American casualty of the war.[65]

During the course of the twentieth century, the allotment was extended to include tombs that contained unidentified remains that were recovered following the Second World War and the Korean War. Prior to U.S. troop withdrawal from

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[61] Yael Tamir, "Pro Patria Mori! Death and the State," in The Morality of Nationalism by Robert McKim & Jeff McMahan (eds.), (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): 236; George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990): 80.

[62] Ron Robin, "'A Foothold in Europe': The Aesthetics and Politics of American War Cemeteries in Europe," *Journal of American Studies* 29, no. 1 (1995): 55; Ron Robin, "Requiem for Public Diplomacy?" *American Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2005): 350.

[63] Robin, "'A Foothold in Europe," 9.

[64] John Hutchinson, "Warfare and the Sacralisation of Nations: The Meanings, Rituals and Politics of National Remembrance," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38, no. 2 (2009): 406.

[65] Roger A. Bruns, "Known but to God," *American History* 31, no. 5 (1996): 37; "The Unknown Soldier's Tomb," *The New York Times*, February 3, 1921: 6.

Vietnam, and Richard Nixon's declaration of "peace with honor," Nixon had secured Congressional funding in order to construct a crypt to house an Unknown Soldier from the war. [66] Despite the fact that no unidentified American military dead had been found by this point, due to the improved processes that enabled the rapid identification and recovery of bodies, it was hoped that a "final sweep of old Vietnam battlefields" following the cessation of hostilities, would yield the Vietnam War's own "Unknown."[67] As work on the Tomb was completed by 1975, there were still no remains, and the newly created crypt was concealed from public view following the large-scale Tomb renovation project that Nixon had initially provisioned. [68] By the 1980s, legislation had been introduced in Congress that reintroduced efforts to locate and bury an Unknown from the war in Vietnam, and then Army Secretary Jack Marsh ordered for any unidentified remains to be reviewed for their suitability.[69] The Army's Central Identification Laboratory, located in Hawaii (CILHI) identified a selection of four sets of remains, yet none were particularly viable: it was hoped that two would be identifiable via dental records, another could not be positively identified as "American," and the final remains designated by the code X-26 – consisting of "four ribs, part of a pelvis and a humerus" – may able to still be identified according to personal effects found at the location of recovery.[70] Chief physical anthropologist Tadao Furue, confident that he would be able to confirm the identity of X-26 if additional remains were found, refused to recommend the remains for interment.[71] Yet on April 13, 1984, the-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger selected the remains of X-26 as those that would be buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Solider.[72] On Memorial Day of that year, Ronald Reagan addressed the nation from the steps of the Tomb's amphitheater and declare the Vietnam Unknown as "symbolic of all our missing sons," with the hope that honoring the remains would enable Americans to "transcend the tragedies of the past."[73] Reflecting on the premature designation of the remains, a former employee of the Central Identification Laboratory commented:

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[66] Allen, ""Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 94-95; Jay Matthews, "3d 'Unknown's' Tomb Eyed," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1972: B2.
[67] Matthews, "3d 'Unknown's' Tomb Eyed," B2.
[68] Allen, ""Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 95-96.
[69] Allen, ""Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 105.
[70] Allen, ""Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 109; Howie Kurtz," Search for New 'Unknown Soldier'; Army Scientist Study Bodies for Vietnam-Era 'Unknown Soldier,'" *Washington Post*, January 7, 1982: A1.
[71] Susan Sheehan, "A Missing Plane – Identification," pt.2, *The New Yorker*, May 19, 1986: 81.
[72] Sheehan," A Missing Plane – Identification," 81.
[73] Ronald Regan, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States* [PPP]: *Ronald Reagan, 1984.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986: 748-50.

Putting X-26 in the Tomb of the Unknowns was politically expedient…

Perhaps it was appropriate to the Vietnam War. So much else about it was political. Everything connected with X-26 has been ordered shredded, but you can't shred what's in men's minds. If we ever get into South Vietnam… and find additional remains that match those in Arlington, there could be a problem.[74]

In 1994, there indeed was a problem, following claims by Vietnam-veteran activist Ted Sampley and CBS reporter Vince Gonzales that the identity of X-26 had been known by officials in the Reagan administration, but had "concealed that information in order to enact a ritual of national reunion in an election year," and that those remains belonged to an M.I.A. Air Force Lieutenant names Michael Blassie, who was shot down in 1972 near An Loc.[75] Blassie's family petitioned the Department of Defense to exhume and test the remains that were interred in the Tomb, and in 1998, following the results of mitochondrial DNA testing, the remains were positively identified as Michael Blassie, leaving the Tomb of the Unknown Solider unoccupied.[76] Since the removal of Blassie's remains, the crypt cover has been replaced with an inscription that reads "Honoring and Keeping Faith with America's Missing Servicemen, 1958-1975."[77] In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* published a year before Reagan's dedication of the Vietnam Unknown, Benedict Anderson declared:

No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and Tombs of Unknown soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded these monuments precisely *because* they are either deliberately empty or no one knows who lies inside them… Yet void as these tombs are of identifiably mortal remains or immortal souls, they are nonetheless saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings.[78]

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[74]Sheehan, "A Missing Plane – Identification," 81.

[75] Allen, ""Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 91; Ted Sampley, "The Vietnam Unknown Soldier Can Be Identified," *US Veteran Dispatch*, July 1994: http://www.usvetdsp.com/unknonwn.htm

[76] Allen, ""Sacrilege of a Strange, Contemporary Kind," 91.

[77] The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/Explore/Tomb-of-the-Unknown-Soldier

[78] Benedict Anderson, "Imagined communities: reflections of the origins and spread of nationalism," London: Verso, 1983: 7-9.

Even when military bodies are not visible, enclosed by a tomb, their power to "haunt" and inform national imaginings is powerfully evident. The case of the Vietnam Unknown demonstrates how meanings can be conferred onto "sacrificial" bodies in order to ventriloquize them and manipulate their visibility in the public realm.

As the war in Vietnam continues to represent a moment of "total rupture" within the historical consciousness of the United States, so too, does the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (VVM) represent a moment of "rupture" with traditional notions of memorialization. The controversies that surround its conception, construction, and reception, highlights how the impacts of the Vietnam War continue to reverberate throughout American society. But such controversies also demonstrate how the VVM contributed to transformative understandings of "memorial," and the ways in which these understandings would redefine the complexion of memorialization in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Marita Sturken argues that since its inception in 1982, the VVM

> Has been the center of a debate on precisely how wars should be remembered, and precisely who should be remembered in a war – those who have died, those who participated, those who engineered it, or those who opposed it. [79]

From the outset, the task of constructing a memorial to Vietnam veterans was problematic - how can a war that was lost be commemorated? Jan Scruggs, a wounded Vietnam veteran, advocate, and founder of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF), was allegedly inspired to create a memorial after viewing the 1979 film, *The Deer Hunter*, following which he proclaimed to his wife – "I'm going to build a memorial to all the guys who served in Vietnam… It'll have the names of everyone killed."[80] In 1980, the VVMF launched a national design competition that would be judged by a panel of eight of architects and sculptors, none of them veterans.   Competition entrants were encouraged to follow a set of design specifications in order to be considered for selection – "the memorial should be reflective and contemplative, harmonize with its surroundings, contain the names of

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[79] Marita Sturken, "The Wall, The Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations* 53 (1991): 119.
[80] Jan Scruggs as quoted in Joel L. Swerdlow, "To Heal a Nation," *National Geographic Magazine* 167, no. 5 (1985): 555.

all the war's dead and missing, and make no political statement about the war."[81] The winning design chosen by the panel belonged to Maya Lin, a twenty-one year old architecture student at Yale University, whose simple memorial proposal consisted of two black granite walls adjoined in a chevron shape, engraved with the names of the dead. Lin described the form of her design as evoking "an initial violence that in time would heal as the grass grew up to the pure flat surface of the stone," invoking the imagery of "wounds" and "healing" that consistently defined how Americans interpreted and understood the psychological, political, and socio-cultural impacts of the war.[82]

From the outset, Lin's design was controversial for breaking from the stylistic traditions that characterize other memorials located on the National Mall – white marble, bronze – and the "modernist aesthetics" of her proposed VVM incited an explosive backlash. Jan Scruggs supported Lin's design, commenting that it said "exactly what we wanted to say about Vietnam – absolutely nothing," yet the reactions to the ostensibly apolitical design highlighted the fallacy that a memorial could be divorced from the politics that have shaped its resonance in the American national consciousness.[83] Detractors of the memorial referred to it as "the black gash of shame," "a slap in the face," "an open urinal," "a wailing wall for draft dodgers," and "a tribute to Jane Fonda," arguing that the list of names inscribed on the walls were indicative of a list of traffic accidents.[84] Scruggs's intention was to create a monument that could separate the "warrior" from the warrior, by not providing any context and by selecting a design deficient in narrative. His intention for the VVM to say "absolutely nothing" about the war highlights the problematic task of creating a memorial for a conflict that challenged and damaged the nation's collective psyche. Tom Carhart, a Vietnam veteran who submit his own design -one that depicted "fallen comrades" in statue form- petitioned the VVMF and the United States Fine Arts Commission to consult the wishes and expectations of the broader veteran community – "Please extend to us the grace and dignity to choose our own memorial that will

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[81] Patrick Hagopain, *The Vietnam War in American Memory*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009: 93.

[82] Maya Lin, "Making the Memorial," *The New York Review*, November 2, 2000: 33.

