MEMORY AND MEANING:
CONSTRUCTED COMMEMORATION IN A NATION'S CAPITAL CITY

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ABSTRACT

Memorials and acts of commemoration are all around us; we encounter them, in various forms and layers, every day. This dissertation explores the ideas surrounding what these acts of memorialization mean, to communities and to nations, by examining war memorials in the United States and Canada, specifically the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, and the National War Memorial in Ottawa, Ontario. It argues that the differences between the two are emblematic of the larger differences between each nation’s national identity.

A great deal of the existing memorial scholarship approaches visitor reactions in broad theoretical ways, or in response to well-known events with lasting historical impact. By combining the theoretical and historical uses of memorial sites with the ethnographic everyday observations taken directly at the National World War II Memorial and National War Memorial, this dissertation builds on existing scholarship by revealing how the visiting public interprets and engages with the memorials, and also provides case studies on how each nation chooses to literally and figuratively frame its history for public consumption, particularly within the urban ceremonial core of each national capital.
For Clarence C. Maloof

The Original Doc
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INTRODUCTION

Whenever I visit a new city, one of my favorite activities is to wander around on foot, exploring various corners of the landscape. One of the more enjoyable aspects of this diversion is the opportunity to discover hidden or overlooked features that have been added to the urban fabric over the years. In seemingly every city, an observer can find monuments and markers commemorating individuals and events, some well known, and others that have long passed from public recollection.

Two cities that are particularly rich in memorialized landscapes are Washington, DC, and Ottawa, Ontario. As national capitals, each city contains parks, avenues, traffic circles, and walkways that are themselves populated with statues, plaques, and other reminders of the past. What is more, I have long been specifically interested in how Americans and Canadians memorialize war, and especially how memorials are situated into the built environment. My interest was renewed during Veterans Day 2008, when I saw a portion of the Canadian Remembrance Day ceremonies on the CBC, and was reminded of the differences in how the day is regarded by citizens in both the United States and Canada. Inspired by such, this dissertation will compare the ways Americans and Canadians remember, and honor, not only casualties of war, but also war itself, specifically throughout Ottawa and around the area of the National Mall in Washington.

Each capital city showcases its memorial landscape in different ways, emphasizing certain individuals and events over others. Written into this built environment is the history of each nation, histories that have long been interlaced and kindred. For instance, when the American colonists fought for their independence from Great Britain, Canada became the home for loyalists seeking refuge. The violence and turmoil of the American Civil War, along with the
perceived shortcomings of the American federalist system that led to fighting between the states, influenced and mobilized Canada towards Confederation. Yet for all the similarities and synthesis between the two nation’s histories, economies, politics, and culture, there exist fundamental distinctions, particularly in global politics and foreign relations. Whereas, during the twentieth century, the United States emerged as a nuclear and economic superpower, Canada moved beyond the shadow of British colonialism and became a force for international peacekeeping. These differing outlooks on world affairs, with one nation boldly asserting its power and another employing multilateralism and collaboration, is similarly displayed in the built environment of each nation’s federal capital.

An understanding of the interplay between commemoration and national identity will thus benefit from a comparative look at both American and Canadian monuments and memorial efforts. The project will examine war memorials in Washington and Ottawa and the ways in which ideas of civic culture, history, and public memory are inscribed into, created, and promoted by, the memorials themselves. Through a comparison of the central memorials in the capitals of Canada and the United States, we may better determine the positions war and memory play in national identity creation in both countries. I contend that differences between two specific memorials – the National War Memorial in Canada and the National World War II Memorial in the United States – are emblematic of the larger differences between each nation’s national identity.

Eleventh Hour of the Eleventh Day of the Eleventh Month

On Remembrance (Veterans) Day, the CBC – Canada’s public broadcast network – airs over three hours of ceremonial programming, including parades, speeches, and interviews. In contrast, one has to hunt around for any sort of similar coverage of an American ceremony,
eventually finding it on C-SPAN – not ABC, CBS, or any other major network. Additionally, coverage is absent from CNN, Fox News, or even the American public broadcaster, PBS. What is more, during the CFL (Canadian Football) games played the weekend prior to Remembrance Day, the on-screen graphics include a poppy. The poppy is widely used in Canada and other Commonwealth countries as a symbol of remembrance for those killed in war, in large part due to Canadian John McCrae’s poem, *In Flanders Fields*, written during World War I and mentioning the abundance of poppies that grew on the battlefields.\(^1\) There is no similar graphic, not even an American flag image, during any of the NFL programs on any of the three major networks that broadcast the games leading up to Veterans Day.

These differences are not just relegated to the television networks, however; individual and group activities are also quite dissimilar. For the two weeks preceding November 11\(^{th}\), many Canadians of all ages wear poppies (typically made from felt) on their lapels. Beyond the occasional American flag lapel pin, there are no unifying, all-encompassing symbols worn by Americans. Moreover, at the Canadian ceremony in Ottawa, there are typically thousands of spectators – the CBC estimated a total of 30,000 people attended the 2008 ceremony. The American ceremony, held at Arlington National Cemetery, draws a far smaller crowd, despite the fact that the United States’ population is approximately nine times larger than Canada’s.

In the United States, even during other days of remembrance, such as Memorial Day or, more recently, the anniversary of 9/11, commemoration ceremonies still do not rival Canada’s National Remembrance Day Ceremony in Ottawa. Local communities might hold Memorial Day parades, and veteran organizations will place small American flags at the graves of fallen servicemen and women. However, Memorial Day, a day specifically dedicated to honoring

\(^1\) Although there are some American organizations that distribute poppies around specific holidays – Memorial Day or the Fourth of July – the poppy does not have nearly the same cultural significance or widespread recognition as it does in Canada.
nation’s war dead, is treated much like Veterans Day, as part of a three-day weekend. Memorial Day is commonly thought of as the unofficial start of summer, when Americans are implored to remember those who gave the ultimate sacrifice, all while they are enjoying a barbeque, shopping trip, or golf outing. In the fall, leading up to September 11th, televised sporting events may feature American flag graphics, with pre-game or halftime shows acknowledging military members and the victims of the terrorist attacks. In 2011, on the tenth anniversary of the attacks, television networks and news agencies featured wide-scale coverage of commemoration ceremonies, particularly in New York, where the National September 11 Memorial was dedicated and opened to the public. Nevertheless, 9/11 is not a national holiday, and it remains to be seen, in the years to come, whether or not annual 9/11 ceremonies will receive significant television coverage. Ultimately, November 11th seems to hold a greater importance in Canada, while in America it is treated similarly to Memorial Day, seen more as a day off from work or school, to go shopping and take advantage of holiday sale prices.

By examining the physical manifestations of remembrance, I hope to unravel some of these issues. There have been a number of books and articles describing the meanings of memorials, the reasons for their creation, and the effect they have on the public. However, many of the works that comparatively discuss memorials focus on Europe, primarily France, Germany, and England. In these analyses, memorials to World War I are the primary pivot, thereby effectively excluding any possible American association, due to the lack of a national World War I memorial (there is a memorial to the Great War in Washington, but it honors only those from
city, and is far off the beaten path from the National Mall, easily passed by and often
overlooked).  

Furthermore, a comparison between the United States and Canada is enlightening, as the
two countries remain strongly connected, in terms of history, economy, culture, security, and
dominant belief systems. Yet there is a divide when it comes to World War I. Quebec aside,
Canada emerged from World War I a much stronger nation – it could be said World War I “made”
Canada, whereas World War II had that kind of an effect on the United States.  

Historian Scott See notes that, while “Canada’s military and domestic war efforts underscored its commitment to
Britain…the Canadian government consciously used the crisis as a platform to gain more
autonomy in the postwar era.” Additionally, Roger Riendeau writes “Canada’s evolution from
colony to nation was further advanced by the postwar peace settlement…. [Prime Minister
Robert] Borden insisted that Canada’s significant contribution to the Allied war effort entitled it
to separate representation at the peace conference in Versailles in 1919.” In the United States, it
is World War II that predominantly served this role, that moment when the Greatest Generation
answered their nation’s call to service, eventually winning a war from which the country
emerged as an economic and military superpower.

These ideals and emphases are found in the designs of both the National War Memorial
and the National World War II Memorial. In Ottawa, the National War Memorial includes nearly
two-dozen bronze figures, depicted returning from war. Their expressions and bearings
communicate fatigue, but also a determination in moving forward, together, towards a new future.

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2 Kansas City, Missouri, is home to the Liberty Memorial, an impressive memorial to the First World War, which
itself houses the National World War I Museum. However, while Congress has designated the museum as the
country’s official World War I museum, the Liberty Memorial has not been granted the same distinction.
3 This dissertation will primarily focus on Anglophone Canada, avoiding the Quebecois issue entirely. Including
Quebec – and the accompanying Francophone-Anglophone history and political tensions – would move the scope of
this project too far from the Canadian-American comparison aimed for.
For the most part, the memorial is reserved, acknowledging what the country and its citizens had gone through, while not crowing about a victory.

On the other hand, the National World War II Memorial in Washington is huge – with a footprint over seventy times bigger than the National War Memorial – featuring a large plaza, fountains and pillars that dominate the landscape, and including various icons and imagery of a nation that united in a successful war effort. Additionally, the memorial makes explicit connections linking the country’s accomplishments in World War II to the legacies and civic traditions started by George Washington and the Revolutionary War and carried on by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War.

There exists an often utilized concept that a nation is born through bloody conflict, that it is typically only through sacrifice and militarism that a nation can come of age, something akin, to quote Charles Tilly, that “War made the state and the state made war.” This trope is often associated with both Canada and the United States, that through each country’s efforts during World War I and World War II, respectively, they were able to emerge as a more powerful figure on the world’s stage. An exhibit sign in the Canadian War Museum, in Ottawa, reinforces this hypothesis, reading: “Victory at Vimy was a defining event for Canada. Many later considered it the moment when Canada left Britain’s shadow and became a country in its own right.” Likewise, the end of the Second World War saw America’s transformation into a global superpower, with not only a strong economy and infrastructure unharmed by the devastating effects of warfare that had so scarred Europe, but also as a nation possessing nuclear weapons – the ultimate symbol of military supremacy. As such, I believe a study of specific war monuments in Washington and

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Ottawa would go far in explaining the American and Canadian stances on their memorials, as well as their relationship with war.

Forging Tangible Memories

Constructing a memorial to war and loss is, to say the least, a complex issue. It is a matter that involves transforming private, intimate feelings into a display suitable for public consumption. Although war memorials celebrate victory and honor, they also serve as a marker of humankind’s failure to peacefully resolve conflict, and that however noble may have been the cause, armies went to war, sacrifices were made, and lives were lost. The question, then, concerns how to best honor, and perhaps to obscure, this failure, as well as pay tribute to those who served, sacrificed, and died in the course of such events. In particular, how does society interact with, and add to, the existing built environment in response to a need or desire to commemorate the events and casualties surrounding war? Is there an added significance when the monuments are located within the nation’s capital? I suggest that by analyzing physical manifestations of remembrance built in Ottawa and Washington – specifically the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial, respectively – additional insight can be gained regarding not only the position war occupies in each nation’s culture and history, but also how certain wars are privileged over others in each society. The construction of a national identity can be found through the study of the conflicting attitudes towards peace and aggression displayed in these sites in either nation’s capital. Comparing and contrasting the memorials in Canada and United States, as this study aims to do, will not only increase an understanding of national identity formation within each country, but, more importantly, will offer an avenue to an increased cross-cultural awareness.
Much is often made, and rightfully so, of a nation’s involvement in warfare, and the impact those events have on soldiers, citizens, and the national psyche. Whether called Memorial Day, Veterans Day, or Remembrance Day, the sentiment is the same in each country; those holidays serve as days set aside to remember and reflect on the sacrifice made by those in the service of their country. However, how is that service commemorated when not nationally prescribed? Through an examination of a nation’s most prominent war memorials, we may be able to better understand the value, or lack thereof, placed on military service, war veterans, community and national service, and history.

In describing the connection between public commemoration and identity, heritage scholar Diane Barthel has written “Thus, if war is politics continued by other means, preservation is also politics continued by other means. These ‘means’ revolve around the act of commemoration.” From this, we can begin to see the important role memorials play in the construction of a specific national narrative. Barthel reinforces this significant function of memorials when she continues, noting, “Sacrifice is an important concept and considered crucial to a nation’s survival. If people are no longer willing to sacrifice for their nation, can the nation long exist? Commemoration serves to encourage future acts of sacrifice, as it promises the would-be heroes that they will not die in vain and that they will be remembered by future generations.” Thus, according to Barthel, memorials do not just help a society honor and remember the past, but also promote and reinforce ideas of patriotism and nationalism.

Nevertheless, the questions remain: in the case of Canada and the United States, have the memorials shaped a public memory towards war, or was the memorial based on a pre-existing mindset of what a specific war meant to the nation? And, who determines what that meaning

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8 Ibid.
includes? If a war memorial is supposed to speak to an entire population, who makes the decision of what the memorial should look like, and exactly how a war should be summarized in granite and marble?

This examination will also study the space in which these memorials exist. In Ottawa, the National War Memorial sits in Confederation Square, in the shadow of Parliament Hill. Moreover, the memorial is a part of Confederation Boulevard, a ceremonial route winding through the city, tying together significant buildings and institutions, memorials and statues, and other sites of cultural and historical importance. In constructing this physical narrative of the Canadian identity, the inclusion of the National War Memorial serves as a crucial focal point.

Similarly, the United States’ National World War II Memorial occupies a privileged place in the nation’s capital, along the main axis of the National Mall and situated between the Lincoln Memorial, the Reflecting Pool, and the Washington Monument, while incorporating the existing Rainbow Pool into its composition, a site originally designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. A number of other memorials and monuments are found on the Mall, while the area itself has frequently served as a place for public demonstrations, protests, gatherings, and leisure activities. The location of the memorial, however, was not without controversy. Unlike the Korean War Veterans Memorial or the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the National World War II Memorial is in an extremely visible, central site on the Mall. What does the favored position of this newest memorial say with regards to the role World War II occupies in an American identity? Comparatively, what is revealed if a broader view is taken, one that involves considering the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial in relation to the rest of the capital city in which they are respectively found?
Although it is true that prior to its dedication, a comprehensive, national memorial to World War II did not exist in Washington, the American capital area was not bereft of memorials associated with the Second World War. In addition to the Marine Corps War Memorial (more commonly known as the Iwo Jima Memorial), there is the United States Navy Memorial located just off the Mall, near the National Archives; the Army, First Division Monument on the south side of the Old Executive Office Building – with a “Big Red One” laid out in flowers at the base; the Army, Second Division Memorial, found near the southwest corner of the Ellipse, across Constitution Avenue from the Washington Monument; and the memorials and monuments located in Arlington National Cemetery – including the Third Infantry Division Monument, the Battle of the Bulge Memorial, the Canadian Cross of Sacrifice, the USS Serpens Monument – in addition to other markers, plaques, and gravestones scattered throughout Washington and Arlington.

Following that same line of thought, the National War Memorial is not the only memorial to war and veterans located in Ottawa. There are a number of other monuments and structures dedicated to honoring wars, battles, service branches, or individuals associated with military conflict. And while many of these are featured along Confederation Boulevard, it is the National War Memorial and Confederation Square that are focal points of Ottawa, occupying one of the National Capital Commission’s designated Landmark Nodes. Moreover, the very name of the memorial, denoting it as the National War Memorial, privileges the memorial above all others. While the other memorials might commemorate specific wars, military branches, or individuals, it is the National War Memorial that serves as the site for the National Remembrance Day Ceremony; it is the National War Memorial that has been modified to include other twentieth century wars, and, possibly, conflicts fought in the twenty-first century; it is the National War
Memorial and Confederation Square that was chosen as the location for the repatriated Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Public Consumption of the Built Environment

The examination of our built environment is more than just a study of the physical, brick-and-mortar additions we make to our landscape. What is built, where it is built, what it looks like, and what is not built all tell us a great deal about who we are as a society. Spending public and private funds to build and care for a memorial can sometimes be a questionable allocation of money, when there is little obvious “return” on such an investment. Likewise, concerns may be raised over the government using much needed money to build a monument to the fallen, while living veterans might suffer, struggling with poverty or the physical and mental scars from war. Nevertheless, memorials and monuments continue to be built, due to a desire to add a tangible interpretation of history and memory to the landscape.

When looking at a memorial, what does a visitor learn about the values of a particular country and what do they take away from the experience? How much does a memorial’s meaning depend on the observer’s point-of-view and background? Does the memorial tell a certain story of nationalism and identity, one that any visitor can understand, regardless of their own specific nationality? How important is a pre-existing knowledge of a nation’s history, rituals, or traditions in comprehending the narrative a war memorial is presenting?

Although this dissertation will address these questions as they pertain to the American National World War II Memorial and the Canadian National War Memorial, the subject matter is relevant to any population, of any nationality. Humankind has long sought to leave a lasting physical mark on the world, while also creating commemorative displays of varying degrees. Some, such as Stonehenge or the Easter Island Moai statues, are notable for their size and level
of craftsmanship, while others, such as simple plaques and markers, continue to add further layers of meaning and history to the landscape. Regardless of what form a memorial takes, they surround us and permeate our everyday lives. Seemingly every town and city, whether in Canada or the United States, from South America to Europe or beyond, contains some sort of commemorative act. These can include statues or monuments in a town square, cemeteries or grave markers, notable buildings and sites of historic events, and even streets, parks, or other civic works named after individuals. Many of these we may pass by without even noticing, or being aware of their significance. Others have become extremely well known, transforming into sought-out tourist destinations. In gaining a deeper awareness of how society memorializes its past, we are able to better understand not only the built environment in which we live and have consciously constructed, but also the values, people, and events a citizenry believes to be significant.

Recent events have highlighted the importance of an increased appreciation of the effect national memorials may have on a population. During the 2006 Canada Day celebrations, three young men were photographed urinating on the National War Memorial. Their drunken act of disrespect briefly cast a spotlight on the memorial and the idea of public commemoration, eliciting a strong reaction from across the nation, as veteran groups, politicians, and general citizens all expressed their outrage. The offenders were eventually identified through the pictures taken of them during the act, but only one man was publicly named – the other two were teenagers and their identities remained private. All three made public apologies and were sentenced to community service. However, that response faded in the ensuing years, with concern over the memorial’s immediate well-being similarly seeming to ebb over time. An effort has been made to post guards at the site, yet they are only there during the summer months of
July and August. While this may be one of the busier seasons for visitors to the National War Memorial – and includes the July 1\textsuperscript{st} Canada Day festivities – for the great majority of the year, the site is left unguarded.

In Washington, controversy has instead centered on the placement of the memorial itself – along the main axis of the National Mall – and its appropriation of the existing Rainbow Pool into the design of the memorial. Another controversy involved an urban legend that an engraved quote from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s address to Congress on December 8, 1941, had omitted the phrase “so help us God.” In the age of the Internet, the rumor spread like wildfire, forcing the National Park Service and the American Battle Monuments Commission to release a statement making it clear that the phrase was part of a much larger speech, and that to include it would actually diminish the power and intent of Roosevelt’s words. And while there have been no incidents similar to the desecration of the National War Memorial, the passing of time highlighted the significance of a memorial to World War II, particularly for the generation that lived through the war. As is often noted, American World War II veterans are dying at an estimated rate of approximately one thousand each day. Prior to its construction, there was a concern that many veterans would not live to see a memorial built commemorating their efforts and the war in which they fought. Even now that the memorial is completed, organizations such as the Honor Flight Network exist to provide veterans a chance to visit the nation’s capital and “their” memorial.

Although peace is valued, and seemingly strived for, wars are still waged, sometimes for questionable motives. This project holds particular contemporary relevance as the United States has largely disengaged from active military engagement in Iraq and begun to wind down operations in Afghanistan, while Canada, an ally in the latter campaign, has done the same. It
remains to be seen how these more recent conflicts, and their casualties, might be memorialized in each nation’s capital region. Although the dates for World War II and the Korean War have been added to the pedestal of the National War Memorial, debate is ongoing as to whether or not the war in Afghanistan will merit the same treatment. Similarly, the reluctance to continue adding to Washington’s National Mall makes it unclear if a memorial to Iraq, Afghanistan, or even the 9/11 terrorist attacks may ever be built in that area.

Moreover, it is important to note that different wars, which involved both Canada and the United States, are accorded differing levels of emphasis in each country. For example, in Canada, the War of 1812 and the First World War are frequent topics of commemoration and factor heavily into the national collective memory. Conversely, in America, the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and the Second World War are favored over other conflicts, particularly in terms of cultural recognition and reference. And, within each nation, there are battles or wars that suggest long-lasting significance, such as Canada’s Battle of the Plains of Abraham, fought during the Seven Years’ War, or the Civil War, over others that have largely passed from the forefront of popular memory and culture, like the Spanish-American War or the Boer War. As will be discussed, the literal and figurative positioning of memorials to these more-privileged and remembered wars are important components to creating a deeper understanding of the ways in which specific wars, and the memorials to those wars, assist in constructing a national narrative.

Ethnography

During the summer of 2010, I visited both capital cities in order to study firsthand the memorials and memorial sites, on different days and at different times, observing how people interacted with the sites and how the memorials fit into the larger fabric of each city’s built environment. In so doing, I spent hours at each memorial, during weekdays and weekends,
across mornings, afternoons, and evenings. While there, I spoke with guides from Ottawa’s National Capital Commission and National Park Rangers in Washington, asking for their impressions of either site, and how they have seen visitors behave around the memorials.

Additionally, I walked around both cities, along Confederation Boulevard and the National Mall, visiting other notable sites and gaining a deeper understanding of how each city attempts to represent itself to the visiting public, and how the public correspondingly interacts with the city and receives that intended meaning.

As a part of the ethnographic process, so as to examine how the public perceives these memorials, I used an approach known as naturalistic observation. According to scholars Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, “Naturalism proposes that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its ‘natural’ state, undisturbed by the researcher…The primary aim should be to describe what happens in the setting, how the people involved see their own actions and those of others, and the contexts in which the action takes place.” Moreover, Patricia Adler and Peter Adler, in describing this technique, wrote:

One of the hallmarks of observation has traditionally been its noninterventionism. Observers neither manipulate nor stimulate their subjects. They do not ask the subjects research questions, pose tasks for them, or deliberately create new provocations. This stands in marked contrast to researchers using interview questionnaires, who direct the interaction and introduce potentially new ideas into the arena, and to experimental researchers, who often set up structured situations where they can alter certain conditions to measure the covariance of others. Simple observers follow the flow of events. Behavior and interaction continue as they would without the presence of a researcher, uninterrupted by intrusion.

This was my intent when conducting my field research, to merely observe how visitors to either site behaved around the memorials, rather than interviewing test subjects or interjecting myself into someone else’s experience. As such, by employing this method, when conducting my

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research trips to Washington and Ottawa, I paid particular attention to the tourists, officials, and other individuals and groups visiting the memorials and touring the city. In the end, I found that silently observing visitors could actually uncover more details, particularly the ways in which people naturally and typically experienced the site and behaved while there.

However, I fully recognize and accept that in using naturalistic observations, my own assumptions and pre-conditions, particularly as a white American male, influence my observations. Because I did not interview many of the people I took notice of and later describe, I cannot speak to their mindset. When I discuss visitors who wade into the National World War II Memorial’s Rainbow Pool, I am unable to likewise explain their rationale for doing so. As Adler and Adler further counsel, “Without the benefits of members’ analyses, observers are forced to rely more exclusively on their own perceptions. They are therefore more susceptible to bias from their subjective interpretations of situations.”

Nevertheless, I believe my observations remain useful and valid. I understood the limitations of this technique prior to my research trips, but did not want to make visitors to the memorials feel self-conscious, that they had to act in a certain way because they were being watched, or upset them by questioning either their motives or the manner in which they interacted with the space. Instead, my goal was to quietly and unobtrusively witness the normal, spontaneous, and organic behavior around the memorial sites.

Much of the existing scholarship on memorials, when it deals with visitor reactions, does so in broad theoretical ways, or in response to widely publicized events with lasting historical impact, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial during the 1963 March on Washington. In contrast, I spent time at each memorial site, observing how people behaved around the memorial and interacted with the site during casual, conventional

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11 Ibid., 381.
visits. Rather than political rallies or large-scale demonstrations, I witnessed families, school groups, and veterans.

**Literature Review**

There is a wealth of scholarship on memorialization, public history, and public memory, and this project aims to add to that discussion and draw connections between those works. Where many of the studies center on one or two disciplines, I intend to examine the subject matter across multiple fields, with a specific emphasis on a comparison between the United States and Canada. It is my goal that the approach taken in this dissertation demonstrates the importance of an interdisciplinary methodology, one incorporating history and public history, cultural studies, ethnographic observations, urban planning and the built environment, and constructions of national identity. Most importantly, I want to elicit a further appreciation of examining the Canadian and American culture and landscape in juxtaposition with each other. Considering that the two countries are so close in so many ways, learning more about one nation will assist in gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the other, and vice versa. Many of the works reviewed here, if they include an international comparison at all, do so with European countries, rather than solely a North American, continental analysis.

Any discussion of relevant books and articles focusing on memorials and monuments in Canada and the United States – and in Ottawa and Washington, specifically – must begin with a few key works. These include: David L.A. Gordon and Brian S. Osborne’s “Constructing national identity in Canada’s capital, 1900-2000: Confederation Square and the National War Memorial” (2004); Jim Zucchero’s “The Canadian National War Memorial: Metaphor for the Birth of the Nation” (1999); Nicolaus Mills’ *Their Last Battle: The Fight for the National World War II Memorial* (2004); and Kirk Savage’s *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National*
Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape (2009). Personally, this project has been inspired and influenced by these works, using them as a starting point for a comparative analysis of the two memorials and cities, and the ways in which the public interacts with each site.

The articles by Zucchero and Gordon and Osborne examine the role the National War Memorial plays in constructing a Canadian identity within Ottawa. Gordon and Osborne note that although “[The National War Memorial] will never be the single dominant symbolic space of the Canadian capital in the manner of the Mall in Washington,” the memorial was central to the efforts put forth by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to establish Ottawa as a world-class capital city. Similarly, Zucchero looks at how the National War Memorial’s origin and design, its dedication by King George VI, and its official description by the Canadian government all “suggest that Canadians will probably continue to define themselves around issues of values, such as democracy; around events in time, such as wars; and through particular means, such as memorialization.” What is more, Zucchero demonstrates how later events, such as other wars or, for him, a photograph of a teary-eyed World War II veteran, are likewise imprinted into the meaning conveyed by the National War Memorial; the memorial does not exist in a vacuum, and thus the story it tells can vary, either through the passage of time or the personal experiences each individual carries with them, which in turn shape their perceptions.

Their Last Battle, by Mills, is a comprehensive history of the different facets of the National World War II Memorial, including the legislative fight to authorize funding for the memorial, the controversy surrounding the final site selection, the shifting design plans, the

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fundraising and supporting efforts to build the memorial, the construction of the site, and the actual completion and dedication of the finished product. Mills provides an excellent overview of everything that went into creating the National World War II Memorial, over the course of many years, while also highlighting the issue of the National Mall’s “closure” to any future additions, and what this might mean for not only the National World War II Memorial, but also for the dominant American narrative.

In *Monument Wars*, Kirk Savage details the evolution of the National Mall from a tangled wilderness of trees, shrubs, and swamp into what Savage calls the monumental core, an area “designed to be eternal, a quasi-sacred space sealed off from the normal processes of change.”\(^{14}\) Additionally, Savage traces the shift in memorial themes, from the celebratory, hero monuments, such as the Washington Monument, to the more introspective victim recognition or therapeutic monuments, as typified by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. As a result, *Monument Wars* is a rich source for the history and varied meanings found throughout the National Mall.

These studies have had a great impact on this work, in that they have been used as a starting point. This dissertation moves beyond those discussions, however, by examining the National War Memorial’s placement within the larger Ottawa memorial landscape, contrasting that location to the one occupied by the National World War II Memorial in Washington, and analyzing how the public engages with each memorial space. Furthermore, this project introduces a comparison between the narrative creation and collective memories positioned within each site.

*Memorialization*

Volumes have been written about the history and importance of the two World Wars and the role they played in the development of both Canada and the United States. Additionally,

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there is existing literature regarding memory and memorials, particularly memorials marking tragedy and death. Certain scholars, including James Mayo (1988), Michael Rowlands (1999), Alex King (1999, 1999), Robert Shipley (1987), and Jay Winter (1995, 2006) have written about memorials in a number of ways, largely focusing on those built in the United States or Europe. Their work involves descriptions of memorials – the elements and features comprising the overall design – and the public reaction.

In *War Memorials as Political Landscape*, James Mayo provides an incredibly comprehensive examination of a large number of memorials to various events and conflicts. Most of the memorials are in the United States, or have an American connection, but there are also some foreign memorials discussed in the text. As the title implies, Mayo regards memorials as political acts, analyzing the purpose and social importance of countless memorials. Additionally, Mayo moves beyond the obvious stone and granite memorials to look at the less obvious, yet more common, such as street names, parks, natural landmarks, and other public spaces. People or events are memorialized in these places, but can often be overlooked when considering memorials as a whole – Mayo is helpful in highlighting this potential oversight. Moreover, Mayo’s chapter titles suggest the scope of the book and one possible way to categorize memorials: “War Memorials as Symbolic Messages,” “War Memorials in the Landscape,” “Monuments to Victory as Justice,” “Monuments to Victory as Manifest Destiny,” “Monuments to Defeat,” and “Memories of Horror.” Mayo’s work is beneficial in that the examination of the political aspect of memorials and memorialization will assist in the discussion of the added significance attached to a memorial located within a national capital.

Michael Rowlands’ “Remembering to Forget: Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials,” found in the edited collection *The Art of Forgetting*, explores why some memorials
“work” and others do not, in terms of successfully memorializing the war dead. For one thing, there is the matter of how best to commemorate and honor those killed in a violent conflict, how best to symbolize their sacrifice with – or without – subsequently passing judgment on the cause of their death. He investigates different approaches to this concept, in both Australia and the United States, and how memorials, and proposals for memorials, which include representations of bodies have been met with significant resistance, suggesting that the public wants to remember sacrifice without necessarily being reminded of the gory details. Furthermore, Rowlands “suggests that monuments become memorials when they satisfy three functions for the living. First they should acknowledge the importance of the death and destruction that constituted the sacrificial act… Secondly, this acceptance of violence takes place in a context where it is claimed that something has been gained instead… Thirdly, the dead are deified.”

Applying Rowlands analysis of successful memorials, or those that “work,” to the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial proves interesting. To begin, the National War Memorial prominently features a number of human figures, which play a specific role in the meaning the memorial is meant to convey. Did their inclusion meet the “significant resistance” Rowlands describes? In the case of the National World War II Memorial, a wall covered in gold stars represents those Americans who lost their lives during the war, with each star representing roughly one thousand lives. However, in the case of America’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial, a wall of names was found insufficient, and eventually two additional memorials were added nearby, one featuring three soldiers and the other featuring three female nurses. Will the future of the National World War II Memorial include a similar adjustment to include some sort of bodily representation?

Alex King’s work involves similar topics – the decision to memorialize a war in a specific way, and which design elements are to be included and how. In *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance*, King investigates the meaning of war memorials, and the “impact of these ubiquitous symbols on the society which created them.”16 King’s particular interest in World War I memorials is due to, as he argues, the fact that they set a precedent for later war memorials. King also discusses the political aspect of memorials – not just how a war is presented, but where the memorial is located, who is represented, how the memorial is funded, and so on; the construction and maintenance of a memorial is no simple affair. King notes that his examination deals primarily with memorials found in Britain, and how an international comparison would provide greater insight into the meaning and intent behind memorials.17 It is my intention to present such an international comparison, albeit between Canada and the United States, and not Britain.

King also contributed to *The Art of Forgetting* with his article “Remembering and Forgetting in the Public Memorials of the Great War,” in which he describes British World War I memorials and the debate their creation and design brought forth. In particular, King discusses how the building of any type of monument is considered a civic act, and as such involves the voicing of many varied, personal opinions as to the best way to socially preserve such memories, and can obviously include political influences and consequences as well. King discusses the use of statues and human figures in memorials, and how this use can cause controversy over a number of topics, from how the figures are posed, what their expressions are, or what they are holding. As with any design elements, there will be a variety of thoughts as to what should be included, but it is interesting to note just how problematic human forms can be. This piece helps

17 Ibid., 249.
explain the public’s reaction to memorials, as well as the stakes they hold in how events are represented. It also provides a brief look into other types of memorials, such as moments of silence; while not exactly pertinent to this discussion, it further illustrates the importance the public places on the act of remembering.

Jay Winter is another scholar dealing primarily with World War I memorials. In *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*, Winter describes memorials to World War I and what he calls a “memory boom” that occurred following that war.\(^1\)\(^8\) As he states, World War I established a framework that many twentieth-century memorials would follow. He details how the extreme violence witnessed in the Great War, and the subsequent shell shock, had to be acknowledged in some way, which further compelled the creation of monuments to those killed in battle. This cause-and-effect would be echoed in the aftermath of World War II regarding “combat fatigue,” and following the Vietnam War in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder.\(^1\)\(^9\) In so doing, Winter illustrates the significance of memorials for not only those who fight and see combat, but also for those on the home front, who must also deal with loss, anger, confusion, and fear. Also at issue is the fragility and fallibility of the human memory; no one can remember everything, every detail, for all time. Memories fade, twist, change, and disappear entirely. This heightens the importance, and problematic nature, of memorials and their role in preserving and constructing memory. The idea of a changing history based on general consensus or the desire of the majority will also tie in to the later discussion of public memory and public history.

Sanford Levinson takes a slightly different approach in *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* by examining what happens to memorials and symbols when

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\(^2\) Ibid., 7-8.
a society’s values, leaders, or traditions change. Examples include Communist memorials and statues in former Eastern Bloc countries or Civil War memorials and symbols – including the Confederate flag – in the American South. Levinson maintains that, unpleasant as the past may at times be, it is difficult to either erase entirely or modify the historical record to agree with prevailing ideals. Moreover, Levinson ponders who holds the authority to expunge one history, as “written in stone,” for another. As he points out, “Public monuments that designate communal heroes or sacred communal events throughout time have been ways by which regimes of all stripes take on a material form and attempt to manufacture a popular consciousness conducive to their survival.”

Levinson also employs the words of Kirk Savage to describe the idea of the state’s role in creating memorials and, thereby, a dominant historical narrative; “After all, as Kirk Savage reminds us, ‘Public monuments do not arise as if by natural law to celebrate the deserving; they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent for their erection.’ A ‘public monument represents a kind of collective recognition – in short, legitimacy – for the memory deposited there.’” Additionally, Levinson reminds us to keep in mind that “The state may benefit from having more economic resources to articulate its position than do its opponents. But one should be aware that not the least valuable of the resources available to the state is its ability to legitimate certain arguments merely by virtue of being the state.”

In *Death So Noble*, Jonathan Vance combines an examination of Canadian World War I memorialization with an analysis of that nation’s collective memory of the war when he writes, “By encouraging people to focus their thoughts on a time when the nation appeared to be united

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21 Ibid., 63.
22 Ibid., 80.
in a common cause, the memory of the war could prove that the twentieth century did indeed belong to Canada.”

Vance goes on to describe a number of different ways that World War I was commemorated in Canadian culture, including traditional monuments and memorial windows; poems, literature, and plays; and reunions, anniversary ceremonies, and public holidays.

*Remembering War*

In addition to the scholarship examining physical commemorations of war, there are also a number of texts that frame the discussion around how wars, and the individuals and nations who played a role in war, are remembered in society and culture. G. Kurt Piehler, in *Remembering War the American Way*, details the evolution of commemorative efforts in America, beginning with the American Revolution, ending with the Vietnam War, and including the War of 1812, the Civil War, both World Wars, and the Korean War. Piehler also demonstrates how each successive commemoration was influenced by those that came before, noting, for example, “The decision to emphasize the continuity between World War II and Korea ensured, of course, that the latter would be overshadowed.”

Further, Piehler shows how current events can shape how we commemorate the past, and how, during the 1950s, the developing cold war with the Soviet Union may have dampened any attempts to honor the “Grand Alliance of the Second World War.”

In *Bodies of War*, Lisa Budreau recounts the history of American World War I casualties; the taxing, trying, and at times gruesome endeavor to locate the remains of soldiers, often found in scattered and improvised gravesites, and provide them a proper burial, either at a military cemetery in Europe or back in the United States; and the transatlantic tours of Europe made by

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25 Ibid., 139.
Gold Star Mothers, those women whose sons had died in the war, in an effort to view the battlefields where their children may had fallen, as well as, possibly, their final resting place, should the decision be made to not repatriate the remains. Moreover, Budreau demonstrates how the sacrifices made by the soldiers, and their families, in support of the war in turn contributed to the very manner in which that war has thereby been remembered. She explains the various ways the bodies and graves of fallen soldiers became symbols of World War I, including the creation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery or as pilgrimage destinations.

Moving the discussion ahead to the Second World War, John Bodnar, a scholar of history and public memory, analyzes how the war has been remembered in various forms, from films and literature to monuments, civic organizations, and public policies. In *The “Good War” in American Memory*, Bodnar illustrates that many of these public forms of memory and remembrance do not correspond with the reality experienced by countless Americans, including women, African Americans, and Japanese Americans. Yet it was not just minority populations who were misrepresented in memories of the war, particularly as they became cemented in the public sphere; the actual emotions and behaviors experienced by American soldiers were seldom reflected. The brutality and violence of war, along with the fear and confusion felt by these young men, was ignored as part of “larger efforts in the culture of the early 1940s to mythologize the American people as virtuous and devoid of dangerous impulses.”

As such, in describing the National World War II Memorial, Bodnar aptly notes that the memorial “contributes to the process of myth making by simplifying the history of the war and concealing the complex set of

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attitudes and emotions that haunted the wartime generation. Its aim is to uphold myths of national power and innocence that have long been central to America’s collective identity.”

Edward W. Wood, Jr., a wounded veteran of the war, continued the critical analysis of the legends surrounding World War II in *Worshipping the Myths of World War II*, in which he identified four myths that, as they “mature[d],” “turn[ed] World War II into a time of national nobility, not the obscenity that I and most of the world experienced.” Wood disagreed with the myths of “The Good War,” “The Greatest Generation,” “We [America] Won World War II Largely on Our Own,” and “When Evil Lies in Others, War Is the Means to Justice,” based largely on what he, and other veterans, had witnessed and experienced in the heat of battle. He realized that “men needed to mask what they had really done in that war in order to hide the animals they had once been. Men turned the pain of their war into shining myths of courage, honor, comradeship, and glory.”