[83] Robin Wagner-Pacifici and Barry Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Commemorating a Difficult Past," *American Journal of Sociology* 97, no. 2 (1991): 394.

[84] Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," 394-400: Sturken, "The Wall, The Screen and the Image," 122.

fairly represent *our* Vietnam experience to posterity."[85] Carhart's testimony to the Fine Arts Commission appeared as an abridged op-ed in the *New York Times* in 1981, and in it, he articulated the politics of remembrance that he and other veterans felt underscored Lin's proposal:

> If Americans allow that black trench to be dug, future generations will understand clearly what America thought of its Vietnam veterans…Yes, we lost 57,000, but what of the millions of us who rendered honorable service and came home? Why can't we have something white and traditional and above ground.[86]

Sturken argues that the "incommunicability of the experience of the Vietnam War has been a primary narrative in the Vietnam veterans' discourse," and in this respect, the incommunicability of veterans' experiences – the rupture with traditional conceptions of war- shaped the ways in which memories of the war in Vietnam could not be easily configured with "prior images of war."[87] The inability to craft the Vietnam war-story in congruence with the traditional notions of heroism and victory that inform the designs of other war memorials, lies at the crux of the VVM's provocative reception. In the wake of public outcry, a bronze statue depicting three infantry soldiers designed by Frederick Hart was unveiled as an addition to the memorial on Veterans Day in 1984.[88] Many felt that the inclusion of the statue was a "compromise," yet its incorporation acutely highlighted the "profound disagreement as to how the Vietnam War should be remembered."[89]Summarizing the climate of debate and confusion that surrounded the VVM and its impact, Ellen Goodman wrote in the *Washington Post* in 1982:

> [The VVM] has provided a new battleground for the same old war… In the end, we have a political pastiche of heroism and loss, a trio of warriors larger than life, and a list of the dead. Instead of a resolution, we have an artistic collision of ideas, an uncomfortable collage of our Vietnam legacy. Maybe… that's fitting.[90]

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[85] Karal Ann Marling and Robert Silberman, "The Statue near the Wall: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Art of Remembering," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 1, no. 1 (1987): 13.
[86] Tom Carhart, "Insulting Vietnam Vets," *The New York Times*, October 24, 1981: p. 001023.
[87] Sturken, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image," 129.
[88] Marling and Silberman, "The Statue near the Wall," 18.
[89] Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," 396.
[90] Ellen Goodman, "Monument to Our Discomfort," *Washington Post*, September 25, 1982.

During the 1990s, the debates over the VVM's failure to symbolize veterans' experiences continued, and another addition was made on the National Mall in order to address the VVM's inadequacies. Disappointed with the lack of representation for female veterans of the war, Diane Carlson Evans established the Vietnam Women's Memorial Fund, which sought to include a memorial dedicated to the nearly 10,000 American women who served in Vietnam.[91]After viewing Hart's "Three Soldiers" tribute, Carlson recounts- "the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial somehow became incomplete. Why weren't women portrayed?"[92] On Veterans Day in 1993, a statute designed by Glenna Goodacre depicting three uniformed nurses tending to a wounded solider was dedicated as an addition to the VVM. The later additions of both statues demonstrates the impulse to rearticulate national memories of the war in Vietnam by shaping the memorial's narrative in tandem with the traditional hallmarks of other monuments, and furthermore, underscoring gendered military identities. In contrast to Lin's intention to create a memorial that pays tribute to individuals, Hart's "Three Soldiers" reconfigures the Vietnam veteran in the lineage of a "generic – timeless – heroic" solider, re-encoding the veterans' "body" with conceptions of military masculinity, heroism, and strength – elements that could not be reconciled in light of American defeat in Vietnam.[93] In this context, Goodacre's tribute makes visible on the National Mall the services and sacrifice of women who served in Vietnam, informing the politics of remembrance triangulated in connection with both Lin and Hart's monuments. Yet the Vietnam Women's Memorial also re-encodes the bodies of women veterans as "feminine," and their role as nurturers who "provided comfort, care, and a human touch for those who were suffering and dying."[94] The "political pastiche of heroism and loss" that the VVM symbolizes, demonstrates how the commemoration of a morally ambiguous conflict represented a moment of rupture with traditional practices and conceptions of memorialization. Furthermore, the VVM's legacy continues to inform memorial practices within the twenty-first century.

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[91] http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org/vwmf.php

[92] Lauren A. Otto, "Profiles: Healing After Vietnam: Diane Carlson Evans' story," *Journal of Emergency Nursing*, no. 5 (1995): 473.

[93] Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," 397.

[94] Vietnam Women's Memorial: http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org/vwmf.php

Scott Stump, a marine veteran who served in the First Persian Gulf War, has spearheaded preparations to fundraise, design, and construct a memorial commemorating Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield on the National Mall in Washington, DC. After receiving Congressional support and authority, and following the site's selection and dedication, the memorial is slated to be constructed by 2021 – in time for the 30th anniversary of the war. [95] In order to give veterans an opportunity to contribute their thoughts and suggestions to the process of developing the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield War Memorial, the association provided a survey asking which key elements of the war should be reflected in the memorials design. The responses addressed the following themes:

1. The memorial's design should reflect or recreate the desert environment where the war was fought.
2. Names of the fallen should be engraved into the memorial.
3. The memorial should include a lifelike statue of soldiers wearing protective masks and chemical warfare protective gear.
4. The memorial's design should illustrate the "Left Hook" maneuver that was used to flank the Iraqi forces.[96]

Early designs of the memorial depict a curving "fish-hook" shaped sandstone wall, gesturing the "left hook" military envelopment that ostensibly drove Iraqi forces from Kuwait in the first months of 1991. Artist renderings indicate that visitors will be able to enter the memorial and follow the curvature of the wall that encircles a bronze depiction of infantryman wearing "Mission Oriented Protective Posture" (MOPP) suits- an image of troops that was prevalent during coverage of the conflict. The pending memorial references elements of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial – a wall engraved with names, the inclusion of a statue – and its proximity to it is of profound significance. Although it is not yet apparent how the National Desert Storm Memorial will be interpreted alongside the VVM, the hallmarks of its initial design demonstrate that the memorial's association and their collaborators are cognizant of the

[95] Nikki Wentling, "National Mall site selected as location of national Gulf War memorial," *Stars and Stripes*, June 21, 2018: https://www.stripes.com/news/national-mall-site-selected-as-location-of-national-gulf-war-memorial-1.534085; Leo Shane and Victoria Leoni, "Desert Storm memorial to be built on National Mall near Vietnam Wall," *Military Times,* June 22, 2018: https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2018/06/22/desert-storm-memorial-to-be-built-on-national-mall-near-vietnam-wall/; Tiffany McGuffee, "Roe Bill to Establish War Memorial Passes House of Representatives," Press Release, May 28, 2014.
[96] National Desert Storm War Memorial: Preparations - http://www.ndswm.org/preparations#

controversies that surrounded the VVM's inclusion on the National Mall. The VVM signified a moment of rupture – hampered with the task of commemorating a war that had been lost. But although the conflict in the Gulf was hailed as a swift and total victory – a breakaway from the conflict that preceded it - it continued to be framed in relation to the Vietnam War, as President George H. W. Bush hastily declared – "By God… we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all."[97] Claims that the war had been "won" in the Gulf would be questioned retrospectively, and despite the relative success of U.S. military operations in the early 1990s, the war itself would come to be framed as one that was left unfinished, in light of President George W. Bush's ill-defined declaration to wage war against "terror" following the attacks of 9/11.[98] Within this context, the official impulse to publically commemorate the First Persian Gulf War has been delayed – the VVM was established seven years after American troops were withdrawn from Vietnam; motions to construct a Gulf War Memorial were ratified in 2017, twenty-six years later.[99] The lack of an "official" memorial, in this respect, has enabled veterans to shape their own "vernacular" responses to their war experience, transforming ideas about what constitutes a "memorial" in the twenty-first century.

In 2004, Michael McConnell, a director at the Quaker advocacy group The American Friends Service Committee, borrowed five-hundred pairs of combat boots and placed them in the Federal Plaza public square in downtown Chicago.[100] McConnell's intention was to address and acknowledge the deaths of American troops who had lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan, in effect, making them "visible" to the public. The exhibition, entitled "Eyes Wide Open: The Human Cost of War in Iraq," simultaneously memorialized the mounting American death toll, whilst protesting the war itself. The success of the exhibition led to its function as a "travelling public memorial," eventually including pairs of "civilian shoes" alongside the combat boots

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[97] George H. W. Bush as quoted in E.J. Dionne Jr. "Kicking The 'Vietnam Syndrome,'" *The Washington Post*, March 4, 1991: https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/03/04/kicking-the-vietnam-syndrome/b6180288-4b9e-4d5f-b303-befa2275524d/?utm_term=.24b137d39bf0

[98] Tom Mahnken, "The Gulf War in retrospect," *Foreign Policy*, January 20, 2011: https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/20/the-gulf-war-in-retrospect/

[99] Senate Joint Resolution 1 (2017-2018): https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-joint-resolution/1/actions; Katharine Keane, "Desert Storm Memorial Flies Under the Radar (But is Already Law)," *Architect Magazine*, April 10, 2017: https://www.architectmagazine.com/practice/desert-storm-memorial-flies-under-the-radar-but-is-already-law_o

[100]Shreema Mehta, "Empty Boots, Ravished Hearts," *The Nation*, October 21, 2005: https://www.thenation.com/article/empty-boots-ravished-hearts/; "Empty boots send a plea: End Iraq War," *People's World*, June 4, 2004.

to represent the deaths of Iraqi civilians.[101] The exhibition underscores a unique articulation of the "remoteness" that characterizes warfare in recent American history. Alex Ryabov, a veteran of the war in Iraq, highlights the tension between the lack of "visibility" and the remoteness that has reconfigured modern conflict:

> It's important to give an idea of the sheer number of human beings killed… You wouldn't know there was a war going on… People don't realize the death and destruction.[102]

Yen Le Espiritu argues "even when war has ended in the geopolitical dimension, it has not necessarily done so in the social dimension… when does war end and who gets to decide?"[103] Historically, warfare has been central to national conceptions of American identity and continuity, and in the twenty-first century, articulations of war memories contribute to shaping the experiences that constitute "total war" in a period that is characterized by the tensions between ubiquitous domestic militarism and the remoteness of war. Through the variety of ways that it manifests, memorialization functions as a lynchpin that connects citizens with the mythic conceptions of freedom and the imperative of sacrifice that fundamentally informs the basis of their citizenship. The post-heroic conditions of American military engagement have demonstrably shaped the ways in citizens choose to memorialize and commemorate military "bodies" in recent history. As an example, the increasing presence of electronic and social media has contributed to shaping contemporary practices of memorialization. Espiritu argues that the "internet has changed the power dynamics of representation for traditionally marginalized groups," as it "allows users to "route around" the traditional gatekeepers" of official national memories.[104] In particular, she refers to the creation of Internet memorial websites – in effect, "subaltern digital archive[s]"- that have been created by Vietnamese Americans in order to acknowledge and offer an "alternative temporality" to the official narratives that constitute memorialization of the Vietnam War.[105] Similar online memorials have also proliferated, memorializing other tragedies such as the 1999 Columbine High School

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[101] Mehta, "Empty Boots, Ravished Hearts," 2005.
[102] Mehta, "Empty Boots, Ravished Hearts," 2005.
[103] Yen Le Espiritu, "Vietnamese Refugees and Internet Memorials: When Does War End and Who Gets to Decide?" in *Looking Back on the Vietnam War: Twenty-First Century Perspectives*, eds. Brenda M. Boyle and Jeehyun Lim (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016): 18-19.
[104] Espiritu, "Vietnamese Refugees and Internet Memorials,"22.
[105] Espiritu, "Vietnamese Refugees and Internet Memorials," 22.

shooting, and the 9/11 attacks.[106] Practices of remembrance are transformed through their presence in digital sphere, allowing for the democratization of national memories that exist to both serve and challenge officially constructed narratives. Memorialization in the "physical" realm has also undergone a transformation- one that intimately connects both practices of remembrance and visual culture, and literally enables the transformation of the "body" as a site of remembrance. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the popularity of military videogames and their functions have engendered a climate in which "enactment is akin to remembrance"- shaping the ways in which memorialization has been reconfigured in recent history. In this respect, vernacular responses (as forms of memorialization) to modern warfare have engendered a climate in which "embodiment" is akin to remembrance. The proliferation of memorial tattoos to "mark" experiences of war, demonstrate how civilians and veterans effectively "curate," embody, and reconfigure their relationship to modern conflict

The twenty-first century marks a period in which the practices of tattooing – and tattoos themselves, as an element of visual culture – have never been more visible in Western society.[107] Within Western society, historically, tattooed bodies have been linked with criminality and to stigmatized populations and marginalized communities; those in prison, in gangs, and in the military. The paucity of tattoo-related scholarship, and the narrowness of its scope, reflects the tendency of academics to characterize tattooing as a pathological abnormality, and as a form of "cultural deviance."[108] The increasing visibility of tattoos in mainstream culture, however, creates a new opportunity to challenge such reductive and stereotypical analyses of the tattooing process, and replace such a practice with the impetus to investigate the lived experience of "being tattooed" in recent history.

Throughout history, American tattoo culture as developed in such a way that it has "allowed discrete groups of people to use iconography to declare a connection to like-

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[106] Espiritu, "Vietnamese Refugees and Internet Memorials," 22; See – *Voices of September 11th*: http://voicesofsept11.org/healing-communities/911-living-memorial; *Legacy.com*: http://www.legacy.com/sept11/home.aspx

[107] Jane Caplan, "Indelible memories': The tattooed body as theatre of memory," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, Karin Tilmans (ed.) Amsterdam University Press: ProQuest eBook (2010): 123.

[108] Michael Atkinson, "Tattooing and Civilizing Processes: Body Modification as Self-Control," CRSA/RSCA 41, no. 2 (2004): 126.

minded people and communities."[109]The military, and Navy in particular, has a long-standing historical connection with tattooing – one that has been relatively well documented. In order to protect American mariners from impressment into the British Navy during the late 18th century, Congress passed an act that would grant citizens a certificate that existed as a "vocationally specific form of passport."[110] During the period between 1796 and 1819, approximately 26 000 seaman filed petitions to receive such certificates, and of the 9761 applications that have survived for analysis, 10 percent indicate that the applicants were tattooed. [111]Sailors were effectively the most visible group to be tattooed within American society during this period, and tattoos essentially existed as a form of "vocational badge," or "emblem of trade" that visibly marked those that were professional seafarers. Sailors would often be tattooed whilst onboard or on stopovers, collecting designs that indicated long service at sea or the places that they had travelled to. [112] Although the popularity of military tattooing waxed and waned throughout the twentieth century, many scholars locate the late 1960s and 1970s as the period in which the practice of tattooing flourished.[113] Such practices have historically continued to inform the experiences of American naval personnel, and many in the military still choose to get tattooed to commemorate their deployment.[114] According to a study conducted in 2014, thirty-six percent of current and former members of the military were reported with having at least one tattoo, making those in the military "among the most tattooed members of American society.[115] The prevalence and visibility of tattoos on both military and civilian bodies, has sparked a scholarly interest in investigating the reasons why many choose to get tattooed. In many respects, recent examples and experiences indicate that "memorial" tattoos are becoming the "most readily recognised type of commemorative tattoo."[116] Such a development demonstrates how both the "body,"

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[109] Jonathan Hyman, "The Public Face of 9/11: Memory and Portraiture in the Landscape," The Journal of American History Vol. 9, no. 1 (2007): 189.

[110] Simon P. Newman, "Reading the Bodies of Early American Seafarers," The William and Mary Quarterly Vol. 55, no. 1 (1998): 60.

[111] Newman, "Reading the Bodies of Early American Seafarers," 60-61.

[112] Beverly Yuen Thompson, "Covered in Ink: Tattoos, Women and the Politics of the Body," New York University Press: ProQuest eBook (2015): 33.

[113] Alan B. Govenar, "The Changing Image of Tattooing in American Culture," *Journal of American Culture* 5, no. 1 (1982): 35.

[114] Ashton Nichols, "How The Athens' Tattoo Industry Has Changed Over Time," *The Post,* 29 November, 2018: http://projects.thepostathens.com/SpecialProjects/inked-athens-tattoo-industry/; Tom Cotterill, "Tattoo shop sets up shop inside historic Portsmouth warship," *The News,* 19 November, 2018: https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/defence/tattoo-shop-sets-up-shop-inside-historic-portsmouth-warship-1-8711565; Mark D. Faram, "The Navy just approved the military's best tattoo rules," *Navy Times*, 31 March, 2016.

[115] Marjorie Connelly, "Who's Frequenting the Tattoo Parlor," *The New York Times – The Upshot,* May 1, 2014.

[116] Deborah Davidson, "Art embodies: tattoos as memorials," *Bereavement Care* 36, no. 1 (2017): 33.

and conceptions of what constitutes a "memorial," are being reconfigured in the post-heroic era – a reflection of how both military and civilian spheres are experiencing "total war" in the twenty-first century.

Sociologist Deborah Davidson argues that

> Memorial tattoos function to communicate experiences and emotions which may be so intense as to defy spoken language alone, and to engage others in the collective process of validating the experience of loss, assuaging grief, and facilitating positive integration of loss for the bereaved.[117]

In this respect, "memorial tattoos both embody memory and serve as a kind of translator of memory into a language readable by others."[118] Historian Jane Caplan acknowledges that memorial tattoos enable a "kind of double dialogue," by simultaneously articulating a visible relationship between internal and private aspects, and external public aspects, which in turn shape and inform national public memory.[119]

In 2003, the Staten Island Historical Society curated a photo exhibition titled "Indelible Memories: Sept. 11 Memorial Tattoos," featuring images taken by photographer Vinnie Amessé. For his project, Amessé photographed 55 individuals who had acquired commemorative tattoos following the events of September 11 2001.[120] Amessé's photographs showcased a variety of tattoos that ranged in artistry and complexity – eagles, American flags, names of the deceased, renderings of the Twin Towers, fire-fighter helmets, and Jesus with a fire department of New York City (FDNY) badge in the place of a sacred heart.[121] Across the nation, an immediate impulse to "mark 9/11 by means of tattoos," became apparent as many tattoo studios noted a surge in the "demand for patriotic tattoos."[122] Such an impulse is consonant with the broader outpouring of national grief and solidarity that characterised the 'state-of-the-union' following the 9/11 attacks. Many Americans who had either never