*Public Memory, Nationalism, and Public History*

Bodnar has described the field of public memory as “a body of beliefs and ideas about the past that help a public or society understand both its past, present, and by implication, its future.” He continues by stating that, in the case of “ordinary people,” “At times they accept official interpretations of reality,” but other times, “Individuals also express alternative renditions of reality when they feel a war death was needless.” This concept is readily seen in the case of monuments and memorials, in the specific narrative they tell, in the reaction to the design, and in any protests or alterations that may occur to the commemorative site. What is

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27 Ibid., 91.
29 Ibid., xi.
31 Ibid., 15.
more, this idea is indicative of other ways in which “official” histories have been changed or modified as time passes. As Bodnar suggests, “Because [public memory] takes the form of an ideological system with special language, beliefs, symbols, and stories, people can use it as a cognitive device to mediate competing interpretations and privilege some explanations over others.” Similar to Levinson’s discussion of memorials to despised regimes being removed from the landscape – as if it would be just as simple to remove that past from the record books – a multitude of books have addressed the idea of a society’s ability, or at least desire, to modify their collective history either as told in textbooks, museum exhibits and displays, or public memorials, holidays, and commemorations. This project greatly benefits from the public memory definitions, examples, and frameworks found in a number of these works.

In his Introduction to *Commemorations*, a collection of essays regarding memory and identity, John Gillis describes national memory as something “shared by people who have never seen or heard of one another, yet who regard themselves as having a common history,” almost akin to Benedict Anderson’s “Imagined Community.” And in *Covering the Body*, Barbie Zelizer writes about collective memory and how it “reflects a group’s codified knowledge over time about what is important, preferred, and appropriate,” how it “helps people use the past to give meaning to the present and to exercise the full spread of power across time and space,” and that it “reflects a reshaping of the practices through which people construct themselves as cultural authorities.”

Whether called public memory, national memory, or collective memory, the implied objective is the same – describing the means and methods by which a population, as a whole, chooses to define and remember its past, applies that selected history to not only the

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32 Ibid., 14.
present-day and future events, but also retroactively filters the past through this new understanding.

These related categories of memory further aid a community in determining which symbols and events will unite them, create a national identity, and exemplify their specific nationalism, and specifically, as it pertains to this project, those segments associated with a moral, martial, and romantic form of nationalism. In the United States, World War II played a large role in delineating the modern American nationalism, one that portrays a democratic society that, in upholding the traditions established by the nation’s founders, strives to bring freedom and justice to those threatened by tyranny and oppression. North of the border, Canadian nationalism describes a country that goes to war only when absolutely necessary; Canada did not even obtain independence from Britain through military conflict, but rather through negotiations with the crown. In comparison to the stereotypical bellicose America, Canada positions itself as a reluctant, yet loyal, ally in wartime, and even more so as a nation whose primary goal is peace.

As Alfred Young describes in *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*, the Boston Tea Party was not known by that name until nearly sixty years after the fact. And, when the “destruction of the tea” became more of a celebratory event, it was due to a newfound appreciation of Revolutionary War veterans, with political parties jockeying for power by spotlighting the workingman’s involvement in fighting for and winning the independence they enjoyed. However, up until that point, due to domestic and international issues, the revolution itself, much less the social and political composition of those who took part, had been largely downplayed, as the fledgling government attempted to assert its authority and establish a foundation from which to grow. As evidence of this, Young points to the construction of public memorials related to the
war, the preservation (or lack thereof) of historic sites and buildings, and the observance of the anniversary of significant events.

In so doing, Young adds to the conversation surrounding the larger issue of public history. One of the foremost works regarding this topic is David Lowenthal’s *The Past is a Foreign Country*, in which Lowenthal examines the formation of a historical consciousness. More specifically, he highlights the ways in which a historical understanding is affected by its interpretation and display, as witnessed in museums and period villages like Plimouth Plantation or Colonial Williamsburg. History can “change” – so far as the general public is concerned – depending on which facts are emphasized or minimized in exhibits. Historians Mike Wallace, and Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt move this discussion into a more contemporary context, in both *Mickey Mouse History* and *History Wars*, respectively, by examining more recent attempts to publicly present history, such as the Smithsonian’s problematic *Enola Gay* exhibit and The Walt Disney Company’s disturbing presentations of history, from the Hall of Presidents to the failed Disney America theme park. Through this exploration of public history, the authors illustrate how, again and again, different agendas can drive efforts to write and rewrite history to achieve certain goals, akin to Young’s assessment of the varying presentations of the Revolutionary era.

A more personal interpretation of history can be found in *The Presence of the Past*, co-authored by Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen. The two men used questionnaires to poll the public in order to determine how people view history, the role history plays in their lives, and from where they learn history. Interestingly, it was revealed that there is a common separation between what is considered history – a dry, academic recounting of events – and what is considered the past – the more personal, family and genealogical history, that which affects
David Glassberg, in *Sense of History*, has also looked at how people negotiate between “history” and “the past,” paying particular attention to how these concepts are made into a reality through reenactments, the establishment of historic sites, and the creation of memorials and statuary. And like Young, Glassberg explores how these public histories have changed over time, specifically in the design and reception of a war (or rather, anti-war) memorial in Massachusetts.

Paul Shackel and Charlene Mires research historic places and sites of memory in *Memory in Black and White* and *Independence Hall in American Memory*, respectively. Shackel focuses on Civil War memorials and how race, location, and objectives affect what is built to commemorate the war and those who participated in, or were impacted by, the conflict, pointing out the controversial nature of many such memorials and how ideological battles can be refought in a new context. On the other hand, Mires concentrates on one building, Philadelphia’s Independence Hall, and how that structure has been modified and used in a variety of ways over time, leading up to its establishment as a national symbol and museum. In *The Shoemaker*, Young voices his thoughts on this topic when describing the changes to the Boston landscape in the years and decades following the Tea Party and Revolutionary War. Young lists many instances where physical manifestations of memory and history were destroyed or altered – including early war monuments, natural landmarks, and buildings – thereby creating a void in the fabric of history. He also criticizes the removal of public rituals and observances of specific events from the public calendar, such as the Tea Party, the Boston Massacre, Stamp Act protests, and the like, and how they were all folded into one holiday – the Fourth of July.

Taken together, these works illustrate a sampling of the breadth of literature detailing public memory and the ways in which memorials and other types of national symbols and icons
have been used and adapted to fit prevailing opinions or hegemonic needs. When applied to the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial, similar examples may be uncovered. For instance, the designs of either memorial may have been shaped – whether from the beginning or in ensuing years – to correspond with a narrative that, while possibly not historically factual, is more palatable to a wider audience. As such, this dissertation will explore any ways in which the memorials have been used in the further elaboration and promotion of that dominant narrative.

Chapter Summaries

The approach I took to examine the National World War II Memorial and the National War Memorial is in a method similar to a target, or a curling house – a series of concentric circles, radiating out from a central point. To that effect, I begin by detailing the memorials themselves, their history and design, and how these elements factor into a reflection of an American or Canadian identity. Next, I expand the scope and study the landscape in which the memorials exist, their immediate surroundings and the larger urban environment, as well as additional memorials in the capital region. The following chapters move out further, providing an overview of the ways in which the public approaches and interacts with each site, and what we can learn by studying these different aspects in conjunction with each other.

The National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial were created in ways that told particular stories. In order to understand how either memorial is displaying, and furthering, a specific narrative, a description of each site must be produced. As such, the first chapter will focus on the creation and details of the memorials themselves, while showing that the elements of each memorial are not there by mere circumstance, that they were purposely included to fit in with existing national historical narratives and identities. For example, of note
is the purpose of certain elements and the language used to describe the memorials. The terms of the design competition for Canada’s National War Memorial maintained that any monument should not “glorify war or suggest the arrogance of a conqueror. While the spirit of victory is essential it should be expressed so as to not only immortalize Canada’s defenders, but convey a feeling of gratitude that out of this great conflict a new hope has sprung for future prosperity under peaceful conditions.” Conversely, America’s National World War II Memorial contains a number of features that boldly pronounce the Allied victory and “celebrate” seemingly every aspect of the war effort. Furthermore, the naming of the “Freedom Wall,” the wall of gold stars, may have been influenced by more recent events – namely the 9/11 attacks – and the subsequent compulsion to add the prefix “Freedom” or “Liberty” to a number of public structures, from the Freedom Tower memorializing the fallen World Trade Center to Newark Liberty International Airport.

A critical related issue is the larger narrative each memorial is attempting to convey. Are there interpretative plaques or other descriptive elements located at the site, or are visitors free to comprehend the memorial on their own? Do the memorials tell a historically accurate account? If certain events or features are downplayed or excluded entirely, what are they, and what could have brought about this omission? And who is, and is not, represented in either memorial?

The location and surroundings of each memorial are pivotal to understanding their larger meaning, and the second chapter addresses this by examining the National Mall in Washington and Confederation Square and Confederation Boulevard in Ottawa. In both cities, the memorials occupy a prominent piece of real estate in very visible, recognizable settings. I posit that there is significant meaning behind these memorials having been placed in what are deemed “important”

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locations. Could they have been placed elsewhere? Due to their importance, and with it, their becoming a permanent fixture on the landscape, how much did their placement factor into the planning and designs? Based on public and critical reactions, have the sites elevated or diminished the solemnity of either memorial? Do the memorials allow for later adaptations or additions? As noted, the National War Memorial has had the dates of the Korean War and World War II added to its pedestal. However, most significantly, in the year 2000, Canada’s Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was moved from its previous location in England and placed in the ground in front of the National War Memorial, adding even further significance to the site. In addition, benches and informative plaques are found around the perimeter of Confederation Square.

In the case of the National World War II Memorial, an attempt to preserve the vista of the National Mall may not allow for many alterations. In contrast, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, considering it was built decades before the National World War II Memorial and in a less central locale – just off the main axis of the National Mall and to the Northeast of the Lincoln Memorial – had enough room surrounding it to include two additional, more traditional looking memorials to those who served in the war, the Three Servicemen statue and the Vietnam Women’s Memorial. With that in mind, how heavily does a site’s possible flexibility factor into a final decision when building a memorial? How far into the future do the planners foresee the use and importance of the spot of land on which they are building?

Both memorials lie among other grand buildings and memorials in each city; from both are visible the meeting places of the respective governments – the United States Capitol and Canada’s Parliament Buildings. In Washington, the National Mall is a popular tourist attraction, with thousands of people each year visiting the numerous memorials and museums that dot the Mall’s landscape. In Ottawa, the National War Memorial is situated near the picturesque Rideau
Canal and Château Laurier, ByWard Market and Major’s Hill Park. How have the memorials been adapted to fit their environment? And how has the surrounding landscape been adapted to fit the memorials? For example, main thoroughfares surround the actual site of the National War Memorial, with automobile and bus traffic driving by at all hours. How does this traffic – with the accompanying noise, visual distraction, and tricky accessibility – affect the memorialization of war and veterans? Pedestrians must cross these busy streets to visit the memorial; as veterans age or are disabled, does this crossing become difficult to the point of being prohibitive? Does the nearby traffic eliminate any ability for moments of quiet reflection, or have architectural and landscape features been added to dampen any noise and visual pollution?

In the third chapter, a number of different reactions and responses are evaluated in order to gauge the interpretation, understanding, and effectiveness of the memorials. Do the memorials serve the public in an adequate way, or have alternative memorial designs been proposed and/or implemented? What do veterans and their families, advocacy groups, and the larger public in general think about the memorials? In what ways have the memorials been used (or abused) in the years since their construction? Has the public fully embraced the National War Memorial and/or the National World War II Memorial as the ultimate testimonial to war and remembrance?

Many individuals and groups voice an opinion about a planned or existing memorial, from veterans and the families of those lost in war, politicians, journalists, academics, and concerned citizens, to larger organizations these people might be involved in, such as congressional subcommittees, federal commissions and agencies, and citizen organizations and coalitions. The viewpoints and judgments expressed by the various factions include, but are not limited to: the reaction to the mere idea of a war memorial; the reaction to the location and site selected for a memorial; the reaction to proposed and final designs; and the ongoing reaction by
visitors, veterans, tourists, and those who would try to use the site in a manner not originally intended.

At first, adding to the built environment may not seem incredibly significant or lasting. Buildings are torn down, houses fall into disrepair, and construction projects are halted if funding dries up. However, as the fourth chapter maintains, the rules can differ regarding memorials; once they are built, they often become imbued with a certain sacredness, the very land they rest on becoming a sort of hallowed ground. It is doubtful if memorials, particularly significant war memorials, could ever be moved from their original location, or even razed. Some memorials are neglected; even the District of Columbia War Memorial, dedicated to those from Washington, DC, who served in the First World War, and itself adjacent to the National Mall, is often overlooked and forgotten. Yet it is extremely unlikely, due to their locations, that either the National War Memorial or the National World War II Memorial will ever meet a similar fate.

More importantly, due to the specific subject matter of either memorial, it is unforeseeable that the memorials will ever be ignored or overlooked. As will be shown, the role played by World War I in Canadian history and national identity, and that played by World War II in American history and national identity, is fundamentally crucial. Therefore, it becomes clear that the memorials to those wars are physical manifestations of this importance, demonstrating the dominant narrative each nation possesses.

The dissertation’s conclusion will not simply summarize all that has come before; it will further elaborate on the argument that memorials reflect and form a national identity, and will pose questions regarding where else the research might be able to go. For instance, would the project benefit from expanding the scope to include other memorials? To include other Canadian and American cities, besides the capitals, or memorials to subjects other than war and loss?
From this research, a deeper understanding of an American and Canadian identity, the differences and similarities between the two, may be obtained, as this project will demonstrate the role war, memory, myth, and commemoration play in constructing these national identities. Further, the study will address the various questions posed here, allowing for a more critical understanding of not only the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial, but also the very acts of memorialization – official and unofficial – and what that means for a population. Adding to existing landscapes, particularly constructing a memorial to those who served and died in war and conflict, says a great deal about who people perceive themselves to be and what they value as a community, society, and nation. What we remember, how we remember, and when we remember are all essential questions that permeate our daily lives, and are thus central to this study.
CHAPTER I – MEMORY IN STONE AND BRONZE: HISTORY, DESIGN, AND INTENT

The National War Memorial and National World War II Memorial were built in very specific ways, designed to tell certain stories of war and the respective effects war had on either population. This chapter details the history and features of each memorial, arguing that those material aspects contribute to furthering a desired national narrative.

To first understand the importance of, and role played by, the National War Memorial in Ottawa and America’s National World War II Memorial to their respective populations, a description and analysis of the sites must be provided. Each memorial faced a number of hurdles to clear before it could be built, from political opposition to the concerns of veterans and citizen groups about how soldiers and wars would be commemorated. Moreover, the final designs of each memorial were, in turn, shaped not only by many of these issues and objections, but also by the debates surrounding the construction costs, symbolism, and dominant narrative inscribed into either site. As such, this chapter will explain the considerations taken into account for the memorials’ design and construction, their appearance and comprising elements, and other significant details related to either site.

In addition, this chapter will highlight how the history of, and motives for, each memorial are evidence of their respective nation of origin. As will be addressed in greater detail below, for example, the Canadian National War Memorial was completed barely twenty years after the end of World War I so as to illustrate to the world the strength and honor of Canada and Canadians. On the other hand, the American National World War II Memorial was not completed until almost six decades after World War II, and even then, the endeavor was promoted as a way to acknowledge and thank the “Greatest Generation,” those who had served in the war, before they all passed away. And yet, despite this asymmetry, both memorials serve as centerpieces of their capital city, further reinforcing the weight and significance of their respective subject matter.
Much like a film’s mise-en-scène, each component and aspect of a memorial site is planned. Everything from the engravings and insignia on display to the type of stone used and the landscaping is carefully arranged; nothing is accidental or left to chance. As such, it is critical that these features are all examined. Considering the financial cost of each memorial – the National World War II Memorial cost roughly $175 million when completed in 2004, while the cost of the National War Memorial amounted to almost $500,000 in 1939, or over $8 million today – what the final product looks like is not a trivial matter.\(^1\) The time, energy, and funds expended to design and build these memorials suggest that any proper analysis needs to recognize this effort and detail them accordingly. Bearing in mind the significance evoked by, and imbedded within, each memorial, we must first know their history, the meanings invested therein, and how they are presented to a visitor.

The National War Memorial

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The idea of creating some sort of World War I memorial in Canada was initially proposed before the war was even halfway over. “The first suggestion for a National Memorial came from Sir Robert Laird Borden, Canada’s war-time prime minister, who in September 1915, stated: ‘It is my desire and intention that some splendid monument shall be erected in this country, perhaps in the capital of the Dominion, which will commemorate the men who responded so splendidly to the call of duty.’”\(^2\) However, the development of a memorial to honor and remember Canada’s World War I dead met with resistance early in the planning stages. These objections stemmed from a number of reasons, including cost, redundancy, or the message implied by such a structure. Following the end of the war, Canada was saddled with a large debt; spending scarce funds on a monument seemed to be an irresponsible use of the government’s budget. Ordinary citizens and Members of Parliament all voiced concerns over the government using much needed money to build a monument to the fallen, while living veterans suffered in poverty and harsh conditions. A new memorial was seen as unnecessary, considering there already existed commemorative plaques and inscriptions on public buildings honoring the sacrifices made to the war effort, while at the same time, memorials and battlefields in Europe were in the process of being preserved and turned into important sites of memory.

Additionally, by the early 1920s, construction of the Memorial Chamber was already underway. Located within the Peace Tower, the large clock tower, observation deck, and carillon that serves as the focal point of the Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings and itself “named in commemoration of Canada’s commitment to peace,”\(^3\) the Memorial Chamber was designed as

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\(^2\) Historical Section General Staff, Department of National Defence (Canada), “The National War Memorial,” 26 Jun 1943, Department of Public Works fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.

“a quiet and sacred space,“⁴ and consists of a twenty-four by twenty-four foot room with a sweeping ceiling reaching high above the floor. In the center of the room is a raised altar, the Altar of Remembrance, upon which is the Book of Remembrance. The book, encased in glass, lists the names of the “66,655 individuals who lost their lives in the First World War.”⁵ Around the room, in smaller altars of their own, are six more Books of Remembrance: The South Africa-Nile Expedition Book of Remembrance, The Second World War Book of Remembrance, The Newfoundland Book of Remembrance, The Merchant Navy Book of Remembrance, The Korean Book of Remembrance, and In the Service of Canada Book of Remembrance. “In the end, all Canadians who have lost their lives in military service to their country are commemorated in one of the seven books housed in the Memorial Chamber.”⁶ Covering the walls are plaques and carvings detailing Canada’s involvement in battle, significant battlefields, memorable words – such as John McCrae’s In Flanders Fields – and regiment insignia. High above are stained glass windows with even more symbols of remembrance, further adding to the gravity of the entire room, and lending a sense of being in a church or other solemn location, while on the floor are eight plaques bearing the names of battlefields significant in Canadian military history.

The idea of another, separate memorial raised the question as to what this new statue could add, or, conversely, what might be lacking in the design of the Memorial Chamber. The war had inflicted such a great cost – in terms of lives, dollars, a sense of security, and human emotion – that was still felt and being understood and interpreted. Many wondered if it was therefore necessary to spend money to memorialize a war still so fresh in the minds of all Canadians.

⁶ Ibid.
Debates from the House of Commons on May 11, 1923, illustrate the discourses and disagreements surrounding the topic of a national memorial. Member of Parliament James Horace King (Lib., Kootenay) stated “It has been felt by the government that we should erect something in the nature of a national monument in the capital city of Canada to commemorate the deeds of our men overseas, a monument of a national character such as would express the sentiment of the nation in that regard.” King maintained that such a memorial was vital, as it would “indicate to the world Canada’s opinion of the gallant part Canadians played” in World War I. Liberal Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King agreed with this, adding “In every country in the world the spirit of the nation has found some expression of the regard to great events in the form of permanent monuments if the occasions have been sufficiently worthy of such recognition from the national point of view.”