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[117] Davidson, "Art embodies," 33.
[118] "York U Prof to Launch First Comprehensive Digital Archive of Memorial Tattoos," *Targeted News Service,* Washington D.C., August 2013.
[119] Caplan, "'Indelible memories,'" 120-121.
[120] Julie Salamon, "Tragedy Pierces the Heart, Memory the Skin," *The New York Times*, April 4, 2003: https://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/04/arts/tragedy-pierces-the-heart-memory-the-skin.html; Caplan, "'Indelible memories," 119.
[121] Justin Korkidis, "Gallery: Portraits of 9/11 Memorial Tattoos," *Complex Magazine*, September 12, 2001: https://www.complex.com/style/2011/09/gallery-portraits-of-911-memorial-tattoos/
[122] Caplan, "'Indelible memories,'" 121.

considered getting a tattoo, or had never been tattooed previously, chose to commemorate the events with a tattoo. Remarkably, even those who had not been directly impacted by the attacks through the loss of a loved one felt an impulse to express their sentiments by receiving a tattoo. George Donnelly, a subject of Amessé's project, chose to have an eagle stylised with the American flag, cradling the World Trade Centre, to symbolize his "own feelings of patriotism."[123] In his interview with the museum, Donnelly remarked that he would see the Twin Towers as he "went about his daily activities," and although he displayed the American flag on his clothing, he felt that he wanted to have one on his body, despite never being tattooed before.[124] Inspired to document the national outpouring of solidarity and patriotic displays that punctuated the domestic landscape following the attacks, photographer Jonathan Hyman remarks that the American vernacular responses to the events of September 11 are a result of a new form of "memorial vocabulary"

> I knew I was looking at the beginning of a powerful grass-roots response to a national tragedy… Americans were talking to each other. They were speaking out loud in public on their cars, houses, and places of business, on their bodies, and anywhere else they could find space. [125]

Hyman argues that 9/11 memorial tattoos are both "signs of sacrifice and important elements of identity in the new vernacular license we have granted ourselves since the attacks."[126] The impulse to commemorate such events indicates the connection between national trauma, and ideas that are tied to "sacrifice," and ultimately, Hyman suggests that the "sacrifice" of tattooing one's body transforms a "tattooed person into a living memorial."[127] Notions of "sacrifice" informing the decision to get tattooed can be evidenced through the personal testimonies of Amassé's subjects. Paul Cortes chose to receive a tattoo that depicted a fire-helmet emblazoned with the American flag, the words "Never Forget," and a rendering of the Twin Towers with an I-beam cross - a sight from the recovery effort at Ground Zero that particularly affected

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[123] Historic Richmond Town, Photo Record: George Donnelly;
https://statenisland.pastperfectonline.com/photo/E559D62A-072F-4103-B288-703689562976
[124] Historic Richmond Town, Photo Record: George Donnelly.
[125] Jonathan Hyman, "The Public Face of 9/11: Memory and Portraiture in the Landscape," *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 183.
[126] Hyman, "The Public Face of 9/11," 190.
[127] Hyman, "The Public Face of 9/11," 190.

him.[128] Cortes says that the process of receiving the tattoo was "two and a half hours of pure torture, but nothing compared to what those guys went through."[129] Whilst acknowledging that the process of getting a tattoo is not comparable to the trauma caused by the attacks, Cortes nonetheless links the pain of receiving a tattoo as a sacrificial gesture, connecting himself with the national trauma at large. Furthermore, the imperative of sacrifice similarly informs the subject of the tattoo, as well as the gesture of the process itself. One of the most commonly documented 9/11 memorial tattoos are the words, "All gave some, some gave all," indicating collective understandings of the sacrificial imperative as it is connected with national citizenship, and the ideas of "sacrifice" that transcend those who lost their lives as a result of the events of September 11. Choosing to receive such a tattoo connects the wearer with trauma of the events, and with others who have been tattooed in a similar fashion. In effect, these tattooed bodies become a part of an "imagined national community," united through notions of trauma and sacrifice.

Ideas of "sacrifice" have historically been connected to the concept of "total war." During the Second World War in particular, the "war effort" was transposed onto the domestic landscape of the United States, in order to unite civilian and military spheres. Through the purchasing of war bonds, scrap-metal drives, and rationing, the war effort on the home front encouraged personal sacrifices to 'support-the-troops' abroad whilst strengthening a collective sense of national unity at home. However, the post-heroic era of warfare has not required factories to be retooled, bonds to be purchased, or food and fuel to be rationed, and such financial and collective tolls on the domestic home front have been displaced.[130] After the events of September 11, and during the U.S led incursions into both Iraq and Afghanistan, President George W. Bush was asked what citizens could do to 'support-the-troops," and "share in the risks and sacrifices of soldiers in the field," - he responded, "Go shopping."[131] Bush's response heralded the multitude of ways that the 'support-the-troops' cause could be funnelled into a variety of outlets for individual economic expenditure, whilst also

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[128] Historic Richmond Town, Photo Record: Paul Cortes;
https://statenisland.pastperfectonline.com/photo/F66061E2-A7CB-484B-BAAF-043658401637
[129] Historic Richmond Town, Photo Record: Paul Cortes.
[130] Peter W. Singer, "Robots at War: The New Battlefield," *The Wilson Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (2009): 45; Colin McInnes, "A different kind of war? September 11 and the United States' Afghan War," *Review of International Studies* 29 (2003): 170.
[131] Singer, "Robots at War," 45.

mobilizing the American public to participate in a larger national project. Sociologist Martin Shaw argues that "memory cannot be understood as free-standing" as memories are effectively the products of both "the ways individuals appropriated their experiences at the time, and of the ways in which these initial memories have been shaped by their subsequent experience."[132] Within this context, 9/11 memorial tattoos can be interpreted as a vernacular response that connects personal sacrifice to larger notions of national trauma by linking personal memories with the construction of national memories. Such tattoos are an enduring form of vernacular memorialization within the twenty-first century context of total war, demonstrating one of the ways in which "bodies" have been reconfigured in the post-heroic era.

The notion of "embodiment" – that one chooses to embody certain experiences via the tattoo process – resonates with the larger historical context of tattooing practices and culture, particularly in the case of the military. In 1943 interview with the *New York Times*, the tattooist Charlie Wagner observed:

> Funny thing about a war… Fighting men want to be marked in some way or another. High-class fellas, too – men from West Point and Annapolis. Sailors used to be my big customers, but now it's soldiers. And fliers."[133]

In this respect, the act of getting a tattoo both informs and "marks" a veteran's experience of war – a form of "proof" that physically communicates their participation in war, whilst simultaneously connecting veterans with a military larger community. Synne Dyvik and Julia Welland argue that the "practice of tattooing can inform part of a wider process of reflecting, communicating, and curating war."[134] Tattoos as a form of vernacular memorialisation – "curating" and communicating experiences of war - in this context, can inspire dialogues between civilians and the military, ultimately transforming the relationships between those spheres.

In 2014, Jason Deitch (former Army veteran, veteran's advocate, and military sociologist) identified a need to "bridge the divide between the veterans and civilian

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[132] Martin Shaw, "Past Wars and Present Conflicts: From the Second World War to the Gulf," in *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, Martin Evans and Ken Lunns (eds.) Berg: New York, 1997 (193).

[133] Helen Cumming, "War Booms the Tattooing Art," *The New York Times*, September 19, 1943: pg. SM38.

[134] Synne L. Dyvik and Julia Welland, "War Ink: Sense-Making and Curating War through Military Tattoos," *International Political Sociology* 12 (2018): 346.

communities." Recognizing tattoos as an "ideal entry point to exploring veteran's experiences," he partnered with the Contra Costa County public library collective in order to facilitate *War Ink*, a virtual exhibit that would document and curate images of veteran tattoos and their accompanying stories. [135] The exhibition chronicles the experiences of Californian veterans representing each branch of the military, and ultimately, it highlights a variety of reasons why some veterans choose to get tattooed as a way to articulate and embody their war experience. *War Ink* positions veterans as "living records" of the conflicts that most American civilians are materially disconnected from. The "war story" that transpires from a reading of these veteran testimonies is neither cogent or unique, yet the project effectively underscores the "messiness, contradictions, and ambiguities of contemporary war."[136]

Similar to the impulse felt by those who chose to receive tattoos in order to memorialize the loss of loved ones following the events of 9/11, many veterans outline their desire to memorialize wartime relationships that were fostered. The exhibit's text explicates such a compulsion:

> A tattoo brings back someone who is lost. It celebrates the bond of an entire unit. It commemorates a pivotal event that shaped a collective history.[137]

War Ink is significant as it facilitates an open dialogue between veterans and civilians, by providing a platform to document the intimate, personal "embodied" memorials," which ultimately transform the complexion of the nation's war story at large. The following examples gathered from the *War Ink* project, and other sources that have documented the practice of memorial tattooing, illustrate the variety of reasons why some veterans get tattooed in order to embody and curate their experiences of war.