What is more, as David L.A. Gordon and Brian S. Osborne have detailed, for the Prime Minister, turning Ottawa into a distinguished and grand capital city was paramount, and creating a ceremonial landscape was central to this plan. As they note:

Indeed, for much of the 20th century, the planning of Ottawa – and of Confederation Square in particular – was much influenced by [Mackenzie] King’s sensitivity to, and cultivation of, the national imagination. In particular, he blatantly manipulated the national identification with wartime sacrifices and the evocative power of the symbolic commemoration of the ‘blooding’ of the nation in global conflict to further his mission of building a capital suitable for a nation that was shedding the last of its colonial ties.

As such, the construction of a National War Memorial would assist in furthering Mackenzie King’s dream of transforming the capital, and by extension, the nation, into an international

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7 Canada, House of Commons Debates (11 May 1923), p. 2685 (Mr. King, MP).
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., p. 2685-86 (Mr. Mackenzie King).
player, one that celebrated and honored its own noteworthy history, traditions, achievements, and icons.

Despite Mackenzie King’s desires and intentions, there was still an apprehension that a brick-and-mortar sculpture might “glorify war or militarism,” rather than “commemorate the failure of the war to obtain one of the slightest things for which [Canada] went to war.”\(^{11}\) One MP went so far as to suggest that a stone memorial – no matter the design – would not be sufficient to fully honor the fallen Canadians; a statute, instead of a statue, would be more appropriate. By taking legislative action to provide for the welfare of veterans, it was believed Parliament might best “give a shred of reflection of the liberty for which [the soldiers] died, that would be an embodiment of a shadow of the ideal for which they poured out their blood.”\(^ {12}\) James Shaver Woodsworth (Labour, Winnipeg Centre) read a letter from a female constituent, in which she wrote “May I suggest that instead of spending money on the fallen, [the government] spend the money for the clothing, feeding and sheltering of the men who had the great misfortune to return to Canada with their lives. It is no fault of theirs if they are not among the so-called ‘glorious dead’…We dress up the dead with cenotaphs, etc., and we refuse the living bread.”\(^ {13}\)

For Mackenzie King, the issue was one and the same. He responded to Woodsworth, saying “If it a choice between living without bread and living without a spirit that is ready for sacrifice, I think the majority of men would prefer the spirit of sacrifice to bread.” What is more, “It is the spirit of heroism, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of all that is noble and great, that was exemplified in the lives of those sacrificed in the Great War, and the services rendered by the men and women who went overseas; and the nation will be dead the minute it loses that

\(^{11}\) Canada, *House of Commons Debates* (11 May 1923), p. 2687 (Mr. Woodsworth, MP).
\(^{12}\) Ibid., p. 2689 (Mr. Irvine, MP).
\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 2687 (Mr. Woodsworth, MP).
vision. It is that vision which the government wishes to keep alive in erecting a monument of this kind."\textsuperscript{14} The Prime Minister believed that the monument issue transcended the basic costs of construction; at its heart lay the very essence of what it meant to be Canadian.

Despite the objections raised over building any sort of new war memorial, the movement to create a national monument was successful, with a request for design submissions made in early 1925. As stated in the \textit{Conditions of Competition}, “The Competition is open to all Architects, Artists and Sculptors, resident in the British Empire who are British Subjects, and to British Subjects by birth, resident elsewhere. Also to all Architects, Artists, and Sculptors, who are citizens or subjects of countries which were Allies or Associate Powers of the British Empire during the late Great War.”\textsuperscript{15} The requirement that the winning designer be of a certain nationality may have stemmed from an earlier incident regarding a World War I monument to be built in Winnipeg. In that case, planning was halted when questions were raised about the origins of the surname of the designer, Emmanual Hahn. It was suspected that Hahn might be a German name – which it was – and “There was a further outcry from Winnipegers when it was learned that the artist had been born in Germany.”\textsuperscript{16} It did not matter that Hahn “had lived most of his life in Canada and had studied sculpture in Toronto.”\textsuperscript{17} When it came time to design and build a memorial to World War I, many Canadians did not want someone of German heritage even remotely associated with the process. For them, it was anathema to conceive of a scenario in which the designer of a war memorial – a memorial that was to not simply commemorate Canada’s service and sacrifice during World War I, but also what that war meant for Canadian society and identity – had close links to Canada’s wartime enemy.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 2687 (Mr. Mackenzie King).
\textsuperscript{15} Department of Public Works (Ottawa), \textit{Conditions of Competition for National Commemorative War Monument}, 12 February 1925, 2. Department of Public Works fonds. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 94.
Memorial scholar Robert Shipley has noted, “The shock of losing so many young people in war had a deep impact on Canadian society. The need to remember their service and their sacrifice, and the desire to be inspired by their selfless example, was clear to those who were left.” The terms of the design competition reflected this, and echoed Mackenzie King in declaring that “It is the spirit of heroism, the spirit of self-sacrifice, the spirit of all that is noble and great that was exemplified in the lives of those sacrificed in the Great War, and the services rendered by the men and women who went Overseas; it is that vision which the Government wishes to keep alive in erecting a monument of this kind.” Some of the earlier concerns regarding the appropriate form any sort of commemoration should take were also addressed, maintaining that the monument should not “glorify war or suggest the arrogance of a conqueror. While the spirit of victory is essential it should be expressed so as to not only immortalize Canada’s defenders, but convey a feeling of gratitude that out of this great conflict a new hope has sprung for future prosperity under peaceful conditions.” This restrained and humble parameter was neither unique nor isolated to the National War Memorial; as Shipley further writes, “In Canada the monuments built after the First World War are almost universally concerned with the suffering of war and the grief of losing young men. Seldom do they even mention victory.”

In response to the call for memorial designs, 127 half-scale drawings were submitted. “There were sixty six from Canada, twenty four from England, twenty one from France, seven from the United States, five from Belgium, one from Scotland, two from Italy and one from

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18 Ibid., 103.
19 Department of Public Works (Ottawa), Conditions of Competition for National Commemorative War Monument, 4.
20 Ibid., 6.
21 Shipley, 116-118.
Trinidad.” Soon after, these 127 submissions were narrowed down to seven finalists – three English architects, one Scottish architect, one from the United States, and only two from Canada itself. In early 1926, the Board of Assessors chose Vernon March, of Kent, England, as the winning designer. Once notified of the Board’s decision, March began production of the memorial, aided by his six brothers – Dudley, Harry, Percival, Sydney, Walter, and Edward – and one sister, Elsie.

The March family worked on the memorial at their studios located in Kent, first modeling the figures in clay, casting them in plaster, and then making bronze casts. Unfortunately, a few years after receiving the contract, Vernon March died of pneumonia, on June 11, 1930, but his siblings continued the project. Interestingly, “none of the brothers, who are all under fifty, has been at an art school. They come of Yorkshire farming stock.” All sculptural work was completed by July of 1932, but “the actual location of the site whereon [the memorial] was to be erected had not at that date been decided upon. The Federal Government therefore permitted the bronze figures to be set up in a temporary architectural setting in Hyde Park, London, England, after which, in May 1933, they were returned to the studios in Kent.” In place of the eventual granite pedestal and archway, grey canvas was stretched over steel scaffolding. After some redesigns and the inclusion of additional figures, in 1937 the bronze figures were shipped to Canada in thirty-five wooden crates.

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23 Ibid.
By mid-1938, work began on the masonry for the memorial. “The 10,000 cubic feet of grey granite from the Art Dumas Quarry at Rivière à Pierre was selected for the base and arch with the approval of Mr. Sydney March, who had come [to Ottawa]…” The granite masonry – 555 tons worth – was finished by October 16, 1938. The total cost of the memorial and memorial plaza was $482,000; the March family received $160,000 for the bronze figures, the granite work cost $124,000, and the plaza and altered roadways around the site cost $198,000.

Ironically, as Canada’s National War Memorial – a memorial heralding peace, freedom, and sacrifice – was nearing completion and its unveiling, the global political situation was darkening.

An interesting ceremony took place on the afternoon of Friday, 30 September, 1938, behind the high board fence which screened the operations of the workmen. It was the day of the Munich Agreement, signed by [British] Prime Minister Chamberlain and Hitler early that morning: ‘symbolic of the desire of our two people never to go to war with one another again.’ [Canadian] Prime Minister Mackenzie King took advantage of the opportunity to commemorate the event by personally moving into place the topmost figures on the memorial.

During a Royal Visit to Canada by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, the National War Memorial was officially dedicated. The unveiling took place at 11 o’clock on the morning of Sunday, May 21, 1939, with a ceremony that included speeches, performances by a band and choir, a moment of silence, and the laying of wreaths at the base of the memorial. Lines of veterans ringed the memorial plaza, with the general public behind them, filling the streets and open space surrounding the site. To an audience of roughly 100,000 people, King George VI would conclude his remarks by saying:

This memorial, however, does more than commemorate a great event in the past. It has a message for all generations and for all countries – the message which called for Canada’s
response. Not by chance both the [crowning] figures of peace and freedom appear side by side. Peace and freedom cannot long be separated. It is well that we have, in one of the world’s capitals, a visible reminder of so great a truth. Without freedom there can be no enduring peace, and without peace no enduring freedom.\textsuperscript{31}

Less than four months later, peace and freedom would again be threatened as the Second World War began in Europe.

The National War Memorial is situated in a central location, the centerpiece of Confederation Square and nearby a number of other noteworthy structures. When facing the memorial, two sites frame the scene. To the left, Parliament Hill can be seen – specifically the East Block and the upper reaches of the Peace Tower – while on the right is the striking Château Laurier and the Rideau Canal Locks. The Square itself is an unenclosed area, filling the plot of land demarcated by the intersection of Elgin and Wellington Streets. According to the official description from Veterans Affairs Canada, “Rising 21 metres [70 feet] from its base, the memorial consists of an arch of granite surmounted by emblematic bronze figures of Peace and Freedom. Shown advancing through the archway are 22 bronze figures symbolic of the ‘Great Response’ of the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who answered the call to serve. All branches of the service engaged in the war are represented.\textsuperscript{32} The pedestal upon which the figures stand bears the years of the First World War – 1914-1918 – on the front and back, while the years encompassing the Second World War and the Korean War were added to the sides in 1982 in order to “symbolize the sacrifice of all Canadians who have served Canada in time of war in the cause of peace and freedom.\textsuperscript{33}"

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
Although the figures – including two mounted on bronze horses – moving through the arch are shown holding weaponry and pulling a field artillery piece, their postures and facial expressions do not convey aggression, but instead evoke a mixture of hope combined with weariness. These men and women are not going off to war, but instead are returning from battle and looking ahead to the peace they fought and sacrificed for, while also serving as a reminder to their fellow citizens of what that peace cost, in both treasure and lives. A 1932 article from *The London Times* describes the memorial as having “a great degree of realism in the faces and attitudes of the figures, and complete accuracy in the representation of every detail of military equipment.” The site gained additional significance in 2000, when the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was moved from England to Ottawa, and placed in front of the National War Memorial.

Prior to its repatriation, Canada’s Tomb of the Unknown Soldier had been at Westminster Abbey in London. In the 1990s, a movement began to establish a Tomb on Canadian soil. According to a report prepared at the time by the Angus Reid Group, a survey-based research company, “Support for this initiative appears to be driven by Canadians’ sense that Canada should have its own memorial to honour its war dead. This sentiment appeals to Canadian patriotism and nationalism outside of the context of the British Commonwealth.” The survey group found that over 75% of those polled favored repatriating the remains of an unknown casualty. Of those, when asked why they agreed, 25% believed the remains should be buried in Canada, 21% believed Canada should have its own Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and 20%

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36 Angus Reid Group, Inc. and Veterans Affairs Canada, *Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: Final Report* (Ottawa: Veterans Affairs Canada, 1999). The report’s findings were based on 1,500 telephone interviews conducted via the National Angus Reid Group, between February 18-24, 1999, of Canadian adults. The Angus Reid Group is now known as Ipsos-Reid.
believed doing so would honour the memory of the dead.\textsuperscript{37} However, the majority (34\%) of those who disagreed with the idea of moving the remains said that the relocation lacked respect for the dead and would be indecent, while 22\% cited the associated costs. Angus Reid noted that “With appropriate planning and communications, Veterans Affairs could convince Canadians that this initiative has been carefully planned in terms of cost and propriety in order to honour Canada’s war dead.”

In May of 2000, a delegation of Canadians, representing Canadian Forces and Veterans Affairs, traveled to France in order to bring an unidentified soldier back to Canada. It was decided “that the remains be selected from the area of Vimy as an appropriate symbol of Canada’s war time achievements.”\textsuperscript{38} Following a somber event, the delegation returned to Ottawa with the remains, which lay in state in the Hall of Honour, in the Centre Block of Parliament, for three days. After affording the public the opportunity to pay their respects, the casket containing the remains was moved to the site of the National War Memorial, where it was placed inside of a granite sarcophagus at the base of the memorial. With the addition of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to the memorial site, the National War Memorial thereby became even more central to Canada’s sense of commemoration and veneration, and how those ideals would be exhibited in the national capital.

To the left and right of the memorial are two stone benches that face low walls inscribed with descriptions of certain elements related to the memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the general rituals and tradition used in the commemoration of veterans – such as wearing poppies and pausing for two minutes of silence at 11 a.m. on Remembrance Day. The actual site

\textsuperscript{37} A note on spelling: where I directly quote Canadian sources or discuss the Canadian Honour Guards (Chapter 3), I will use the Canadian spelling of honour. Anywhere else, I will use the American spelling – honor.

that the entire memorial occupies is shaped like a triangle, with one point splitting and extending down Elgin Street; this area includes wood benches – all facing the memorial and away from traffic. Trees, flowers, and shrubs are placed in semi-circles to the left and right of the memorial, on the far edges of the plaza. This greenery gives some refuge from the surrounding traffic and city noise, but in no way eliminates it entirely. Nor do the trees provide much shade or shelter around the memorial; Confederation Square is very much open to the elements, at times creating a harsh environment for visitors and honor guards. The site is visible from a number of different locations around the city, and Elgin Street, one of the city’s main thoroughfares, terminates at the memorial, creating a visually stunning scene. Since its initial construction, the plot of land the memorial occupies has been expanded, creating a larger Confederation Square with benches and more room to freely move around the memorial. However, even though the growth has moved vehicle traffic further away from the memorial itself, the square is still in a high traffic area. Pedestrian visitors to the memorial must navigate across busy roads, and the passing cars, trucks, and buses do not allow for much quiet reflection.

One reason for the evolution of the National War Memorial from a structure commemorating a single war to one honoring all of Canada’s war dead can be found in James Mayo’s study on war memorials. According to Mayo, “The meaning of a war memorial can change as a later war forces its reinterpretation.”

The National War Memorial was meant to serve as a reminder of not only the war itself, but also the sacrifice made by so many to “win peace and to secure freedom,” as reinforced by the winged figures atop the arch. However, as earlier stated, in one of the great ironies, the memorial was unveiled in May of 1939, only months before hostilities would once again erupt in Europe. Based on an account in the Ottawa

40 Veterans Affairs Canada, “The Memorial.”
Citizen, of the memorial’s dedication by King George VI, any threat of a renewal of hostilities in Europe – which some people believed to have been averted by the Munich Agreement, signed only months earlier in September of 1938 – did not diminish or minimize the message of the National War Memorial, but rather highlighted its importance. Writing about the memorial at the time, journalist L.H. Jenkins noted, “If the shadow of a rearming world fell on its beauty, no less eternal were the principles for which it stands – peace, freedom and the dignity of the human spirit.”

This idealism would be greatly tested in the ensuing years, as the Munich Agreement proved insufficient to appease Nazi Germany’s thoughts of expansion and domination. As Mayo writes, “World War II devastated the symbolism intended or placed upon [World War I] commemorations. They became commemorative anomalies to bygone beliefs.” Including the dates for later wars on the memorial’s pedestal may be seen as an attempt to resurrect and reinforce some of these “bygone beliefs,” while also silently recognizing that society did not adequately learn the lessons from the First World War, the supposed “war to end all wars” that was repeated a generation later.

The National War Memorial’s evolution into a more comprehensive war memorial – one that commemorates multiple wars, not just World War I – was fairly simple during the remainder of the twentieth century. Date ranges were merely added to the pedestal; the group of figures moving through the archway was not amended to include period-specific soldiers, dress, or weaponry from either World War II or the Korean War. However, modifying the memorial to accommodate any other wars may not be as easy; the question of including the date ranges for any future wars, including the war in Afghanistan, on the National War Memorial is currently up

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41 L.H. Jenkins, “Moving and Inspiring is Ceremony at Unveiling Performed by the King,” Ottawa Evening Citizen, 22 May 1939, 17.
42 Mayo, 10.
for some debate. As a matter of simple logistics, it would be difficult to aesthetically add additional dates to the memorial’s pedestal – the dates for World War II and the Korean War occupy most of the available space. Without the dates – whatever those dates may be, whenever the war might officially end – what does that say about the significance of the war in Afghanistan in Canadian culture? If Afghanistan is not included in the National War Memorial, it would be difficult to still view the memorial as the national memorial to all wars, nevermind the fact that the National War Memorial does not acknowledge the wars conducted prior to 1914. Moreover, the wars included on the memorial’s pedestal would obviously possess a certain amount of privilege over other wars. If the war in Afghanistan were to get its own memorial, a whole new layer of problems would be created. Not including Afghanistan in the National War Memorial could be seen as minimizing the efforts of the soldiers who served and sacrificed in that effort. On the other hand, creating a unique, stand-alone memorial for Afghanistan might also be seen as favoring or highlighting the recent war, as if to say it was more significant than both World Wars and the Korean War. It remains to be seen whether or not the National War Memorial will remain static and locked in a specific timeline from the past, or if it will adapt to current or future wars in which Canadians might take part.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{43} Additional discussion of the official memorialization of the war in Afghanistan will be provided in Chapter 3.
As the examination moves south of the 49th parallel it uncovers profound differences between the National War Memorial in Ottawa and the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC, in terms of their scope, size, use of space, and the visitor’s experience. In comparison to the National War Memorial, the National World War II Memorial is not one single structure but instead a sprawling site filled with a number of features, design elements, and inscriptions. “The World War II Memorial complex occupies a 7.4-acre site, of which 1.7 acres consists of the memorial itself.”

The National World War II Memorial is built around, and incorporates, the Rainbow Pool, originally named for the rainbows created from the mist arising from its fountains, located at the east end of the better-known Reflecting Pool, opposite from the Lincoln Memorial. The Rainbow Pool, and thus the war memorial surrounding it, is situated between the Reflecting Pool and 17th Street, across from which lies the Washington Monument.

Monument. In order to preserve the scenic vista from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Monument, the National World War II Memorial is sunk roughly six feet below grade. Approaching the site from the east, from the direction of the Washington Monument, one first encounters a granite sign placing the memorial in context with both its surroundings and history. It reads “Here in the presence of Washington and Lincoln, one the eighteenth century father and the other the nineteenth century preserver of our nation, we honor those twentieth century Americans who took up the struggle during the Second World War and made the sacrifices to perpetuate the gift our forefathers entrusted to us: a nation conceived in liberty and justice.”

From there, the visitor descends a slight ramp, as walls rise up on either side of the grand ceremonial entrance. On the north and south sides of the entranceway are two flagpoles flying the American flag, with a base including the emblems of the American military services involved in World War II – Army, Navy, Army Air Forces, Merchant Marine, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. Surrounding the base is a granite bench engraved with “Americans came to liberate, not to conquer, to restore freedom and to end tyranny.” Relief panels depicting America’s involvement in World War II are located on either side of the ceremonial entrance leading into the memorial, twelve on each wall. The reliefs on the north wall feature aspects of the Atlantic Theater of Operations, whereas those on the south wall feature the Pacific Theater. The reliefs are laid out in an approximate timeline, so as a visitor enters the memorial site, they are able to trace the history of the war. For example, the Pacific side begins with a relief depicting Americans hearing the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and ends with a panel showing people celebrating the end of the war and V-J Day.

At the bottom of the entrance ramp, the site opens up into a wide oval plaza, surrounding the Rainbow Pool. In his history of the planning and construction of the National World War II

45 This sign, and its deeper meaning, will be explored in later chapters.
Memorial, Nicolaus Mills writes, “The narrative history related by the relief panels at the ceremonial entrance is over at this point. From here on, it is the evocativeness of the memorial’s architecture and sculpture that defines the visitor’s experience.” According to the official description of the memorial, “Curvilinear ramps at the north and south approaches provide access to the plaza for visitors walking along the existing east-west pathways between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. These ramps provide a gentle entry to the plaza. Granite benches follow the curvilinear rampart walls.” More prominently, “Two forty-three-foot-tall granite pavilions, honoring the Atlantic and Pacific theaters of war, anchor the north and south sides of the memorial’s plaza. Within each pavilion are bronze baldachinos that form a canopy of four bald eagles holding aloft a laurel wreath.” The floor of each pavilion features a reproduction of the World War II Victory Medal, given to all Americans who served in the war, surrounded by the words “Victory on Land,” “Victory at Sea,” and “Victory in the Air.” “These sculptural elements celebrate the victory won in the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters.” At the base of each pavilion, at the memorial’s ground level, “in the fountains facing the plaza, are inscribed four theaters of operation. Inscribed along the rim of the basin are the names or locations of individual campaigns crucial to achieving victory in that respective theater of war.” The Pacific side’s smaller theaters include “Southwest Pacific” and “North Pacific,” and battles such as “Guadalcanal,” “Midway,” and “Leyte Gulf.” Across the memorial plaza, the Atlantic side features “North Africa” and “Western Europe,” along with “Normandy” and “Battle of the Bulge,” among others.

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48 Krowl, 92.
49 American Battle Monuments Commission, “Fact Sheets – Memorial Design.”
50 Krowl, 92.
Quotes from prominent Americans are inscribed on the walls throughout the plaza, including the words of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman and Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur. One of the more striking focal points is the Freedom Wall, located on the west side of the plaza, across the Rainbow Pool from the ceremonial entrance. The wall is comprised of 4,048 gold stars, representative of the gold star hung in the window of a household that had lost a family member in the war. Each star on the Freedom Wall symbolizes one hundred Americans who died or went missing during World War II. As Kirk Savage has noted, “Tucked behind a small pool, the wall is impossible to reach without stepping into the water, which is forbidden. Instead, visitors encounter a huge didactic inscription that doubles as a barrier: ‘Here We Mark the Price of Freedom.’”

Encircling the plaza are fifty-six pillars, representing the forty-eight states and eight American territories under U.S. control during the war, which are “arranged chronologically by their entrance date into the federal union of acquisition by the United States but alternate from south to north of the Freedom Wall.” According to Frederick Schreiner, a National Park Service Ranger and Memorial Guide, the entire memorial was designed to be reminiscent of a Roman forum, where people can speak freely. In the words of the memorial’s designer, Friedrich St. Florian, “I envisioned the plaza as a place that is full of joy and full of happiness, and where people can interact and have discourses and disagreements. Because that, I thought, was the finest celebration of democracy.”

More specifically, the Freedom Wall and pillars are meant to represent a victory banquet – the Wall is in the place of honor and centrally located. Delaware, the first state to enter the

52 Krowl, 102.
union, is thus located immediately to the left of the Wall, while Pennsylvania, the second state, is immediately to the right of the Wall. This pattern continues for every subsequent state and territory. Each pillar is seventeen feet tall and features the same elements: the name of the state or territory carved into both sides; wreaths of wheat and oak leaves that alternate from each pillar on the front and back; and a narrow opening in the middle of the pillar. The wreath of wheat symbolizes the agricultural strength of the United States, while the oak leaf wreath denotes the industrial power that aided in the war effort. The open space in the pillars, the negative space, represents the loss of life experienced by each part of the United States, demonstrating that every state, district, or territory made a sacrifice during the war. “Extending the metaphor of unity among the states and territories, each pillar is connected to its neighbor with a segment of bronze rope, indicating that the entire country literally was bound together by the common experience of war.”

There are little details throughout the memorial that bring additional, deeper meaning to the experience. Drainage grates feature a stars-and-stripes design. The Great Seal of the United States is carved into each balustrade at the ceremonial entrance. And hidden behind the memorial, by both entrances to the underground rooms holding the memorial’s machinery and utility spaces, the observant visitor can find little engravings of “Kilroy,” the cartoon figure peaking over a wall, with the well-known caption “Kilroy was here.” The sketch and saying, which became associated with American soldiers and sailors during World War II, pays homage to the original by similarly being in an out-of-sight location, something only revealed to those actively seeking it out.

In the center of the plaza rests the Rainbow Pool, rehabilitated and made 15% smaller than the original. Two powerful jets of water are at the north and south curves of the pool, with the water shooting upwards of fifteen feet in the air – the height, and ensuing spray, can be

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54 Krowl, 102.
lessened during inclement weather. Smaller fountains spouting graceful arcs of water form an inner oval around the pool, which is beautifully illuminated at night. As a result, the memorial is a series of concentric ovals, moving outwards from the smaller fountains and the Rainbow Pool to the plaza and pillars. When an individual is at the memorial, having descended the ramps and is near the Rainbow Pool, the rest of the National Mall is largely hidden from view. The walls and pillars that rise above the sunken space visually block the large crowds that typically flock to the Mall, while the fountains in the Pool can drown out the noise of the nearby pedestrian and automobile traffic.

The landscaping around the perimeter of the memorial blends in with the National Mall’s topography and vegetation. Large elm trees provide much-needed shade on hot Washington summer days, and curvilinear paths wind around the memorial and lead visitors on to either the Lincoln Memorial to the west or the Washington Monument to the east. Benches are scattered along the pathways, offering spots for rest or reflection. The site includes two additional structures, one housing a National Park Service information station, and the other, further away from the memorial, containing restrooms and drinking fountains.

Unlike Canada, it took the United States many decades following the war’s conclusion to begin building a memorial to such a pivotal moment in the nation’s history. A pattern has emerged in the United States of constructing war memorials in Washington in an almost reverse timeline. The memorial for the Vietnam War (1955-75), the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, was dedicated first, in 1982. The memorial for the Korean War (1950-53), the Korean War Veterans Memorial, was dedicated in 1995. Although World War II ended in 1945, it was not until 1993 that Congress passed legislation authorizing the construction of the National World War II
Memorial, and the memorial was not completed until 2004, finally being officially dedicated on May 29, 2004.

The story behind the delayed planning and development of the National World War II Memorial is detailed and complex. In the years immediately following the war’s conclusion, it was believed by many that a memorial was not necessary. Typically, local communities would add the names of World War II dead to pre-existing war memorials. And, as Nicolaus Mills has stated, “Communities were, moreover, under no pressure from the returning veterans to do otherwise.”\(^{55}\) Rather, the prevailing notion was that the war had been an unpleasant job that needed to be done, and with it completed, it was time to return to lives that had been interrupted by hostilities. Similarly, John Bodnar has posited that “Wartime losses also raised the possibility that an excessive amount of public mourning might weaken the overall attachments people had to the state that mobilized the war effort in the first place – no matter how just the cause.”\(^{56}\) The idea that a memorial was not immediately necessary, that it was instead best to move on, was often echoed in interviews with World War II veterans and officials connected to the memorial effort. According to Ducky Wilkinson, a Marine veteran who had fought in the South Pacific, “Nobody ever brought [the war] up. We just got the job done and walked away from it.”\(^{57}\) The memorial’s project executive, Barry Owenby, has stated, “When the guys came home from World War II, they had parades, the GI Bill; everybody loved them, and they were just concerned with getting on with their lives. They didn’t need a memorial.”\(^{58}\) Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH) built on the idea that the World War II generation is, in the words of Tom Brokaw, “the Greatest Generation,” when she said, “They’re the most unselfish generation

\(^{55}\) Mills, xxiv.
\(^{57}\) Bill Maxwell, “Your gifts could build WWII memorial,” *St. Petersburg Times*, 10 November 1999, 17A.
America has ever known. That’s why there was no World War II memorial before, because they never asked for it.”59 It was almost as if the success and power of the United States in the years following the war served as an adequate recognition of the World War II generation’s sacrifice. Rather than a granite memorial, Americans could instead perceive their country’s nuclear might and economic prosperity as testament to that Greatest Generation.

In 1987, Ohioan and World War II veteran Roger Durbin asked his U.S. Representative, Congresswoman Kaptur, why no memorial to World War II existed in Washington, DC. Thus began the long process – legislative, fiscal, design, and construction – of what would become the National World War II Memorial. “The process of getting memorial legislation passed would in the end take longer than it took to win the war.”60 Representative Kaptur introduced H.R. 3742, the first bill to deal with the construction of a World War II memorial on a national scope, in December of 1987.61 The bill eventually died in committee, only to be reintroduced by Kaptur in 1989 at the start of the 101st Congress. This pattern – a bill’s introduction, only to later wither away in committee – would continue until, finally, “in 1993, as the 103rd Congress began, there was finally widespread agreement that the memorial legislation should not be subjected to more delays for any reason.”62 Influential Senator Strom Thurmond, who had been proposing similar, parallel legislation in the Senate, had by this time joined Kaptur in attempting to get a memorial built. Through their efforts, on May 25, 1993, President Clinton signed the bill that became Public Law No. 103-32, authorizing “the construction of a memorial on Federal land in the

59 Ibid.
60 Mills, 10.
62 Mills, 13-14.
District of Columbia or its environs to honor members of the Armed Forces who served in World War II and to commemorate United States participation in that conflict.”

Although this large hurdle was at last overcome, the National World War II Memorial still had other obstacles blocking its path to completion. The first of these was the selected location for the memorial. The National Mall, and its center axis in particular, has evolved into a seemingly sacred space in the nation’s capital. Anchored on its western end by the Lincoln Memorial and stretching east to the Grant Memorial and U.S. Capitol Building, the Mall is generally bounded on the north and south by the White House and Jefferson Memorial, respectively.

The main axis of the National Mall has played host to a number of demonstrations and gatherings over the years, from the 1963 March on Washington to the displaying of the AIDS Quilt, while also serving as a massive public green space in the middle of an urban environment. As will be discussed later, the Mall, with its monuments, has become a sort of “pilgrimage site, where communities of believers actually come together in the act of occupying a holy site, seeing a relic, reenacting a sacred event.”

In the early stages of the design and planning process, a number of sites were considered for the National World War II Memorial. These included a location near the Capitol Reflecting Pool, located in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol Building, and the area around Constitution Gardens, the plot of land between the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and 17th Street, to the north of the Reflecting Pool. After much consideration, however, even these two frontrunners were deemed insufficient. National Capital Planning Commission member Jack Finberg saw the

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64 Savage, 4.
Constitution Garden site, off to the side of the main axis of the Mall and nestled amongst trees, as appropriate due to the fact that “war ‘never has been and should not become the centerpiece’ of the Mall’s symbolic display.” In contrast, however, J. Carter Brown, Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, among others, believed that the Constitution Garden site did not do justice to the significance World War II had had on American history and culture, and that a more central location was required. “The magnitude of World War II and the ideals for which it was fought necessitated a memorial site that was more prominent than the sites for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean War Veterans Memorial.”

During a July 27, 1995, meeting between officials from the American Battle Monuments Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, the idea of placing the memorial at the Rainbow Pool, which at that time was crumbling and in a state of disrepair, was first introduced. For those who had bristled at the notion of the National World War II Memorial not receiving a deserved place of honor on the National Mall, this new site was seen as preferable straightaway. Haydn Williams, a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission and chairman of the World War II Memorial Site and Design Committee, believed “that the Rainbow Pool site south of the Constitution Gardens was the right place for the National World War II Memorial and that such a site would put the Korean War Veterans Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in proper historical perspective.” For Williams, and others, World War II was believed to be the pivotal moment in American history, and as such, a memorial to that war necessitated a location that would signal that idea.

In addition, placing the National World War II Memorial at the Rainbow Pool would also put the memorials to World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War in physical and

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66 Mills, 105.
67 Ibid., 86.
spatial perspective. With both the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the western end of the Reflecting Pool, to the south and north of the Pool, respectively, and with the National World War II Memorial anchoring the far eastern end of the Reflecting Pool, a triangle is formed when viewing the National Mall from above, with the National World War II Memorial at the apex of this triangle. Moreover, absent any sort of religious connotations, the National Mall can appear, from above, as a Latin Cross, with the area from the Lincoln Memorial to the U.S. Capitol forming the long axis, and the stretch from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial forming the shorter cross-axis, with the Washington Monument at the intersection of the two. Looking at the war memorials, with the National World War II Memorial positioned at the Rainbow Pool, the Latin Cross is re-created on a smaller scale, with the Lincoln Memorial (Civil War), National World War II Memorial, and Washington Monument (Revolutionary War) creating the long axis, and the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial forming the cross-axis.

In October of 1995, when it was announced that the National World War II Memorial would be placed in between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, at the site of the then-little-known Rainbow Pool, a cry arose from some in the public and private sectors. It was said that the new memorial would destroy the historic, scenic vista of the Washington Monument and Mall from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. From the Senate floor, then-Senator Bob Kerrey (D-NE) declared, “The memorial proposed for the Rainbow Pool would forever alter the openness and grandeur that is America’s front lawn.”68 And in a white paper written for the National Capital Planning Commission, the agency in charge of regulating and preserving the capital city’s landscape and buildings, Kerry reiterated “The World War II Memorial proposed for this site interrupts the symbolic and special continuity between

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68 Ibid., 95.
Washington and Lincoln." Washington’s congressional delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) went on the record against the selected location when she said, “The Mall is the urban equivalent of the Grand Canyon. There should never be anything in the middle of the Grand Canyon.” Additionally, “some said too many memorials had cluttered the National Mall, leaving little room for future generations to erect their own monuments,” thereby creating a “theme park effect” on the Mall.71

Most notable were the objections raised by Judy Scott Feldman, chair and president of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, an organization founded in 2000, seemingly in direct response to the National World War II Memorial. Feldman’s organization constantly stressed that they did not object to a memorial to honor World War II veterans, but rather the specific location said memorial was slated to occupy. As Feldman argued, “This is not about honoring veterans; this is about ruining the nation’s most important gathering spot by putting up a monstrosity that will block the unimpeded walkway and the open vista that now exists.”72 Feldman would later ask, “If we don’t have our public space and our commons, where do we go to celebrate, to demonstrate?”73 This question paralleled the concern that the location of the National World War II Memorial was too close to the Lincoln Memorial and the site of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, thereby intruding on this historically significant site. However, as Nicolaus Mills has illustrated, the “distance from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to the eastern edge of the Reflecting Pool,” roughly where the National World War II Memorial

69 Ibid.
72 Guillermo X. Garcia, “USA’s ‘front yard’ is veteran’s latest battleground,” USA Today, 27 October 2000, 4A.
73 Ward, H09.
begins, is 765 yards – over two and a half football fields in length.\textsuperscript{74} The National Coalition to Save Our Mall even went so far as to claim that building the memorial at the Rainbow Pool would so dramatically affect the water table and ground topography that the nearby Washington Monument would be in danger of toppling over – a claim that was clearly proved false, as the Washington Monument is still standing.\textsuperscript{75}

Despite these concerns and objections, the planning of the memorial continued onward. In late 1996, after the American Battle Monuments Commission received over 400 submissions in response to a call for memorial designs, the design by architect Friedrich St.Florian, an Austrian-born U.S. citizen and former Professor of Architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design, was selected as the winning entry. When describing his approach to the memorial, and its design requirements and restrictions, St.Florian has remarked, “We were told we cannot change the form and the shape of the [Rainbow] pool. Nowhere was it said that you could not lower [it]. That decision to lower the memorial plaza into the ground gave us the opportunity to create a monument of substance and of importance. And yet, it does not interfere with its surroundings.”\textsuperscript{76} The initial concept of St.Florian’s memorial included interior space in compliance with the preliminary design requirements that the new memorial must contain, below-grade, a hall of honor or remembrance, “interactive education facilities, an auditorium and a visitor information center.”\textsuperscript{77} These requirements quickly came under fire, with many critics arguing that the site “should be a memorial, not a museum.”\textsuperscript{78} Unlike Ottawa, which, in addition to the National War Memorial, also features the Canadian War Museum, there is no national war museum in Washington, DC. The early plans for the National World War II Memorial attempted

\textsuperscript{74} Mills, 104.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 101-02.
\textsuperscript{76} America’s Greatest Monuments, Smithsonian Channel.
to slightly remedy this by including elements of both. The result, however, led to designs that were hindered by the contradictory requirements for a memorial that included large amounts of underground space for museum attractions, yet still maintained a low profile and did not intrude on the Mall’s vista.

As Washington architecture critic Benjamin Forgey noted, “Underground buildings are particularly tricky because they’re supposed to be invisible. Lots of stairs and entrances and exits, for fire safety as well as convenience. Elevator cabins above ground. Big rooms for ventilating equipment, and big exhausts.” Concealing these necessary by-products of such an underground exhibit space would contribute to their elimination entirely. The first to go was the 400-seat auditorium, regarding which, Haydn Williams, of the American Battle Monuments Commission, stated, “Our own thinking has been changed and we’re scaling down the amount of enclosed space considerably. We just began to question who would use it, who would operate it, what was the real need.” Eventually, all of the underground space for museum-type exhibits and displays would be removed from the design requirements, allowing St. Florian to create the open, airy memorial design that exists today. In interviews, St. Florian has remarked how Forgey’s critiques on the requirements for interior space in early memorial designs influenced his own view of the memorial’s desired result. Speaking about Forgey, St. Florian noted, “He said a memorial is not a school. It is a shrine. A memorial is not to teach. It is to inspire.”

Before ground was officially broken on the memorial site, memorial planners had to contend with yet another obstacle to a successful completion, this time in the form of a lawsuit.

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79 Benjamin Forgey, “Tactical Error.” The question regarding subterranean buildings for information centers and educational facilities continues to be debated. Recent suggestions for an underground center near the Vietnam Veterans Memorial were met with similar criticism and concerns that such sites would bring ancillary problems in the form of entrances, exits, and HVAC equipment on the surface, as well as set a precedent for such space in future memorial designs. See: Deborah K. Dietsch, “Mall sprawl poses issue,” Washington Times, 27 May 2006, B02.


81 Mills, 148.
In October of 2000, the National Coalition to Save Our Mall filed a federal lawsuit aimed at not only reducing the size of the memorial design, but also moving it back to the Constitution Gardens site. The Coalition argued that, among other grievances, the parties involved – including the Commission of Fine Arts, the National Capital Planning Commission, and the American Battle Monuments Commission – had violated existing laws and regulations regarding the placement of new memorials in proximity to existing memorials on the Mall. In addition, the suit maintained that the memorial planning agencies had “failed to give the public notice or an opportunity to comment on either the selection of the Rainbow Pool site or the design criteria guiding the memorial's design.”82 As a result of the legal action taken, the official groundbreaking a month later, on Veterans Day, could not involve a shovel actually digging into the earth. Instead, a long wooden box was constructed and filled with dirt, and it was from this that the officials, politicians, and other dignitaries involved officially, and ceremoniously, broke ground on the National World War II Memorial.83

Facing a lawsuit and increased interagency squabbling and confusion, the possibility of the National World War II Memorial being built anytime soon became questionable. In the face of such delays, Benjamin Forgey wrote a May 2001 article in The Washington Post lambasting the National Capital Planning Commission and encouraging Congressional action. As Forgey noted, “In a year, more than 400,000 aging World War II veterans will die… selecting another site, designing a new memorial and getting the necessary approvals could take five years or more. In five years, more than 2 million World War II veterans will die… The veterans – and, in fact, the entire World War II generation – deserve dignified commemoration while some are still alive

83 Mills, 183.
to hold their heads high.” Moreover, in recent years, the World War II generation had received increasing amounts of praise and attention. In 1998, *Saving Private Ryan* was released in theaters and *The Greatest Generation* was published. The film, directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Tom Hanks – who would later become a spokesperson for the National World War II Memorial Campaign – takes place during World War II and involves a small group of American soldiers tasked with finding an American paratrooper whose three brothers died in military action. One of the most striking scenes of the film was its opening sequence, an intense, stark, and realistic depiction of the D-Day invasion of Omaha Beach. Tom Brokaw’s book, dubbing the World War II generation the “Greatest Generation,” further highlighted the efforts and sacrifices made by that generation. Such a groundswell of public interest and support had allowed the National World War II Memorial Campaign and the American Battle Monuments Commission to raise over $200 million not only from private corporations and organizations, but also from individuals and grassroots fundraising efforts.