Some veterans also choose to receive tattoos that perform a talismanic function, in order to provide safety, and good luck whilst on deployment. The concept of a tattoo as a form of talisman is not a new one – as tattooist Charlie Wagner in 1943 recounts a client's request:

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[135] *War Ink*: http://www.warink.org/about.html
[136] Dyvik and Welland, "War Ink," 347.
[137] *War Ink*: http://www.warink.org/

> Had a fine chap from the Air Forces who wanted to be tattooed for good luck before he took off… so I put five 'Happy Landings' on his chest… Better than a rabbit's foot.[138]

In *Dispatches*, war correspondent Michael Herr refers to what he terms as kind of "flip religion," describing the variety of talismanic objects that grunts carried with them during their tours in Vietnam:

> Guys stuck the ace of spades in their helmet bands, they picked relics off of an enemy they'd killed… they carried around five-pound bibles from home, crosses, St. Christophers, mezuzahs, locks of hair, girlfriends' underwear… One man was carrying an oatmeal cookie… wrapped in foil and plastic and three pairs of socks… his wife had baked it and mailed it to him.[139]

Although these physical items are not permanently inscribed on one's body, the impulse to tattoo a "talisman," –to embody one - can be interpreted within the context of Herr's conception of a "flip religion." In contemporary conflicts of the twenty-first century, such impulses continue to persist. Members of the 101st Airborne Division returning from Iraq in 2005 chose to get tattoos in order to commemorate their experiences, and also to give them "strength and protection in battle."[140] Tattoo artist Donna Vinge details the designs that many of the veterans chose – "angels fighting off demons with swords, names of loved ones, horseshoes and centaurs, four-leaf clovers"[141] Richly symbolic religious iconography is often chosen by veterans to offer talismanic protection, yet such symbolism can also serve other purposes.

Mike Ergo, an Iraq veteran and former Marine chose to receive a depiction of the archangel Saint Michael slaying any enemy on the inside of his forearm. The instructions for the tattoo artist were specific – "the enemy's hair had to be curly and dark, the beard thick. This was part of a face etched into his memory, that of the first insurgent he killed during the battle of Fallujah."[142] Ergo outlines why he selected this representation of his combat experience - "the tattoo kind of just helps me to see that

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[138] Cumming, "War Booms the Tattooing Art," p. SM38.
[139] Herr, *Dispatches*, 52.
[140] Christian Davenport, "Indelible Memories For Veterans of Iraq," *The Washington Post*, November 6 2005: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/05/AR2005110500856.html
[141] Davenport, "Indelible Memories For Veterans of Iraq," 2005.
[142] Davenport, "Indelible Memories for Veterans of Iraq,"

this guy got what was coming to him."[143] In this respect, Ergo's impulse to "embody" his war story functions as a form of both vindication and of vengeance. Ergo's choice to commemorate a powerful moment, albeit the moment in which he celebrates victory over an enemy, resonates with the broader context of tattooing as a vernacular response to memorialising contemporary conflicts. For others, tattoos represent a form of memorial "in-the-flesh" – their bodies become a living testament to those who have lost their lives in warfare.

Tattoos that seek to memorialize the deaths of fallen "brethren" are among the most common chosen by veterans, and in their own way, they have produced their own generic iconography that connects wearers of such tattoos to the broader military community. One of the most popular designs sought by veterans is that of the "battlefield cross" – a configuration of an inverted rifle, boots, a helmet, and dog tags. The battlefield cross has historically been a visible symbol of memorial.[144] Although the origins of its conception are disputed, Kathleen Golden argues that it might have been used during the Civil War "to signify a dead solider to be gathered and buried," yet by the First and Second World Wars, it "began to serve as a memorial" to those fallen in battle.[145] During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the image of the battlefield cross has become an instantly recognisable "symbol of loss, of mourning and closure for the living."[146] The battlefield cross represents a fallen soldier, and in this respect, it can be argued that its configuration (the combination of military accoutrements) attempts to articulate a "body" in the absence of one. Jonathan Snyder, a subject of the *War Ink* project and a veteran who served in both Afghanistan and Iraq, outlines why he chose to be tattooed with the battlefield cross, and the words "Fallen But Not Forgotten":

> We lost 14 people in 9 months, and when I came home, I didn't know how to feel about the fact that my friends died and I was just fine. So I turned to [getting a] tattoo for therapy. I wanted to get something to try and take the

[143] Davenport, "Indelible Memories for Veterans of Iraq," 2005.
[144] James Wright, "Remembering Those Who Wore the 'Boots on the Ground': A metaphor conceals the price paid by those who serve their country in times of war," *The Atlantic*, May 30, 2016: https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/05/boots-on-the-ground/484682/
[145] Kathleen Golden, "The battlefield cross," *The National Museum of American History*, May 21, 2015: http://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/battlefield-cross
[146] Golden, "The battlefield cross," 2015.

pain away and I felt like I owed them something… cause they gave everything. I dedicated my back to them.[147]

Another participant in the project, Russell Toll, articulates a similar sacrificial imperative in his testimony:

I was very fortunate to be in the company of some incredible men, who were chosen by a force I don't understand, to have fallen in combat. And the sad part is, there's not enough room on my back to put all the dog tags.[148]

In order to honour military friendships and the perceived sacrifices of their fallen brethren, these veterans "sacrifice" their own bodies in order to create a living, memorial landscape. The tattooing process – a form of self-inflicted wound – helps many veterans to reinterpret and rearticulate their war experiences in tandem with the dynamic relationship between conceptions of pain and sacrifice. Veteran Jason Lemieux, who has "Never Forget" and the name of marine killed in action tattooed on his arm, best exemplifies this connection between sacrifice and memorial- "When I was feeling the pain of the tattoo, it was actually making it OK that those guys got killed and I didn't."[149]

For Lemieux, his memorial tattoo also functions as a tool – a warning label – in order to educate and remind civilians about the existence of a war many Americans are materially disconnected from – "It's for my guys… But it's also never forget the cost of war, to get people to understand what they're asking for when they support war."[150] Others similarly recognise the educative utility of memorial tattoos. Veteran Josh Wheeldon had the number "22" tattooed on his finger, in order to memorialise the deaths of four of his friends who committed suicide, and in reference to the number the of veterans who commit suicide everyday in the United States, according to a 2012 report by the U.S. Department of Affairs.[151] In this respect, memorial tattoos also "ventriloquize" the dead – they make the military dead visible in the living sphere. The presence of veterans (as military bodies) acts as a conduit between

[147] Jonathan Snyder, *War Ink*: http://www.warink.org/
[148] Russel Toll, *War Ink*: http://www.warink.org/
[149] Michael M. Philips, "Politics and Economics: Tattoos Honor Marines Killed in Iraq and Help the Survivors," *Wall Street Journal*, 15 February 2006.
[150] Philips, "Politics and Economics," 2006.
[151] William Robert Ferrer, "Veterans' Tattoos Symbolize Loss, Patriotism, Resistance," *The Associated Press*, 2018: http://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/07/10/veterans-tattoos-symbolize-loss-patriotimes-resistance.html

historical memories of the military-dead and the civilian public at large. Just as veteran memorial tattoos contribute to the visibility of the military-dead, so too, do memorial tattoos inform and disseminate military identities in the post-heroic era.

Memorial tattoos enable veterans to articulate and claim "warrior" status within the context of the imagined community that informs military identities within the United States. Elizabeth Estabrooks – one of the first women to undergo gender-integrated basic training during the 1970s – chose to "embody" her identity as a veteran through the tattoo process. Her tattoo depicts pink army boots, draped with pearls and dog tags- a recasting of traditionally "feminine" elements over objects that are connected to "masculine" conceptions of the military.[152] She states:

> Women aren't often acknowledged as having served… And you know, people don't think of women as veterans, and people don't think of veterans as women… Here's my message to the world… I'm a woman, I was in the Army, and I proudly served.[153]

For Estabrooks, her tattoo represents a crucial element of her identity as a female member of the military in a climate that has been historically hostile to the inclusion of women. In this respect, veteran tattoos can exemplify the complex ways in which military and civilian identities intersect. Larry Milam, a veteran who served in Iraq with the Army National Guard, chose to tattoo a depiction of his combat action badge, in order to permanently and visibly articulate his military identity – "…so when I don't wear it on my uniform… I always have it on me."[154] Milam's tattoo demonstrates an explicit desire to embody his experiences of war, reconciling his civilian and military identities. In some cases, military and civilian identities cannot be so easily reconciled. One of the most salient examples of this dichotomy is that of Patrick Meagher, a *War Ink* participant, and Navy veteran of the Vietnam War, who sought to painfully remove his tattoo via laser - in effect, attempting to "erase" his embodied experiences of the war. The image of Meagher in contrast with other veterans in the project is striking – whilst other participants' sport colourful designs, Meagher's arm is bare with only faint traces of ink visible:

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[152] Ferrer, "Veterans' Tattoos," 2018.
[153] Ferrer, "Veterans' Tattoos," 2018.
[154] Larry Milam, *War Ink*: http://www.warink.org/

This was a Sailor Jerry tattoo. It had the two diesel submarines that I was on. Some of it, you can see. You can't get it 100%. The metaphor that I used was I got to get clean because I'm not going to be a sailor anymore. I was making a shift out of a culture where this was part of what I was leaving. It's not like it's really accepted. I'm talking about the mid to late 70s… Who got tattooed back then? Sailors, criminals.[155]

These examples of veteran memorial tattoos highlight the variety of ways that the tattooing process has enabled members of the military to "curate" their experiences of war, in a climate characterised by increasingly acceptability of tattoos as an element of visual culture. Yet for some like Meagher, tattoos are a reminder of an identity that cannot be so easily assimilated when expected to return to "civilian" life. Despite the fact that tattoos are slowly becoming a more culturally acceptable form of body modification, some veterans have expressed that their tattoos have threatened their employment prospects when making a transition to the civilian workforce. In observance of Veterans Day in 2014, the Carolina Laser & Cosmetic Center offered free tattoo removal sessions to any military veterans who were suffering from "tattoo regret." Dr. Anne White, the owner and lead physician of the center commented:

Veterans face many challenges upon returning from military duty, a significant one being reentering the workforce. We've heard from our military patients that many employers do not allow visible tattoos and that's where we can help.[156]

The notion of "visibility" fundamentally underscores the impulse to receive (or remove) a tattoo, and within this context, it can be argued that the act of marking in the body in order to be seen, can be understood in relation to how military bodies have been policed during recent history. As noted, the nature of the First Persian Gulf War coverage effectively communicated a war story that extolled the exceptional virtues and capabilities of efficient, elegant technology, ultimately reconfiguring weapons as "heroes" of the war. "Bodies" were rendered virtually invisible, both by administrative control, and the narratives that were promulgated by the media, and the relative lack of American "blood spilt" led to the displacement of the soldier as

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[155] Patrick Meagher, *War Ink*: http://www.warink.org/
[156] "Carolina Laser & Cosmetic Center to Offer a Free Laser Tattoo Removal Session to Military Veterans this Veterans Day, *Medical Devices & Surgical Technology Week*, November 30, 2014.