In response to the potential delays for a memorial that was evidently so popular with a large segment of the population, Congress stepped forward with legislation that would expedite the construction of the memorial. Within a matter of weeks during the spring of 2001, both the House and the Senate passed bills calling for the immediate construction of the memorial, and that any existing design or site questions be resolved quickly and efficiently. Most importantly, the bill, which would become Public Law 107-11, stated, “The decision to locate the memorial at the Rainbow Pool site…shall not be subject to judicial review.” After a Memorial Day ceremony, during which President Bush signed the bill into law, Bush stated, “the time has come

for all concerned with the creation of the memorial to act with the same determination and sense
of common purpose so wonderfully displayed by those we honor. We must get the job done, so
that those who served are able to see the Nation’s permanent expression of remembrance and
thanks.” Unfortunately, one of those veterans who would not be able to see the completed
memorial was the one whose question had sparked the entire process. Roger Durbin, who had
worked tirelessly with Representative Marcy Kaptur and others in advocating for the creation of
a memorial to World War II, who had met with President Clinton and Senator Bob Dole, and
who had participated in a number of official ceremonies pertaining to the commemoration of
World War II and its veterans, died of pancreatic cancer in early 2000. Durbin, like
approximately 12 million other Americans who had served in the war, would not live long
even to see the completion of the National World War II Memorial.

On May 29, 2004, the National World War II Memorial was officially dedicated. Over
150,000 people attended the Memorial Day ceremony, which included speeches by President
George W. Bush, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Senator Bob Dole, Tom Hanks, and Tom
Brokaw. The memorial’s unveiling was the centerpiece of the “Tribute to a Generation,” “a four-
day celebration…[that] paid tribute to the service and sacrifice of America’s World War II
generation.” Of the event, a National World War II reunion which drew an estimated 315,000
people over four days, Richard Kurin, director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Center for
Folklife and Cultural Heritage, said that it “will be the largest single gathering of veterans, and
sadly, it will be the last.” Kurin added “For a lot of people, this is the culmination of their
biography…Coming to this memorial is like coming to a pilgrimage.”

The reunion included events such as displays of military equipment, live bands performing World War II era music, and wartime oral and written histories from the Veterans History Project. Additionally, there was a workshop featuring “experts from the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress” that “advised veterans and their families on how best to preserve the documents, scrapbooks, photos, medals and memorabilia” from World War II, as well as representatives from Veterans Affairs educating veterans on the resources and benefits available to them. The activities clearly were meant to not only celebrate and honor veterans, but also demonstrate a concern for their memories, histories, and well-being.

There were extra considerations to take into account when dealing with such a large congregation of aged veterans. One news article providing an account of the reunion noted:

A team of 40 grief counselors was ready to help people having difficulty coping with emotions triggered by anything from a handshake, a ‘thank you,’ a uniform patch or the sight of the memorial itself, counselor Jan Sparks said. Unlike the veterans of more recent conflicts, those who served in World War II are at higher risk from emotional stress because of their health conditions, she said. ‘The danger is in the memories that they have, of the losses, of the wounded, of the killed. There’s a reminder that Joe didn’t come back.’

Along with caring for the mental and emotional welfare of the visitors, additional awareness had to be given to their physical health. With temperatures in the 80s (high 20s to low 30s Celsius) and high humidity levels, there was a genuine concern over the increased risk of heat exhaustion and dehydration. Dr. William Rogers, operational medical director for the National Park Service, noted that the event was “going to be more medically challenging than the Fourth of July because of the age of participants.”


90 “Dedication to Draw Thousands,” Philadelphia Inquirer, A02.

91 Miller and Ward, B01.
More than 200 physicians, nurses and corpsmen with the Navy and U.S. Public Health Service have volunteered to man the first-aid tents for the dedication, most signing up for the unpaid job out of a sense of patriotism… ‘A lot of them have parents who were in World War II and they feel really strongly that this is something they need to do,’ Dr. Rogers said. ‘They were adamant that they wear the white dress uniforms out of respect for the veterans.’

There were even wheelchair technicians on hand to help fix any broken wheelchairs used by the veterans. According to Alan Retter, the spokesperson for the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services, the organizers and medical officials for the event were “prepared for a mass-casualty situation,” an interesting, and unsettling, choice of words for a war memorial dedication.

Despite the worry of large numbers of injuries and maladies, and safety issues ranging from thunderstorms to possible terrorist attacks, the dedication of the National World War II Memorial was a success. Veterans expressed their joy, relief, and appreciation that the memorial had at long last been completed. An event that had been years – decades, even – in the making was finally a reality. From legislative hold-ups to legal battles, from controversy surrounding everything from the site location to design plans, the path followed by the National World War II Memorial was not a direct one. However, due to a renewed interest in World War II, a sense of urgency and fear that the World War II generation would not live to see the end result, and the need to honor a “Good War,” especially in contrast to the fear and uncertainty of a post-9/11 America, the National Mall finally gained a new memorial.

The Memorials in Comparison

Although one of the driving forces behind the completion of the National World War II Memorial was to honor those who served before they all disappeared, the memorial was not designed solely with those people in mind. Much like the National War Memorial, the National

92 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
World War II Memorial is meant for all citizens, across all generations, including those yet to come. As a result, even though the memorials in Ottawa and Washington are very different in shape, size, and form, both feature similar components and employ similar memorial “language” and themes, particularly in regards to the attempted narrative being conveyed. Both the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial include human figures, although to varying degrees of centrality. As noted earlier, the National War Memorial’s most prominent element is arguably the twenty-two bronze figures – as well as two horses and a field gun – moving through the archway. At roughly eight feet tall, the figures are impressive in both their size and detail. Pages of correspondence between the Office of the High Commission for Canada in the United Kingdom, the Canadian Department of National Defence, the Prime Minister’s Office, Members of Parliament, and the sculptor, Vernon March, demonstrate not only the exacting consideration and attention to detail regarding which military services would be represented on the memorial pedestal, but also, more notably, how the figures would be dressed and accessorized. Every facet of the memorial was discussed, from the style of helmets and headwear to uniforms and tartan kilts, to the accuracy of the weaponry, tools, and other equipment, even so far as to how the figures should be posed and arranged.

Most importantly, it was vital that as many branches and services of the Canadian military, as possible, would be represented in the National War Memorial, including infantrymen, sailors, airmen, sappers, foresters, signalmen, railway troops, air mechanics, and stretcher bearers. Accordingly, this meant that different genders and ethnic origins would consequently be depicted, from the kilted member of the Scottish Highland Battalions to the infantryman who “might well represent one of the 3,500 native Canadians who served in the war overseas.”

Likewise, two

women are positioned at the rear of the procession, one representing the Nursing Services, the other shown in a Voluntary Aid Detachment uniform, representing all other women’s corps. It is worth acknowledging, however, that the possible Native Person appears to be the only visible representation of a person of color included in the memorial. Missing from the memorial is any figure representing the Black Canadians who served in World War I, albeit in segregated units.95

The National World War II Memorial also showcases, in the relief panels lining the ceremonial eastern entrance leading from 17th Street, some of the different races and genders that played a role in America’s war effort. Men, both white and black, are displayed being sworn into military service, while men and women are shown on the home front, working in factories and fields in support of the war. What is more, some of the inscriptions around the memorial acknowledge the labor and sacrifice made by women. A quote by Colonel Oveta Culp Hobby states, “Women who stepped up were measured as citizens of the nation, not as women… This was a people’s war, and everyone was in it.” Next to the Freedom Wall, and its 4,000-plus gold stars, President Truman is quoted as saying “Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices.” And, rather than specifically depicting the different service branches that took part in the war, and that are somewhat observable in the relief panels, the National World War II Memorial explicitly displays the name and seal of each of the six military branches at the base of the flag poles flanking the ceremonial entranceway.

As mentioned, both sites include panels that further explain the memorial, the veterans and war(s) being honored, and the general idea of commemoration and remembrance. In Washington, the twenty-four relief panels depict scenes and events such as the Lend-Lease Act

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and War Bond parades, paratroopers preparing to jump out of an aircraft, the D-Day Invasion of Normandy, battlefield medics, winter combat and the Battle of the Bulge, submarine and jungle warfare, a field burial, Allied prisoners of war, and American and Russian soldiers meeting at the Elbe River.

Nevertheless, the panels do not include any sort of written description or even a title letting the visitor know exactly what they are seeing. Instead, a pre-existing knowledge of World War II and certain battles or events is required to fully comprehend the information being conveyed. The panels are brief snapshots that do a valiant job of highlighting the horrors of war and the effort undertaken by men and women during the conflict. Yet without any explanatory descriptions, some panels may be confusing or unclear to the average visitor. Moreover, the physical placement of the panels can make them difficult to view. The panels are horizontally aligned along the walls that line the entrance into the memorial space. The first few panels are down low, at about knee-level, requiring individuals to crouch down in order to truly view them. As one walks down the ramp, descending into the sunken memorial space with the walls climbing higher, the panels move from being at the visitor’s knees, to eye-level, to finally, over their head, with the last panels at least six feet off the ground. This placement creates difficulty for any visitor – adults need to squat to see the early panels, while children are too short to fully appreciate the details of the later panels. Additionally, the physically impaired, such as those in wheelchairs – which is not unheard of when dealing with an audience that includes aged World War II veterans – are prohibited from being able to closely inspect certain panels that may depict events from their own lives.

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96 It is worth noting, though, that seeing as how the memorial was meant to honor the veterans themselves, explanations or labels of the scenes featured in the panels might not have been deemed necessary, since the World War II generation had experienced them firsthand.
The National War Memorial avoided this predicament by placing panels and descriptions – in both English and French, Canada’s two official languages – on short walls facing stone benches. One wall entitled “They Gave Their Youth…” features a description of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, explaining not only the design elements of the Tomb but also the ultimate sacrifice made by many Canadians, both in the past and those to come. The panels explain that the Tomb includes a medieval sword “symbolizing courage,” maple leaves “symbolizing Canada,” and laurel leaves “symbolizing both victory and death.” Additionally, “Three corners of the Tomb feature replicas of the Memorial Cross…presented to the families of those who gave their lives while serving in an area of hostilities outside of Canada.” The fourth corner features a poppy, which, as explained by the panel, is a “symbol of sacrifice and remembrance.” The panel goes on to place the poppy in a modern context, stating that the poppy “is worn by thousands of Canadians on Remembrance Day, November 11.” A bronze relief, showing each element in greater detail, accompanies each description.

Across the memorial plaza, another low bench faces panels describing the memorial and additional aspects of commemoration. Located on a wall titled “We Will Remember Them…” the panels begin by explaining that the memorial’s figures represent all Canadian forces in service during World War I, while the dates “remind us of those who served in the Second World War and the Korean War.” The panels go on to explain that the allegorical figures atop the memorial represent Peace and Liberty, holding a laurel wreath and a torch, respectively. The final elements of these panels describe how many Canadian soldiers are buried in military cemeteries on foreign soil, while “Each year on November 11, at 11 a.m., Canadians pay tribute

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97 The allegorical figures have been described in a number of ways: as representing Peace and Freedom, Peace and Liberty, and Victory and Liberty. Early accounts favor Victory and Liberty, which may have been changed to Peace and Liberty in light of the competition guidelines stipulating against a display of a conquering – or victorious – force.
to our war dead and remember those who have served and those who continue to serve our country.” In these ways, the panels at the National War Memorial succinctly educate the public about details and elements of the memorial and tomb, as well as commemorative practices and customs followed by Canadians. Similarly, this wall also features small square reliefs that include depictions of a soldier, sailor, and airman, a Canadian military cemetery, and the top of the Peace Tower, the prominent feature of the Centre Block on Parliament Hill, with the clock on the Tower set at 11 o’clock.

Despite the panels and explanations, however, the physical positioning of the memorial’s figures makes them somewhat difficult to appreciate. As described, the figures moving through the archway tower over the visitor, and with so many figures – and horses – included, they are grouped closely together. This makes it hard for the viewer to adequately differentiate the figures located in the middle of the pack; the particular attention to detail given to uniforms, patches, and weaponry is lost. Additionally, it is practically impossible to view the faces and fronts of the figures at the rear of the archway. They are walking “away” from the visitor, and the only way to see anything other than their backs would likely entail climbing up onto the pedestal or observing the memorial while hovering twenty feet in the air, so as to see over the mounted figures.

Although each memorial includes representations of different genders and ethnicities, it is also important to note what is not on display. As mentioned above, the National War Memorial in Ottawa does not feature any Black Canadians, and has only one figure that might be a Native person. Scholar Jim Zucchero, in critiquing the supposed Native Canadian figure, explains that such a representation skips over the mistreatment experienced by those Native Canadians who wanted to serve in the war, and how they had to give up their Native status if they joined the
Canadian Armed Forces. As Zucchero notes, “At best this sort of selective narration can be seen as an ill-conceived, if well-intentioned, attempt to recognize and honour Native veterans; at worst it is a shameful manipulation of facts to construct a fiction for the purpose of fostering a feel-good response among ill-informed and unsuspecting readers [of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ official literature about the memorial].”

The interpretive plaques on the site’s perimeter similarly fail to mention these other, more marginalized segments of the Canadian forces. Likewise, the National World War II Memorial only seems to include two races or ethnicities – white and black. There are no Asian Americans, Native Americans, or other groups represented on the twenty-four relief panels detailing the American involvement and response to World War II.

More significantly, there is a lack of any acknowledgement of the more unpleasant aspects of war, committed by either Canada or the United States. On some level this is understandable; when designing and building a memorial, particularly one located on so central a national stage, showcasing unfavorable or embarrassing actions does not top the list of priorities. And in the case of the National War Memorial, the design is such that displays of this type might not seamlessly fit in with the memorial. However, the National World War II Memorial was not hampered by the same constraints. The relief panels, for example, illustrate certain horrors of war. These include representations of dead soldiers – the casualties of the D-Day Invasion and subsequent battles – and one panel solely devoted to the depiction of a field burial, complete with a shrouded body. One panel goes so far, in portraying the liberation of American Prisoners of War (possibly survivors of the Bataan Death March), as presenting the POWs as emaciated figures wearing tattered clothing, one with an arm in a sling and another whose left leg is

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amputated at the knee, supporting himself with a crutch. In all instances, though, what is shown is what was done to American soldiers and sailors, rather than any actions taken by these same men. In contrast to the panel featuring American POWs a visitor might expect to see a panel similarly depicting the interment of tens of thousands of Japanese Americans in response to Executive Order 9066.

The National World War II Memorial includes another omission – or possible glossing over of historical fact – in the inscriptions of significant battles and campaigns in each theater of war. The Pacific Theater ends with the simple inscription “Japan,” supposedly including all aspects of the American assault on that island nation. Absent from that one-word inscription, or in the relief panel heralding V-J Day, is any explanation of how the end to war in the Pacific was expedited. There is no mention of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, no relief panel featuring the Enola Gay or a mushroom cloud. Again, the reason behind excluding atrocities, or even controversial events, committed by the United States might be as basic as the fact that the site is a memorial meant to honor the service and memory of the American veterans of that war. Another explanation can be found in the words of Benjamin Forgey and his assertion that the National World War II Memorial could not also serve as a museum; it would be impossible to adequately incorporate a full history of the war into the memorial design.

A third rationale may be the precedent established by the problem-filled exhibit attempted by the Smithsonian’s National Air and Space Museum in response to the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. The debate centered around the museum’s decision to discuss how the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki not only helped end World War II, but also heralded the beginnings of the Cold War and the atomic age. The museum planned to not only talk about the men who had served in the Allied cause, but also
about the victims on the ground, those Japanese citizens who had been killed or injured by the bombings. The resulting controversy was summed up best by Tom Crouch, the curator of the National Air and Space Museum, when he said, “Do you want to do an exhibit intended to make veterans feel good, or do you want an exhibition that will lead our visitors to think about the consequences of the atomic bombing of Japan? Frankly, I don’t think we can do both.”

It appears that the museum staff did not heed the words of David Lowenthal when he said, “People often strive to forget or banish a baneful inheritance.” Despite repeated revisions in the draft proposal, the Smithsonian still came under fire for attempting to shine a light on an incident in America’s past that was less than noble, especially an event that had occurred during a war considered to be “The Good War” and had helped shape a large part of the nation’s identity as a global power. As stated by Edward Linenthal, “The Air Force Association...expended considerable energies in mobilizing Congress, other veterans’ groups, and journalists, all of whom in turn shaped the public’s perception of the nature and meaning of the exhibit.” The AFA’s beating of the drums eventually succeeded, with politicians such as Massachusetts Representative Peter Blute and presidential hopeful Patrick Buchanan chiming in on the debate, echoing statements made by other politicians. Blute said that he did not “want 16-year-olds walking out of [the museum] thinking badly about the U.S.,” while Buchanan claimed that the exhibit was a by-product of a “sleepless campaign to inculcate in American youth a revulsion toward America’s past.” Both politicians saw the Smithsonian’s effort to deal with the bombing of Hiroshima as an attack on American nationalism, and not as an

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102 Ibid., 61.
103 Ibid., 59.
accurate portrayal of the event, the period leading up to the event, and the event’s aftermath. To again cite Linenthal, “Compared with the tremendous political clout of veterans’ groups, congresspeople, and the media, the historians’ objections [to the changes desired by the aforementioned organizations] carried little weight, for the museum gained nothing politically by responding to their concerns.”

In the end, the politicians won when the Smithsonian bowed to the mounting pressure and created an exhibit that was, for all intents and purposes, meaningless. In 1996, when the American Battle Monuments Commission announced the competition for memorial designs, the controversy over the Enola Gay exhibit was barely two years removed. The memorial architects and designers may have wanted to avoid the contentious debates and animosity that the proposed exhibit had evoked, pitting veterans groups against historians. As a result, any mention of the Enola Gay, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, internment camps, and other unpleasant, embarrassing, or shameful aspects of American activities during World War II were not included in the final memorial design. Instead, the National World War II Memorial touts the triumphs, sacrifices, and efforts of the American citizenry; to paraphrase Tom Crouch, it is a memorial largely meant to make Americans feel good at the expense of a consideration of the negative consequences of war.