"warrior." Furthermore, the increasing use of UAV technology and systems during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, has contributed to the altering of the warrior narrative in a post-heroic era, subsequently shaping the reconfiguration of military bodies. The proliferation of memorial tattoos following the events of 9/11, coupled with the burgeoning acceptance of tattoos in mainstream culture, have in part transformed the ways in which civilians and veterans choose to embody their experiences in relation to the nation's narrative of war at large. In this respect, veterans are able to connect with each other, and the larger sense of the imagined "community" that informs their war experiences. Memorial tattoos are not only an outlet for veterans to process their grief, shape their memories, and express and reclaim (or renounce) their identities – they also allow for veterans to reconfigure their bodies by demanding a visibility in the public realm. The notion of visibility also directly applies to the unprecedented rate of private military contractors being deployed to assist the "boots-on-the-ground" in military operations abroad.

As previously acknowledged, a growing trend in both academic scholarship and popular discourses addresses military privatization and America's increasing reliance on contractors during recent history. Scholars and journalists categorically address issues including: the regulation of contractors and companies, accountability and legality, and the ways in which civil-military relations have been transformed through the shifting dynamics between corporate and military spheres.[157] Yet the experiences of contract workers at war–the psychological, social and cultural implications of their participation in military operations - have not yet been addressed at large. Accounts of private contractor experiences, and the unique set of challenges they face when they return, commonly proliferate on blogs or websites that have been created in response to the lack of resources that have been made available to contract workers, as T. Christian Miller characterizes it – "a homemade system of sympathy, patched together through websites and email."[158] Private contractors are characterised as a

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[157] Deborah D. Avant., *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005; Molly Dunigan, *Victory for Hire: Private Security Companies' Impact on Military Effectiveness,* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011; Simon Chesterman, "Lawyers, Guns, and Money: The Governance of Business Activities in Conflict Zones," *Chicago Journal of International Law* 11, no. 2 (2010-2011): 321-341; Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army,* New York: Nation Books, 2007; Pratap Chatterjee, *Halliburton's Army: How a Well-Connected Texas Oil Company Revolutionized the Way America Makes War,* New York: Nation Books, 2009.
[158] T. Christian Miller, "The battle scars of a private war: Contractors wounded or killed in Iraq are the anonymous casualties. Ceremonies are secret, and benefits are scarce." *Los Angeles Times*, February 12, 2007; Some examples

"shadow warriors," and in effect, they are "private bodies" - their involvement in war making is obfuscated, and they are rendered virtually invisible within the public sphere.

Reporting for the Los Angeles Times in 2007, T. Christian Miller chronicles an undisclosed ceremony for the posthumous awarding of honours to the families of contractors killed while working in Iraq. Nine families gathered together in a "hushed hotel ballroom" whilst an Army Major General conferred Defense of Freedom medals, one of the highest-ranking civilian honours, yet there was "no public recognition of sacrifice... The Army even refused to release the names of those it was honouring."[159] The medal ceremony highlights the relationship between the military and private contracting companies such as KBR, Inc. (formerly Kellogg Brown & Root, and formerly a subsidiary of Halliburton), and the issues that attend the acknowledgement of PMC involvement in U.S. military operations. Contractors that return from conflict are configured as a "largely invisible kind of pseudo-veteran," forming a scattered yet burgeoning community of civilians whose participation in modern war making problematizes notions of sacrifice.[160] The unprecedented degree to which the United States Department of Defense has utilised PMCs to perform tasks typically ascribed to the military in recent history, has fostered an unusual and uneasy blurring of distinctions between what constitutes an "offensive" and "defensive" engagement in conflict, and how those engagements should be publically framed. An example of this is an incident that occurred in 2004, when eight security contractors working for Blackwater assisted military operations by helping to "repel a major attack on a coalition authority building" in Najef, Iraq.[161] The contractors "fired thousands of rounds" into the crowd that surrounded the building, at one point "giving orders to an active-duty U.S. Marine on when to open fire."[162] Transparency about how the incident arose is fraught – there are no official military reports as Blackwater was tasked with "guarding the building and coordinating its defense."[163] Furthermore,

of these websites include: http://www.americancontractorsiniraq.com/;
http://www.operationwearehere.com/CivilianContractors.html; https://shadowwarriorsproject.org/
[159] Miller, "The battle scars of a private war." 2007.
[160] Miller, "The battle scars of a private war." 2007.
[161] David Barstow, James Glanz, Richard A. Oppel Jr and Kate Zernike, "Security Companies: Shadow Soldiers in Iraq," *The New York Times*, April 19, 2004.
[162] Barstow et. al, "Security Companies," 2004; Jeremy Scahill, *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army*, New York: Nation Books, 2007: 193.
[163] Scahill, *Blackwater,* 193.

only estimates indicate the casualty toll, ranging from "hundreds," to "twenty to thirty dead with two hundred wounded."[164] When called upon to address the incident, vice president Patrick Toohey asserted that his men "fought and engaged every combatant with precise fire," yet he also insisted that the PMCs had not been engaged in combat, as they were "conducting a security operation."[165] Under international law, private contractors are prohibited from performing offensive combat operations. Toohey's unclear response underscores how PMC activity in modern conflict fails to conveniently cohere with the notions of "bravery" and "sacrifice" that attend conceptions of traditional military intervention abroad. Yet despite this uneasiness, the rhetoric of sacrifice has still been employed by officials to frame the experiences of contract workers.

Following the deaths of Halliburton contractors in 2004, the company released a statement that referred to the deceased as "brave hearts without medals, humanitarians without parades and heroes without statues," further stating that "once Iraq is rebuilt, as it will be… it will be a living testament to the tenacity, courage and sacrifice of these employees."[166] Sean McFate reports that since 2009, the ratio of contractors to U.S. troops in war zones has "increased from 1 to 1 to about 3 to 1," and as of 2016, 75% of U.S. forces in Afghanistan were contracted.[167] The proliferation of "private bodies" outnumbering American "boots-on-the ground" has created a situation in which, by 2010, more contractors were dying than U.S. military personnel.[168] A study conducted by political scientists Deborah Avant and Lee Sigelman indicates that although the American public at large is "just as sensitive to the deaths of private forces as it is to military deaths, it is less likely to know about them."[169] No "running count" exists to record the deaths of private contractors, and in this respect, the invisibility of private bodies engendered by the lack of official transparency contributes to the American public's disconnection from the "human costs" of war.

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[164] Scahill, *Blackwater,* 193.

[165] Barstow, et. al. "Security Companies," 2004.

[166] Ralph Blumenthal, "The Struggle for Iraq: Civilian Employees; Hope Intermingles With Grief Among Halliburton Workers," *The New York Times,* April 22, 2004.

[167] Sean McFate, "America's Addiction to Mercenaries: Washington's reliance on private contractors to fight its wars has mutated into a strategic vulnerability," *The Atlantic,* August 12, 2016: https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/08/iraq-afghanistan-contractor-pentagon-obama/495731/

[168] McFate, "America's Addiction to Mercenaries," 2016- The "official" tally of contractor deaths is unknown, as few laws exist to regulate the private contracting industry.

[169] Deborah Avant and Lee Sigelman, "Private Security and Democracy: Lessons from the US in Iraq," *Security Studies* 19, no. 2 (2010): 230.

Historically, conceptions of "sacrifice" in the military context fundamentally correlates to the loss of life on the battlefield, and in this respect, it could be argued that the post-heroic conditions of recent warfare have shifted the burden to contractors, who disproportionately have been "making the ultimate sacrifice."[170] Gary Schaub and Volke Franke argue

> the outsourcing of combat functions to the private sector cuts to the heart of military professionalism, calls into question what it means to be a solider, and diffuses traditional notions of a warrior identity. [171]

Whilst the deaths of soldiers "may communicate a message to the public about the importance and legitimacy of a mission," the deaths of private contractors (and their role in the U.S. machinery of war making) do not produce the "same symbolic potency."[172] As noted in chapter one, the majority of private contractors have previously served in the armed forces. A Rand study indicated that 84% of their sample demographic of private military contractors had prior military experience.[173] Many veterans returning from deployment express that transitioning from active-duty to civilian life presents challenges that they are often unprepared for, including unemployment. Veterans with unique skill sets, particularly those with a background in Special Forces or who have served in the combat arms, may not find equivalent roles in the "civilian" job market. Colby Buzzell, an Iraq war veteran who served in the infantry, writes about his experiences whilst attending a job fair facilitated by the Department of Veterans Affairs. He recounts a meeting with another Iraq war veteran, who expressed his disenchantment at finding employment:

> Translating my military experience into the civilian world is hard… Being infantry, there's no job equivalent out there… There are no jobs for people who jump out of planes and engage the enemy. There is nothing that is anything close.[174]

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[170] McFate, "America's Addiction to Mercenaries," 2016.
[171] Gary Schaub Jr, and Volker Franke, "Contractors as Military Professionals?" *Parameters*, Winter 2009-10: 100.
[172] Avant and Sigelman, "Private Security and Democracy," 256-257.
[173] Molly Dunigan, Carrie M. Farmer, Rachel M. Burns, Alison Hawks, Claude Messan Setodji, "Out of the Shadows: The Health and Well-Being of Private Contractors Working in Conflict Environments," RAND Corporation, National Security and Research Division (2013): 25.
[174] Colby Buzzell, *Thank You For Being Expendable And Other Experiences*, USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

For many veterans, becoming a private contractor enables them to still "support the military," and use their skills whilst earning a higher wage. A collection of websites online encourage military veterans to re-deploy as contractors, offering downloadable resources such as "The 6 Figure Solider: How To Achieve Financial Independence And Get A Six Figure Job":

> Are you a military veteran who is about to transition to civilian life or already struggling as a civilian? Civilian life is expensive, and the pay is never enough… As a civilian, you work hard but have little more to show for it and big financial pressures. However, there is a solution… We're talking REAL money, not peanuts, for the job you are doing now. Use your skills to pay your bills![175]

Despite previous military service, private bodies are disconnected from the traditional notions of obligation and service that inform the military identities of service people, – they are often characterised as "mercenaries," are not required to swear an oath to the Constitution of the United States, nor do they represent any nation-state.[176] Private contractors maintain civilian identities whilst they are engaged in military operations, and upon their return, yet their experiences echo those of service people deployed in the military's official capacity. A comprehensive study conducted and released by Rand in 2013, addressed the paucity of data concerning the experiences of private contractors working in combat conditions. The report found that contractors were equally affected by serious health problems, including PTSD.[177] Furthermore, contractors are not entitled to any military health benefits as they are employed as civilians, and as such, are reliant on the public healthcare system. T. Christian Miller reports that even when contractors have sustained injuries in combat, "contractors with head wounds… have had to fly back to the U.S. on commercial jets for medical care."[178]

The declining rate of American military casualties abroad is often touted as a positive condition of post-heroic warfare. Supplementing ground forces with private

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[175] Military Contractor Academy, 2018: http://www.militarycontractoracademy.com/

[176] Tim Weiner, "A Security Contractor Defends His Team, Which, He Says, Is Not a Private Army," *The New York Times*, April 29, 2007.

[177] Dunigan et. al. "Out of the Shadows," 16; Mark Thompson, "Contracting Out PTSD: It's not only the troops suffering from war's mental ravages," *TIME*, December 15, 2013: http://swampland.time.com/2013/12/15/contracting-out-ptsd/

[178] Miller, "The battle scars of a private war," 2007.

contractors (whose deaths are not recorded) and the sustained reliance on UAVs have fostered conditions which have enabled American officials and commentators to claim that recent warfare is waged with a relatively "light-footprint." Less Americans are dying in war, yet more Americans are returning as veterans. In 2012, it was reported that "45% of the 1.6 million veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are now seeking compensation" for service-related injuries, which is "more than double the estimate of 21% who filed such claims after the Gulf War in the early 1990s."[179] Furthermore, veterans of recent wars are sustaining different types of injuries, and in greater numbers, than have been recorded in previous conflicts. On average, veterans of the post-heroic era are seeking compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for upwards of eight injuries, in contrast to Vietnam veterans who receive "compensation for fewer than four, on average, and those from World War II and Korea just two."[180] In a tone that could almost be mistaken as indicating an inconvenience to the VA, chief medical rehabilitation chief David Cifu commented on the increasing number of returning veterans - "They're being kept alive at unprecedented rates."[181] The mounting claims made by veterans for a variety of ailments -including the loss of limbs, disfigurement, blindness, hearing loss, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and PTSD- enter a backlogged and overwhelmed department that lacks the resources to adequately assist these "forgotten bodies" of recent conflicts. In his memoir, Colby Buzzell recounts his experiences dealing with the VA as a returned veteran diagnosed with PTSD:

> Years after I first returned from Iraq I started having thoughts and visions of killing myself, I'd call the Department of Veterans Affairs. They always put me on hold… Before, I thought it was a miracle that I survived the Iraq war. Now I'm thinking it's a miracle I'm still alive after dealing with the VA for so long."[182]

Within the context of memory and memorial, the prevalence of PTSD affecting veterans in the post-heroic era has come to characterised by some scholars as form of "involuntary commemoration," reconfiguring veterans as "involuntary walking

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[179] Marchione, "U.S. vets' disability filings reach historic rate," 2012.
[180] Marchione, "U.S. vets' disability filing reach historic rate,"2012.
[181] Marchione, "U.S. vets' disability filings reach historic rate," 2012.
[182] Buzzell, *Thank You For Being Expendable*.

memorials" to their experiences of war.[183] Jo Stanley argues that any "nominal public respect" offered to veterans by way of memorials and commemorative anniversaries, is ultimately "undermined by the lack of a supportive infrastructure such as pensions and appropriate health care for those bearing the disabling legacies of their service."[184] An internal study conducted by the VA recorded that suicide rates among veterans were 7.5 times higher than the national average, indicating that in 2008, the "total number of veteran suicides in a single year eclipsed the number of combat deaths in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined."[185] Within this context, such tolls represent a form of "total war" on veterans' "forgotten" bodies in the post-heroic climate of warfare.

While the bodies of returning veterans are often rhetorically connected to the broader combat narratives that inform cultural experiences of war, responsibility for veteran care is systemically eschewed. In order to mitigate the deluge of mounting claims for disability compensation, the military has been found to "discharge thousands of soldiers exhibiting signs of PTSD and TBI… as having pre-existing personality disorders."[186] Personnel dismissed on these terms are likely to be found ineligible for medical care or compensation, and often, the grounds of their release displayed on administrative documentation renders it difficult for those discharged to obtain gainful employment. Post-9/11 veterans of both the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are "twice as likely to be unemployed as the general population," and more than a million veterans who have entered the civilian workforce are working minimum-wage jobs.[187]

Consistent with the trend to further privatise functions of the military, federal entities such as the Department of Defense and the VA have considered ways to foster public-private partnerships in order to meet the needs of the burgeoning veteran population.[188] In 2011, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce launched an initiative called

[183] Jo Stanley, "Involuntary commemorations: Post-traumatic stress disorder and its relationship to war commemoration," in *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration,* T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper (eds.) Routledge: London, 2000: 240.
[184] Stanley, "Involuntary commemorations," 240.
[185] Gordon P. Erspamer, "The New Suspect Class: Tragically, Our Veterans," *Human Rights* 35, no. 2 (2008): 17.
[186] Erspamer, "The New Suspect Class," 19; Jean Otto and Bryan Webber, "Mental Health Diagnoses and Counseling Among Pilots of Remotely Piloted Aircraft in the United States Air Force," *MSMR* 20, no. 3 (2013): 5-6.
[187] Avi Asher-Schapiro, "Uber is recruiting 50,000 veterans as drivers: But are these vets getting taken for a ride?" *The Verge*, November 4, 2014: https://www.theverge.com/2014/11/4/7150225/uber-is-recruiting-50000-veterans
[188] Eric R. Pedersen, Nicole K. Eberhart, Kayla M. Williams, Terri Tanielian, Caroline Epley, and Deborah M. Scharf, "Public Private Partnerships for Providing Behavioral Health Care to Veterans and Their Families: What

Hiring Our Heroes, which seeks to connect veterans with employment available opportunities spanning public, private, and non-profit sectors.[189] The Silicon-valley based company Uber – a ride-sharing service that employs drivers as independent contractors for short-term engagements – is an exemplar of a flourishing spate of "gig economy" providers, a trend that has transformed the casualization of the labour force, seeking veterans to bolster their employee base. Uber launched UberMILITARY in 2014, an initiative that sought to hire 50,000 veterans by 2016 (roughly a quarter of unemployed veterans that have returned from both Afghanistan and Iraq), yet many veterans who have signed up have voiced their disillusionment with their experiences.[190] The nature of low-wage, unstable "gig" employment leaves workers unprotected, as one veteran articulates:

> Uber promises a good job, but in reality it's a very precarious way to make a living. I'm looking for a new job, and there's no way I would recommend this life to other vets. [191]

Furthermore, many veterans struggle with the lack of opportunities to employ the skills they have acquired whilst in service, finding their unique skill-sets irreconcilable with a transition to a "civilian" identity. Responding to these concerns, veterans have also created their own avenues to assist veterans re-entering "civilian" life post- active duty. Ryan Tate, a former Marine who served in Iraq, felt inspired to create opportunities for veterans to channel their military expertise in a meaningful capacity. After being exposed to the issue of elephant and rhino poaching in East Africa, Tate established Veterans Empowered To Protect African Wildlife (VETPAW), an organisation that "utilizes specialized military experience… as a result of counter-insurgency training techniques to help turn the tide against the poaching epidemic."[192] Seeking to address the needs of veterans who are highly skilled in combat-related areas and wish to "serve in another capacity," Tate leads teams to train park rangers to counter poachers of protected wildlife. Although Tate's

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Do We Know, What Do We Need To Learn, and What Do We Need to Do?" *RAND Corporation* 2015: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR994.html

[189] Hiring Our Heroes: https://www.hiringourheroes.org/

[190] Allie Conti, "All the Reasons Why Uber Is the Worst," *VICE*, November 19, 2014: https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/exm7za/all-the-reasons-why-uber-is-the-worst-1118; Colby Buzzell, "My Life Driving Uber as an Iraq War Veteran with PTSD," *VICE*, 7 June, 2015: https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/zngv39/driving-uber-as-an-iraqi-war-veteran

[191] Asher-Schapiro, "Uber is recruiting 50,000 veterans as drivers," 2014.