However, in light of the fact that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was supplemented by the addition of the Three Servicemen statue, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, and the In Memory memorial plaque – dedicated to those who served in the war, but died afterwards due to their service in Vietnam – a future modification of the National World War II Memorial is not completely out of the question. As Sanford Levinson points out in Written in Stone, even though “All monuments are efforts, in their own way, to stop time,” there is a detailed history of

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104 Ibid., 52.
105 Obviously, the Wall of Honor, with its Gold Stars, is a clear reminder of negative consequences of war. However, as described, the story being told by the National World War II Memorial involves more than just that one wall.
memorials and monuments being moved, altered, or torn down entirely as time passes or attitudes change.\textsuperscript{106} When these aspects are deemed worthy of being included into the memorial landscape, or if an existing memorial is seen as insufficient, a change is made. This is already evident at the National War Memorial, where the dates for World War II and the Korean War were added to the pedestal. If enough public or political pressure is eventually applied, perhaps the National World War II Memorial could be reworked to include some of the untold stories and viewpoints from that era.

The design and features of both memorials, the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial, were not created by happenstance. They were created in order to convey a specific story of the moment when each country took a major step onto the global stage and came into their own; World War I allowed Canada to further break away from England’s colonizing shadow, while, by the end of World War II, America was on its way to becoming an economic and military superpower. Examining the national memorials originally constructed to commemorate these events reveals the dominant narrative each population wishes to advance. These physical assertions of a distinct public memory and history are only amplified when the memorials are considered in their larger urban context.

Ottawa and Washington are capital cities filled with memorials and statues, monuments and plaques. Some have been forgotten or long overlooked, while others are prominent and figure large in the urban fabric. As will be described, Canada’s National War Memorial and America’s National World War II Memorial, are in the latter category, positioned in central, significant locations within each city, locations that are part of a larger ceremonial and

\textsuperscript{106} Sanford Levinson, \textit{Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies} (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 7. Of course, Levinson also describes how memorials are often destroyed as the by-product of regime change or a dramatic reordering of government power structures. Nonetheless, memorials and monument parks in the American South, for example, have also been modified to appropriately and adequately recognize that region’s troubled past and history of slavery; not all change has dubious or shifting motivations.
noteworthy landscape – Confederation Boulevard in Ottawa and the National Mall in Washington. The design, elements, and placement of each memorial contribute to the national narrative that is presented in these public spaces.
CHAPTER II – MEMORY IN THE URBAN FABRIC: CAPITAL CITY CENTERPIECES

The National War Memorial and National World War II Memorial are centerpieces of their respective capital cities. This chapter examines the larger urban fabric in which the memorials are located, and suggests that the placement of either memorial not only adds to the ceremonial landscape, but also signifies their importance to the national narrative.

After examining the elements and details comprising each memorial, it is important to expand the scope and view the sites in relation to their surroundings. For the National World War II Memorial the analysis involves Washington, DC, and the National Mall; with regards to the National War Memorial, this means Ottawa and Confederation Boulevard. A striking difference is found, though, in the areas in which the memorials are located – the National Mall and Confederation Boulevard; the former has been deemed closed to future additions, while the latter was specifically developed with future expansion in mind. Yet despite this asymmetry, each cityscape includes a number of different memorials, statues, federal buildings, museums, and other sites of memory and national importance. In either city, due to the respective memorial’s placement, relative location to other sites, and subject matter, the National World War II Memorial and the National War Memorial have become central features of the capital landscape, ranking above other sites – both existing and future – in terms of national significance, identity creation, and cultural predominance.

Similar to other capital cities, Washington and Ottawa exist in an interesting liminal space, straddling across two different spheres: the functional, purposeful city that houses the seat of a national government and the highest levels of executive, legislative, and judicial powers; and the ceremonial, symbolic landscape representing the nation as a whole, the iconic buildings and monuments that attest to a country’s history, power, and character. The city names themselves also serve as shorthand for the government, the legislature, or the administration; journalists often write about the divisiveness in Washington, or provinces griping about Ottawa. A number
of different meanings and implications are thus wrapped up in the words “Washington” and “Ottawa.”

What is more, each city has a delicate relationship with the rest of its country. For instance, citizens of Washington frequently object to the fact that they do not have a genuine member of Congress representing them; the motto on Washington’s license plates harkens back to the American Revolution: “Taxation without Representation.” And Ottawa has made an attempt to physically strengthen Quebec’s ties with the rest of Canada by locating a number of government departments and agencies across the Ottawa River in Gatineau, Quebec. With all of these varied layers of meaning found in each capital city, it becomes vital to investigate how each memorial is positioned not simply within its immediate surroundings, but also within the ceremonial memmoryscape and the larger urban environment.

Washington and the National Mall

Figure 3: Map of the National Mall (courtesy of the National Park Service)
Memorial scholar Kirk Savage, in describing Washington’s National Mall, has called the space a “monumental core” and stated that “Inscriptions are fixed forever; statues do not move and change. Traditionally, this means that monuments strip the hero or event of historical complexities and condense the subject’s significance to a few patriotic lessons frozen for all time. Washington’s monuments, in this conception, promise to immerse visitors in the ‘essential’ America, the ‘soul of the nation.’”¹ However, the lessons and meanings presented by the Mall and its memorials have historically been contested. What is built on the Mall, and which events or people are portrayed, and in what manner, has often been a subject of debate.

The National Mall contains some of the most significant and recognizable structures, monuments, and vistas in the country. However, the current landscape and design of the Mall has evolved over years and decades. Pierre L’Enfant, the man tasked by George Washington to design the fledging nation’s capital city, conceived of a “grand capital of wide avenues, public squares and inspiring buildings in what was then a district of hills, forests, marshes and plantations.”² The Mall encountered a variety of barriers in its development from wild parkland to a more designed, crafted landscape. Some of these stumbling blocks were the lack of funds, lack of interest, or external tragedies that derailed any plans.

Despite good intentions, L’Enfant’s original 1791 purpose for the space, which involved a grand avenue approaching the Capitol, had largely been left to flounder. The exact reasons for this are varied: in 1792 George Washington fired L’Enfant due to disagreements between the engineer and city commissioners; there was already considerable cost associated with building the capital city from scratch, with houses and government buildings taking precedence; and the

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¹ Kirk Savage, Monument Wars (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 10.
land was instead used for grazing or simply allowed to grow wild.\(^3\) Only by the second half of the nineteenth century was the terrain transformed into a naturally landscaped park with gravel paths winding through the tree-filled grounds. In 1850, Andrew Jackson Downing, the noted landscape architect, was commissioned to redesign the Mall. He dreamed of six separate aspects for the space, including a botanical garden, carriage paths bordering a manmade lake, gardens, trees, an arboretum, and a “Monument Park.”\(^4\) In explaining this design, Downing wrote:

> The Public Grounds at Washington…would undoubtedly become a Public School of Instruction in everything that relates to the tasteful arrangement of parks, and grounds, and the growth and culture of trees, while they would serve…to embellish and give interest to the Capital. The straight lines and broad Avenues of the streets of Washington would be pleasantly relieved and contrasted by the beauty of curved lines and natural groups of trees in the various parks.\(^5\)

While certain parts of Downing’s plan for a large, educational urban park had been implemented, the vision was far from complete when he passed away in the summer of 1852, in a boat fire while traveling down the Hudson River. When Downing died, so too did his ideas for the transformation of the Mall; “without Downing’s executive ability to carry [the design scheme] out, the project languished and was forgotten in the storms of the Civil War.”\(^6\) As the quote implies, when the Civil War broke out, there was simply no time, attention, or funding available to dedicate to the overhaul of the Mall. In fact, “During the Civil War most of the Mall was used

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\(^5\) Andrew Jackson Downing, “Explanatory Notes to Accompany the Plan for Improving the Public Grounds at Washington,” 3 March 1851, Records of the Commissioners of Public Buildings, Letters Received, vol. 32. National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

for military purposes, such as camping, training, slaughtering cattle, and storing equipment” – a far cry from today’s popular tourist attraction.7

By 1901, Republican Senator James McMillan from Michigan had decided that something had to be done with the National Mall. After multiple failed attempts to create a unified, coherent landscape, the Mall was a rambling hodgepodge of vegetation, buildings, and mixed uses. The land was still used as grazing land for cattle, while a railroad cut across the eastern end of the Mall, further marring the park’s terrain and at times noisily interrupting debates in Congress. As chairman of the Senate Park Commission, also known as the McMillan Commission, McMillan led a group of architects and planners in drafting a new design for Washington and, particularly, its ceremonial and symbolic core.

The members of the McMillan Commission included such experts as: Daniel H. Burnham, fresh off his success in designing the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair – the “White City”; Beaux-Arts proponent and architect Charles F. McKim; and noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. These men were “charged with interpreting for the twentieth century Pierre Charles L’Enfant’s vision of the nation’s capital.”8 Inspired by European landscapes and tree-bordered avenues, the McMillan Commission put its own stamp on Washington’s design. “L’Enfant’s plan of 1791 called for a Grand Avenue, which would be flanked by open space, and beyond that gardens and fine residences. The McMillan Plan of 1902…calls for a lawn flanked by roads and monumental public buildings.”9 Instead of Downing’s winding paths carving through forested parkland, the McMillan Commission envisioned a clear-cut greensward, 300 feet wide, with four rows of trees on either side.

7 Bednar, 45.
One of the central aspects to the redesigned National Mall was the building of the Lincoln Memorial, anchoring the western end on land reclaimed from the Potomac River. However, despite all the construction, tree clearing, and plans to make a grand, sweeping vista, real world events would intervene. With the start of World War I, the capital city needed a great deal more office space for wartime mobilization efforts. Temporary office buildings, or “tempos,” were hastily erected along the Mall, to the north of where the Reflecting Pool would be completed, to house the “Main Navy” and “Munitions” departments. “Built with cement and grey plaster board, they made the formerly elegant space resemble ‘a kitchenette with too many grand pianos in it’. “10 “President Franklin D. Roosevelt, then under-secretary of the Navy, ordered their construction there in 1918 but later said he regretted allowing them to be built so close to the Mall.”11

The “kitchenette” would become even more crowded during World War II. The completed Lincoln Memorial and Reflecting Pool competed for space with the still-standing tempos from World War I (which gained a fourth story), but also additional two- and three-story buildings constructed on the south side of the Reflecting Pool and on the grounds of the Washington Monument. Moreover, two covered, elevated pedestrian bridges straddled the Reflecting Pool, connecting the “Main Navy” buildings with those for the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts.12 Aerial photographs of the Mall from this era show a landscape blanketed with office buildings and starkly demonstrate the nation’s wartime condition. Many of the tempos along the Mall seemed far from temporary, lasting several decades until being demolished in the 1960s. Six blocks of tempos, those along the north side of the Reflecting Pool, would hold out

even longer, finally torn down in 1970 and replaced six years later with Constitution Gardens, a quiet park that includes a man-made lake and memorial to the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

As it currently exists, the National Mall is a vast area, stretching just over two miles, east to west, from the Capitol building to the Lincoln Memorial, and over a mile from the White House in the north to the Jefferson Memorial in the south, comprising over 1,000 acres. It can be said that the Mall is comprised of two components, a monument section and a museum section. East of the Washington Monument lie the National Gallery of Art buildings and the numerous Smithsonian museums – the national museums of American History, Natural History, Air and Space, American Indians, and African Art; the Hirshhorn Museum; the Freer Gallery of Art; the Arts and Industries Building; and the Sackler Gallery. These museums, along with the Smithsonian’s National Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Castle, and the Department of Agriculture building line the north and south sides of the open greensward between 14th street to the west and 3rd street to the east. This segment of the Mall is bookended by the Washington Monument and, over a mile away to the east, the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial, the Capitol Reflecting Pool, and the U.S. Capitol Building.

The other end of the Mall, the area west of the Washington Monument, includes the National World War II Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Constitution Gardens, the Lincoln Memorial, the District of Columbia War Memorial, the Tidal Basin and Japanese Cherry Trees, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, and, anchoring the southern end of the Mall, the Jefferson Memorial. Additionally, the margins of this area contain West Potomac Park, playing fields, and baseball diamonds, bringing a more utilitarian, functional aspect to the vast urban parkland.
Further, the Mall extends northward to also include the White House and Ellipse. There are numerous other, smaller statues, memorials, and details of the Mall, some off the beaten path, that are not as well known or iconic; they are not necessarily the features of the Mall that are typically found on picture postcards or in family vacation photo albums, yet they continue to add further levels of memorialization and significance to the space.

On the outskirts of the Mall, just beyond the perimeter formed by the museums, are a variety of federal departments. These include the buildings for the Departments of Energy, Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, and Commerce, the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Trade Commission, Federal Reserve Board, Internal Revenue Service, the National Archives, and the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center – home to the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the United States Agency for International Development.

As such, the Mall incorporates multiple aspects of the American experience. Two of the three branches of government are represented, with the Supreme Court located on the opposite side of the Capitol from the Mall, while museums and monuments display and impart history and added meaning to the space. Considering Washington is a government town, it is only natural that federal agencies and bureaus are clustered near each other, in close proximity to the Mall. According to Charles L. Griswold:

The Mall is the place where the nation conserves its past in this particular way, simultaneously recollecting it (albeit rather selectively), honoring it, and practicing it (in the White House and Capitol). The presence of the many museums along the Mall emphasizes this fact; they adorn this monumental precinct with America’s scientific and artistic heritage. The arts and sciences thus come into close proximity with the seat of government, as if to self-consciously proclaim their mutual influence. We are to infer that the history of American power is that of a cultured and progressive people.13

When a visitor walks around the Mall and ventures to nearby locales, they pass by a wide assortment of government buildings and institutions, all adding to the impression that this is a serious city, one laced with gravitas.

As the Mall was refashioned into the open space it is today, evolving from the tree-filled urban park envisioned by Downing, it naturally became a gathering place for large groups of people. One of the first such examples was the historic 1939 Easter Sunday performance by African American opera singer Marian Anderson. The Daughters of the American Revolution had denied Anderson the use of Constitution Hall solely on account of her race, an act that drew protest from Eleanor Roosevelt, among others. As a result, the concert was moved to the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and Anderson’s performance, given in front of 75,000 people and broadcast over film and radio, marked a significant transition in the Mall and its monuments. According to *America’s Greatest Monuments*, a television documentary originally aired on the Smithsonian channel, “Anderson’s concert, and the blatant prejudice leading to her performance on its steps, transformed the Lincoln Memorial into a venue for Americans to be heard. And forever changed the purpose of the Great Emancipator’s place on the Mall.”

That specific venue would again serve as the site for historic markers of the Civil Rights Movement when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech on August 28, 1963. The finale to the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,” King addressed 200,000 people, black and white, gathered in front of the Lincoln Memorial and around the Reflecting Pool. The Lincoln Memorial would later be slightly modified to acknowledge the historic event which occurred there; “In 2003, to mark the fortieth anniversary of [King’s] speech, the same

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granite step, the same stone, on which he stood and spoke was engraved with his name and the words I HAVE A DREAM."\(^{15}\)

The following decades witnessed numerous groups and organizations similarly using the Mall as a staging ground for demonstrations. During the Vietnam War, anti-war protests brought hundreds of thousands of people to the Mall, the largest of which occurred during the April 1971 Vietnam Veterans Against the War demonstration. Edith L.B. Turner further points out:

Over the years, hundreds of other rallies for scores of different causes have taken place, seeking to validate a particular cause by taking it onto a plot of ground so intimately involved with the nation’s core values. These events have included not only antiwar and civil rights rallies but also antinuclear rallies, rallies against unfair housing practices, against President Nixon, in support of missing soldiers, in support of embassy hostages in Iran, for the victims of drunk drivers, gay rights rallies, foreign policy rallies, women’s rallies, Native American rallies, environmentalist rallies, rallies for abortion rights, for the rights of the fetus, the right to smoke marijuana, for an end to intervention in El Salvador, freedom for Cuba, for Taiwan, Thailand, Pakistan, South Africa, and China, rallies for the world’s hungry, the Hands Across America rally, the Promise Keepers rally, the AIDS Quilt, the Million Man March, rallies for debt relief…the list goes on.\(^{16}\)

To this list can be added the Restoring Honor Rally, spearheaded by Glenn Beck, and the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, led by comedians and Comedy Central hosts Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert. Beck’s rally occurred – supposedly by sheer coincidence – on the 47\(^{th}\) anniversary of King’s speech, also from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. In late October 2010, Stewart and Colbert’s event was held at the other end of the Mall, with the U.S. Capitol as a backdrop. Although the latter gathering was viewed as a response to Beck’s conservative rally, Stewart maintained that that was not the case, stating, “Like everything we do, the march is merely a construct…People have said, ‘It’s a rally to counter Glenn Beck.’ It’s not. What it was, we saw that and thought, ‘What a beautiful outline. What a beautiful structure to fill with what


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 74.
we want to express in live form, festival form.””\textsuperscript{17} However, despite Stewart’s words to the contrary, as the political debate of recent years ratcheted up, particularly prior to the November 2010 midterm elections, when the Tea Party brought a whole new level of political rhetoric to the table, the two rallies were seen as occurring in opposition to each other. Audiences for each rally largely came from different sides of the political spectrum, and both rallies sought to use the Mall, with its recognizable, significant landscape, to further advance their cause.

The Mall is also the site for less politically divisive events, such as national celebrations, free programs and community activities, and educational visits. And visitors come to the Mall in droves. The National Park Service estimates that over twenty-five million people from around the world visit the Mall every year. They come for a variety of reasons and purposes. The Mall plays host to family vacations, school field trips, political events, demonstrations and public protests, and national holidays. During the warmer months, thousands of people watch the Fourth of July fireworks display, attend free concerts put on by military bands, go boating in the Tidal Basin, or visit festivals and exhibitions staged on the Mall. In this manner, we can see the dual function of the Mall – it is both the symbolic heart of the nation, emblematic of so many aspects of the country, yet is also a large park in the middle of a city, a greenspace that provides ample room for recreation and relaxation in an urban environment.

Even though the National Mall is such a popular destination, and serves as a location for celebration and demonstration, the memorials themselves are not free of some controversy. The dispute surrounding the construction of the National World War II Memorial was not an isolated incident. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, commonly known as “The Wall,” caused consternation from the start. The Wall is made up of two polished black granite tapered walls

sunk into the earth, climbing from a height of eight inches at the tips to over ten feet where they meet. Inscribed on the walls are the names of the over 58,000 men and women killed during the war, listed chronologically. The result is a display of names – absent any rank or hierarchy – that can overwhelm any visitor. The walls are angled so that one points to the Lincoln Memorial and the other points towards the Washington Monument. As a visitor proceeds up the ramps and away from the center of the Wall, they are visually confronted with either one of these other iconic national memorials.

Although now widely believed to be one of the most striking and moving memorials in America, in the beginning many critics believed that the simple angled granite wall did not properly honor those who served and died in the Vietnam War. In a piece written for the New York Times, Vietnam veteran Tom Carhart described the “anti-heroic” memorial as “a black gash of shame and sorrow, hacked into the national visage that is the Mall.” In order to appease critics, an additional monument was built two years after the Vietnam Veterans Memorial’s dedication in 1982. The Three Servicemen statue is a bronze monument of three soldiers equipped in Vietnam-era fatigues and gear, placed across a grassy lawn from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The three men are situated so as to appear as if they are emerging from a lightly wooded area to find the Wall, inscribed as it is with the names of their lost comrades.

Just to the east of the Three Servicemen, in a shaded area within site of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, is a statue to those who served in Vietnam, but who had long been marginalized and deemed outsiders. Whereas the Three Servicemen provides the traditional, heroic portrayal of Vietnam Veterans, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial presents a similar commemoration for female medics and demands they be recognized for their contributions. The statue depicts three women – “Faith,” “Hope,” and “Charity” – in various poses: “Charity” is

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cradling a wounded soldier in her arms, his eyes bandaged and mouth open in a grimace of pain; “Hope” is looking skyward, presumably for a medevac helicopter; “Faith” is on her knees, possibly in prayer, and holding the soldier’s helmet. Although the Vietnam Women’s Memorial is nearby the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, it is not located in as prominent a location as the Three Servicemen, and unfortunately can easily be overlooked.