[192] VETPAW: http://vetpaw.org/

initiative offers veterans an opportunity to apply their skills, VETPAW's objective also reconfigures the "bodies" of veterans by enabling them to become "boots-on-the-ground." Tate outlines the crisis of identity he faced on completing active duty – "When I returned to civilian life after the Marine Corps, I lost myself. I didn't really know what I was here for."[193] In this respect, the opportunity for veterans to re-engage with their "military identities" helps to reconfigure them as "warriors" post-service.

Veterans exemplify the tolls of a "total war" on the military body. The invisibility of military bodies – whether deceased or returned from war– fosters conditions in which bodies can be ventriloquized in order to be endowed with new meanings. As the war in Vietnam represented a moment of total rupture, traditional conceptions and official practices of memorialization were challenged and reconfigured in response – how can a war that was "lost" be commemorated? The process of memorialization brings the military dead into the living sphere. In light of the Gulf War – a claimed victory, that lacks closure – and the contentious, ongoing War on Terror, the functions of memorialization have transformed. The American public has sought to articulate, process, and understand their experiences of warfare and trauma, in connection with the larger "war story" that attends the contemporary climate of total war. In this way, vernacular responses to conflict have come to inform practices of vernacular memory – allowing civilians and veterans to demand and reclaim visibility. Notions of embodiment, visibility, and connection, are intimate responses to the broader climate that is characterized by remoteness, yet examples of how the "body" has been reconfigured in the post-heroic era arguably demonstrate the ways in which war still continues to inform the imagined community's identity – as a citizen, or as a soldier, but fundamentally as an *American.*

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[193] VETPAW: http://vetpaw.org/

Conclusion

Total War: what is the war story for the 21st century?

"The more I try and forget about Iraq, the more I'm reminded of it. I tried hard. Inside
the movie theater, to see the new Errol Morris documentary, the Unknown Known, I
tried to block out every conversation around me… but here was another couple…
They held hands. They kissed. They talked about their next vacation. I wanted to
vomit. Who the fuck goes on a date to a documentary in which the architect of the
Iraq war tries to defend himself?"[194] – Colby Buzzell

The epilogue of Rachel Maddow's *Drift* outlines a "to-do" list for Americans to
undertake in order to "unmake those specific decisions" that set the nation on a course
that has become complacent with the normalcy of war.[195] Maddow concludes that
ultimately:

> We just need to revive that old idea of America as a deliberately peaceable
> nation. That's not simply our inheritance, it's our responsibility.[196]

Arguably, violent conflicts continue to characterize and guide the American animus.
The notion of "deliberate peace" rests uneasily with the reality that historically,
conflicts have come to inform a sense of national mythology, and develop a culture of
war that underlies, and operates within American national and popular culture at
large. This thesis has sought to trace and contextualize the historical and cultural
contingencies that underpin a new reconfiguration of the American war story.

The new culture of "post-heroic" war that emerged in the late twentieth century and
have endured into the twenty-first, has informed the transformations between military,
civilian, and corporate spheres of interest. The ubiquitous, domestic hegemony of
U.S. militarism is contrasted by the reality that Americans have become increasingly
disconnected from the substantive processes of waging war. This thesis has argued
that a concept of "remoteness" has characterized this shifting complexion of "total
war," informing the relationships between civilians and their military, whilst also
informing the ways in which warfare has been waged and conceived.

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[194] Colby Buzzell, *Thank You For Being Expendable And Other Experiences*.
[195] Rachel Maddow, *Drift*, (New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2012): 249.
[196] Maddow, *Drift*, 252.

The central political character of the "citizen soldier" continues to inform notions of identity and citizenship, despite the ways in which it has been challenged. In particular, the citizen-soldier ideal – as constituted by an obligation of sacrifice and the responsibility of martial service – was challenged by the creation of the All-Volunteer Force in the 1970s. Furthermore, the proliferation of Private Military Companies and their expanding roles in conflict have come to evince the ultimate extension of an AVF policy that was shaped by market forces. The market *for* force – an outsourced force- has allowed recent administrations to escalate conflicts abroad whilst fundamentally rewiring the relationships between citizens and the military.

Chapter One broadly sketched the functions and transformations of the citizen-solider mythos, focusing on the National Guard and its historical connection to the citizen-soldier ideal. The re-invigoration and conflation of citizen-solider and warrior identities, as evidenced in the SoS campaign, demonstrates the way in which the concept has been rearticulated to service the contemporary needs of the military in a climate that has been characterized as post-heroic. Furthermore, the enduring popularity of superheroes – accelerated by the proliferation of superhero films produced after 9/11 – reveals a cultural impulse to comprehend and interpret the salient, contemporary anxieties that challenge American conceptions of identity in an era of "total war."

The technological revolution that has attended the transformation of U.S. military forces during the first decade of the twenty-first century, has shaped the way that Americans wage and conceive of war. The concept of "remoteness" applies literally to understandings of how UAV technology function operationally. Within this context, "remoteness" relates to the removal of military personnel from the spatial reality of the battlefield. The asymmetrical reality of UAV technology has implications for the ways in which those who operate drones reconcile their military identity with the elements of their role that imitate some aspects of civilian labor. Yet despite the fact that pilots are removed from the physical battlefield, "human" factors still inform the ways in which drones are operated and understood. Chapter Two historically situated the evolution of UAV technology, whilst exploring how the drone

phenomenon has entered the public's collective consciousness – despite the paucity of "official" data relating to the U.S. military's conducting of the drone program abroad. This chapter illustrates that the material, operational, and cultural anatomy of the "drone" informs a new facet of the "total war" story – one underscored by a paradox of ubiquity (visibility) and absence (invisibility), remoteness (machine) and "fleshiness" (human).

The mechanical concept of "remoteness" is also applicable to the analysis of videogames as cultural products, and the ways in which contribute to shaping the cultural experiences of warfare, literally, via remote control. Video games exist as a ubiquitous element of visual and popular culture that informs the homology between corporate, military, private spheres – the military industrial entertainment complex. Furthermore, the interactive function of gaming has evidentially shaped the relationships between civilians and the military. Guided by the premise that "military games are best seen as a new kind of dialogue between military and civilian spheres," Chapter Three explored the ways in which games have functioned on several levels of engagement. The collusion between both the military and civilian sector has fostered the creation of games utilized to recruit and train enlistees – effectively mediating their experiences of war via remote. Furthermore, gaming technology has facilitated the treatment of veterans suffering from PTSD, informing the way in which returned veterans continue to experience the war post-deployment. The enormous popularity of "historical" war games and their dedication simulating "visual fidelity" has transformed the ways in which players "experience" and ostensibly "participate" in warfare. Games of this genre often fail to provide the critical exposition and requisite socio-political context that inform the historical events they depict. Eschewing this context creates a one-dimensional environment in which players leave with conditional memories of the historical narratives in which they have "participated". Furthermore, the nature of gameplay within this context reinforces the notion that enactment is akin to remembrance. Joseph deLappe's project highlights the connection between "remembrance" and the visibility of the military body.

The bodies of the military dead are laden with symbolic potential. The rigorous administrative and military control that has governed the visibility of military mortality during the post-heroic era, has transformed the ways in which the concept of

the "body" is reconfigured within the context of modern warfare. Chapter Four examined how the "visibility" (or invisibility) of military bodies have been shaped by the conditions that have characterized "remoteness." The war in Vietnam represented a watershed moment of rupture, challenging traditional understandings and practices of memorialization. In light of this, functions of memorialization have transformed, enabling the American public to reconfigure their own experiences of warfare and national trauma in connection with the larger "war story" that shapes the contemporary climate of total war. The concept of vernacular memory – as informed by the variety of vernacular responses to trauma and warfare visible in visual culture – enables both citizens and veterans to reclaim and demand visibility within the social sphere. The increasing proliferation and acceptance of tattoos within society, has informed a vernacular process of memorialization that allows civilians and veterans to physically embody their experiences. Such a practice demonstrates a sense of intimacy that still attends cultural perceptions of warfare, even in a climate more broadly characterized by remoteness. Furthermore, these responses exemplify how the "body" has been reconfigured in the post-heroic era, informing the way in which identity is constructed and perceived – as a citizen, or as a soldier, but fundamentally as an *American.*

This thesis highlights the ideological pressure points that underscore American conceptions of their national identity. It has aimed to provide a platform for future discussion whilst contributing to dialogues about how identity, citizenship, and warfare are conceptualized. Furthermore, this thesis has sought to contextually historicize elements of this dialog that have been neglected or overlooked by scholarship. The parameters of this project - a broad cultural survey – have imposed restrictions that have limited the depth of specific components of the discussion. There remains scope to further explore the examples as provided, and their particular application to other disciplines, including the political sciences, international relations, and critical and cultural studies.

By tracing the historical and cultural dynamics that have given rise to the post-heroic factors of warfare, it is evident that a transformation has attended American

understandings of their role in warfare. Although themes of remoteness and dislocation largely underpin and shape the shifting relationships between American civilians and their military, the cultural impulses to "connect" with the larger national project of contemporary warfare – whether to reject it, interpret it, or be entertained by it – arguably inform the American "war story" for the twenty-first century.

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