Located along the Tidal Basin, the sprawling Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial covers roughly 7.5 acres and consists of five open-air “rooms”: a “Prologue” room, and one room representing each of FDR’s four presidential terms. The memorial was embroiled in controversy during the early planning stages, centered on the question of how to depict the 32nd president. Having become paralyzed from the waist down in his late thirties, FDR would often use a wheelchair in private, although in public he relied on leg braces or a cane to hide his paralysis. Although the extent of FDR’s paralysis was a fiercely kept secret at the time, in later years he is known in the cultural zeitgeist as using a wheelchair. Despite this, even though the site was designed to be entirely wheelchair accessible, initially the FDR Memorial only featured a statue of a seated Roosevelt covered in a large cloak, thereby hiding the type of chair in which he is seated. Criticism mounted over the absence of any acknowledgement that FDR was disabled, an aspect of his life from which many have drawn strength. As a result, the memorial’s designer first added casters to the chair, which are only visible from the rear of the statue. Eventually, an entirely new statue was added, this one at the main entrance. The addition shows FDR, in a wheelchair similar to one he actually used, in front of a wall featuring a quote by Eleanor Roosevelt in which she discusses the positive consequences of FDR’s illness.

19 The reason for FDR’s paralysis, commonly thought to be the result of polio, has come under question in recent years. A 2003 study suggests that Guillain-Barré syndrome may have actually been the cause. See: Goldman, AS, Schmalsteig, EJ, et. al., “What was the cause of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s paralytic illness?” Journal of Medical Biography, Vol. 11, No. 4 (Nov. 2003) 232-40.
Interestingly, the quote also features its Braille transcription underneath, illustrating the memorial’s acknowledgement of different abilities.

The FDR Memorial is also an example of the increasing tendency for memorials on the Mall to have large footprints. As noted, the memorial is spread over 7.5 acres – the largest of all Presidential memorials on the Mall – and includes a number of inscriptions, statues, water features, and reliefs. It may seem only natural that a memorial honoring the man who served as president longer than any other would have to be big. Moreover, FDR’s terms in office saw the United States suffer through and emerge from the Great Depression, implement the New Deal, and enter into World War II, along with Roosevelt dying in office. It could be difficult to convey all of these weighty subjects in a small, modest memorial. However, that is exactly what Roosevelt desired. In a conversation with Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, FDR declared, “If any memorial is erected to me, I know exactly what I should like it to be. I should like it to consist of a block about the size of [his desk] and placed in the center of that green plot in front of the Archives building. I don’t care what it is made of, whether limestone, or granite or whatnot, but I want it plain without ornamentation, with the simple carving, ‘In Memory Of…’”

A memorial fitting this description was erected in 1965, yet was later deemed “[an insufficient] way to honor one of America’s most beloved presidents,” and would be, for all intents and purposes, supplanted by the larger FDR Memorial in West Potomac Park in 1997.

The Korean War Veterans Memorial is another monument on the Mall dedicated to a twentieth century conflict. Along with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial flanks the eastern side of the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans

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Memorial to the north and the Korean War Veterans Memorial to the south. Visitors enter the memorial site via one of two ascending walkways, which meet at a point and form a sort of triangle. Between the walkways are nineteen stainless-steel statues, depicting a group of American soldiers, representing different military branches, on patrol, walking among granite blocks and small juniper bushes. “A granite curb on the north side of the statues lists the 22 countries of the United Nations that sent troops or gave medical support in defense of South Korea.” The end of the walkway intersects a circular pool, the Pool of Remembrance, which is surrounded by trees and benches, providing a spot for rest and reflection. The human cost of the war is engraved in stone near the edge of the pool, featuring the numbers of wounded, captured, missing and dead soldiers from both the United States and the United Nations. Opposite these etchings, a polished granite wall is also engraved with the reminder “Freedom is not Free.” As a visitor leaves along the second walkway, they move parallel to another polished black granite wall that “mirrors the statues, intermingling the reflected images with the faces etched into the granite. The etched mural is based on actual photographs of unidentified American soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines.” In this sense, the Korean War Veterans Memorial is similar to the Wall; in both cases, representations – either names or faces – of those who served are engraved into a granite wall burnished to such a reflective level that visitors can view themselves in its surface.

The other memorial to a war fought during the 1900s is the District of Columbia War Memorial, which, according to its inscription, is “A memorial to the armed forces from the District of Columbia who served their country in the World War.” Dedicated on November 11, 1931, the memorial is a peristyle Doric temple and bandstand honoring only those individuals

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23 Ibid.
from Washington who fought in World War I. Inscribed around the base are the names of the nearly 500 citizens who gave their lives during the war “as a perpetual record of their patriotic service to their country.” In addition, in the cornerstone “are recorded the names of the twenty-six thousand Washingtonians who when the United States entered the World War answered the call to arms…”24 Despite its grand message, for nearly forty years the memorial was allowed to fall into disrepair. The flagstone walkways cracked and became uneven, water and pollution soiled the marble columns and dome, and fractures appeared in the base, spreading into some of the inscriptions and making them difficult to read. Moreover, visitors to Washington can easily overlook the memorial; the site is not off of the primary walkway along the Reflecting Pool, the main concourse pedestrians follow when visiting the Mall. Instead, the District of Columbia War Memorial is further south, and tucked away amongst overgrown trees.

The memorial started to garner more attention in the last few years due to the efforts of Frank Buckles, the last surviving American World War I veteran. Buckles’ wish was to see the rededication of the District of Columbia War Memorial as a national memorial to World War I, even providing testimony before Congress in support of legislation to that effect. Unfortunately, Buckles passed away on February 27, 2011, just weeks after turning 110 years old, his dream unfulfilled.25 However, with recent funding from federal economic stimulus monies, the U.S. Recovery Act, the memorial is at last undergoing the much-needed renovations and repairs. It remains to be seen what modifications, if any, will be made to the memorial if it is to be transformed from a local memorial to one with a national scope. Additionally, the case could be made that simply rededicating an existing memorial is giving short shrift to the now-extinct

24 Inscription on the District of Columbia War Memorial.
25 Bills proposing the rededication have previously stalled in committee, yet in March of 2011 Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) reintroduced bipartisan legislation again advocating the rededication of the District of Columbia War Memorial as the “District of Columbia and National World War I Memorial.”
American veterans of World War I. Every other war fought during the twentieth century, as well as many from previous centuries, has a unique national memorial on the Mall. Presidents, politicians, organizations, and distinguished individuals have their own memorials and monuments. Yet World War I is relegated to co-opting an existing memorial, and a relatively small one at that. The footprint for the existing District of Columbia War Memorial is smaller than that of the building housing the new restrooms constructed as part of the National World War II Memorial. Yet with the passing of Frank Buckles, the veterans of the First World War have lost their Roger Durbin, the everyman veteran representing a generation and advocating for a memorial honoring their service and sacrifice.

Just beyond the designated, and generally recognized, border of the Mall, along with all the additional statues and monuments scattered around Washington, lies what can be considered one of the country’s largest memorials to military service and sacrifice – Arlington National Cemetery. Besides the headstones and grave markers, which themselves are a form of monument, Arlington National contains other memorials such as those honoring the crews of the Space Shuttles *Challenger* and *Columbia*, President John F. Kennedy’s gravesite and Eternal Flame, the Pan Am Flight 103 Memorial Cairn, the *USS Maine* Mast Memorial, the Canadian Cross of Sacrifice – which remembers those Americans who served in the Canadian military services and died during both World Wars and the Korean War – and a number of other monuments and memorials to battles, events, military units, and individuals. One of the most well-known, and prominent, memorials is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, placed high on a hill with Washington and the National Mall in the background. The tomb is guarded twenty-four hours a day, every day, by Tomb Guard sentinels – members of the 3rd U.S. Infantry, also known as the
Old Guard. The changing of the guard, an elaborate and heavily symbolic ritual, has become a popular tourist attraction, with visitors lined up four and five deep to watch the ceremony.

Along with the construction of new memorials, and the renovation of existing memorials, additional changes have recently been made to the National Mall. Since the mid-1990s, the number of security barriers ringing vital buildings and important sites in Washington has increased. After the April 1995 truck bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, security in Washington was ratcheted up. Jersey barriers were installed around all federal buildings and the stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House was closed to vehicular traffic. Barriers were also placed around memorials on the Mall, including the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. These security measures would remain in place, their necessity reinforced by the 1998 bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and, of course, by the events of 9/11.\textsuperscript{26} However, Jersey barriers, while effective, are unsightly and far from a long-term solution to modern security needs.

As a result, more permanent fortifications have been installed all around Washington’s cityscape, such as truck-resistant barriers and bollards – posts set into the ground to protect property from vehicles and damage. The Lincoln Memorial received such treatment, with bollards and concrete planters surrounding the site and limiting vehicular access while still permitting “easy pedestrian movement between the memorial and the Mall.”\textsuperscript{27} In July 2005 the National Park Service unveiled new perimeter fortifications at the Washington Monument, including “a series of interlocking rings of ash rose granite wall, standing just 30 inches above the ground. They reach deep enough into the ground and overlap at just the right points to stop

\textsuperscript{26} Sara Hart, “In the aftermath of September 11, the urban landscape appears vulnerable and random,” \textit{Architectural Record}, Vol. 190 Issue 3, March 2002, 135-41.

31 Savage, 10.
demonstrations, gatherings, and recreation. However, this benefit can also be a drawback; the Mall is, quite simply, huge, almost to the point of overwhelming. Rows of elm trees along the Mall provide some shade from the harsh sun and Washington weather, but do not alleviate the matter entirely. Additionally, the ground around the Washington Monument does not feature any trees, so pedestrians are provided little relief from the summer heat and humidity or winter wind and snow. The National Park Service claims the entire Mall, from the Grant Memorial and the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, can be covered in a twenty-minute “brisk walk,” a laughable idea when one looks at the facts.\footnote{National Park Service, “National Mall and Memorial Parks Map,” accessed 26 March 2011, www.nps.gov/nama/planyourvisit/maps.htm.} As described, the Mall is roughly two miles long; covering this distance in twenty minutes would require a “brisk walk” of approximately six miles per hour, otherwise known as a jog. Realistically, walking from one end of the Mall to the other, even stopping only briefly at a few memorials, takes at the very least an hour.

Getting to and around the Mall can also prove difficult. Parking is very limited, and, where available, is quite expensive. Washington’s public transit system, the Metro, includes some stops near the Mall, but any visitor to the city must be prepared to do a fair bit of walking. Tourmobile sightseeing vehicles, a hop-on/hop-off narrated shuttle service, used to provide a respite from walking around the Mall, but only at a steep price. The 2011 rates for a single-day ticket, which included unlimited travel around the Washington sites and to Arlington National Cemetery, were $32 for an adult, $16 for a child (ages 3-11).\footnote{Tourmobile, “Frequently Asked Questions,” accessed 26 March 2011, www.tourmobile.com/faq.php.} For a family of four, opting to walk would save close to one hundred dollars, if not more. Unfortunately, even the Tourmobile is no longer a possibility; “After 42 years of service around Washington’s monuments and
attractions,” the company shuttered its service on October 31, 2011. Replacement solutions are in the works, including the DC Circulator bus system and a shuttle service similar to the Tourmobile, yet the National Park Service is still exploring other options for transporting the massive numbers of annual tourists to the Mall, such as bike sharing services.

Considering the millions of visitors to the National Mall every year, facilities to accommodate basic needs also seem scarce. Restrooms and food concession stands are scattered around the Mall, and charge high prices for even a bottle of water. Needless to say, a balance must be struck; the National Mall cannot be turned into a food court or have restrooms every twenty yards. However, during a research trip taken in a hot and humid June 2010, which included quite a bit of walking and exploring of the Mall, bottles of water and Gatorade were endangered species in my presence; a $3 bottle of Gatorade would be empty before I took fifty steps away from the concession stand. Additionally, oftentimes the closest restroom was inside one of the Smithsonian museums, which involved waiting in line just to get into the building, before going through security and a bag check. What is more, finding an affordable meal around the Mall is difficult, especially if what is desired is something other than a hot dog from a street vendor or an expensive meal in one of the Smithsonian’s cafés. Due to the great size, and lack of amenities, the Mall has been criticized for being a void in the city, what Lewis Mumford described as “at best a fire barrier, which keeps segregated and apart areas that should in fact be more closely joined.” While the Mall is the monumental core of the city, it is a physically hollow core. Visitors are drawn to its monuments and history, but are then stranded in an urban desert.

Despite these drawbacks, the Mall continues to be the symbolic center of the city and the nation. In order to preserve the meaningful significance and themes found on the National Mall, Congress and other federal bodies have proposed plans to limit and constrain future development. By 1997, concerns were raised regarding the overcrowding of the Mall and the potential for Washington to turn into a “city so jammed with tourists that visiting the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial and other national monuments becomes a numbing ordeal.”\textsuperscript{37} Extending the Legacy, a report published by the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), declared, “With the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in 2002, the McMillan Plan for the Mall will be complete.”\textsuperscript{38} Four years later, the idea that the Mall was a completed landscape, and closed to further construction, would be emphasized with the NCPC’s \textit{Memorials and Museums Master Plan}, released in 2001. The new report built on the recommendations discussed in \textit{Extending the Legacy} by providing a discussion of the Commemorative Zone Policy, adopted a year prior by the NCPC, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), and the National Capital Memorial Commission (NCMC). “The Commemorative Zone Policy calls for the establishment of an area termed the \textit{Reserve}, which encompasses the central cross axis of the National Mall formed by its primary resources – the U.S. Capitol, Lincoln Memorial, White House, Washington Monument, and Jefferson Memorial.”\textsuperscript{39} Under this policy, no new memorials or museums could be built on the \textit{Reserve}, the cross-axial area at the core of the Mall. The plan also created a boundary for additional memorial zones; Area I is the federal land surrounding the \textit{Reserve}, generally comprising the larger kite-shaped area of the Mall, which includes the Smithsonian museums, West Potomac Park, and Constitution Gardens. According to the Commemorative Zone Policy,

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\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 25.
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“Area I is considered to be a sensitive area designated for commemorative works of preeminent historic and national significance.” These reports were codified with the Congressional passage of the Commemorative Works Act in 2003. The Commemorative Works Act further stipulated that any remaining space on the Mall is to be preserved, and created the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, which included members from the National Park Service, the CFA, the NCPC, city officials, and others, to oversee the policies and procedures related to memorial construction in the city.

Most significantly, the Joint Task Force on Memorials, an organization comprised of representatives from the NCPC, CFA, and NCMC and tasked with providing a clear, unified vision for the Mall, “considers the Reserve to be a completed urban work of art, a place where citizens can join in celebration, contemplation and the exercise of their rights of free speech.”

With that, the agencies most directly involved with the Mall’s planning and design deemed the space “closed,” and the national narrative and ideals put forward to be thoroughly and entirely presented.

In light of the fact that the Mall is now static and considered “closed,” the question remains regarding whether or not it has ever really been one unified space. From the unfinished early design schemes, the multiple purposes and utilizations of the land, the temporary buildings that existed for over five decades of the twentieth century, the addition and modification of major memorials, and current security concerns, the Mall has never really been “completed.” The movement to see the Mall as a finished work of art, and the high levels of criticism in response to any proposed changes, seem to be obsessed with an imagined nostalgia for what the Mall has

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40 Ibid., 9.
42 However, provisions were made to allow those memorials that had already received permission to be built – the National World War II Memorial and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial – to proceed to completion.
never truly been. Any additional debate over what it means to be “American,” and how an adapting, unfolding definition might be written into the National Mall, is seen as blasphemy. In reality, history has proven that the Mall is actually a dynamic, ever-changing space, constantly used and re-appropriated for, and by, different causes and groups of people. However, this in no way discounts the bottom line that there is a finite amount of space on the Mall, space that is quickly filling up.

Nevertheless, by proclaiming the Mall to be “complete,” federal agencies have marginalized any future events or historical figures and minimized their impact on the national story. In deciding that nothing else can be built on the Reserve, the Mall will forever be frozen in time, highlighting only wars and individuals from up to the end of the twentieth century. Based on current policy, no memorial to either wars in Afghanistan or Iraq, or to the 9/11 attacks—events that have had a dramatic and lasting impact on national policy and the national psyche—could ever be built in the symbolic core of the capital. Ironically, the alterations to the Mall in response to 9/11 are defensive upgrades; rather than a statue or monument, the Mall’s lasting memorial to September 11 is increased security measures in the form of bollards and limited access roadways.

It is in this environment and surrounding landscape that the National World War II Memorial exists. As described, the memorial is located in between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument, on a prominent and highly visible plot of land. Unlike the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, whose walls merely point to the memorials to Washington and Lincoln, the National World War II Memorial overtly proclaims its connection with the two presidential memorials, and with history. The memorial features a sign at the ceremonial entrance, the Announcement Stone, stating “Here in the presence of Washington and Lincoln, one the
eighteenth century father and the other the nineteenth century preserver of our nation, we honor those twentieth century Americans who took up the struggle during the Second World War and made the sacrifices to perpetuate the gift our forefathers entrusted to us: a nation conceived in liberty and justice.” With its central location at the Rainbow Pool, right on the main axis of the Mall, the National World War II Memorial is situated as a marker of one of America’s most significant military conflicts. With the Washington Monument also representing the Revolutionary War and the Lincoln Memorial (and, at the other end of the Mall, the Grant Memorial) symbolizing the Civil War, the National World War II Memorial carries on this martial tradition and lineage. The placement of the National World War II Memorial makes it clear that it celebrates and honors what is heralded as the most impactful moment in twentieth century American history, an event much more consequential than the wars in Korea or Vietnam, or even the First World War. The memorials to these other wars are off to the side, located on the edges of the Mall; they are still visible, but not nearly to the same degree as is the National World War II Memorial. As such, the memorial to World War II is granted a greater level of prestige and distinction, once again favored as the “Good War,” particularly when contrasted with the later wars.

Moreover, as the Mall is “closed” and viewed as a completed work of civic and urban art, the National World War II Memorial occupies what is possibly the last available significant site for new construction. For a number of reasons – the creation of the Reserve, the resulting controversies over the location of the National World War II Memorial, and the decreasing amount of available space – it can safely be said that nothing else will ever be built on the Mall’s main axis. As one of the final monuments to be built on the Mall, and in one of the most
prominent settings, the National World War II Memorial is thus positioned as the capstone to the design plans put forward by Pierre L’Enfant and the McMillan Commission.

Ottawa and Confederation Boulevard

Figure 4: Map of Confederation Boulevard (courtesy of the National Capital Commission)

In Canada, comparatively, Ottawa has attempted to grow in a similar fashion as Washington, to greater or lesser success. The Canadian capital city began as Bytown, a lumber town on the Ottawa River, as well as “the base camp for the construction of the Rideau canal and waterway.”43 In 1857 the city, now called Ottawa, was named the capital of the Province of Canada, and would transition into the national capital ten years later, after Confederation. During an 1893 speech, future Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier declared his intention to see Ottawa transformed into the “Washington of the North,” with similar street layouts, design schemes, and architectural symbolism. By 1899, the Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC) had been established to “create a city worthy of a capital.”44 Inspired by other urban landscape projects and the City Beautiful movement, as well as the soon-to-be-formed McMillan Commission in Washington, the OIC worked to turn Ottawa into a grand capital city.

A lack of funding, two World Wars, and, at times, a disinterested public, led to a floundering design policy for Ottawa. However, in the late 1940s, Prime Minister William Lyon

44 Ibid., 90.
Mackenzie King, a man long interested in urban planning and development, renewed the campaign to create a cohesive urban fabric. To achieve this, Mackenzie King hired French planner Jacques Gréber to make Ottawa a capital city that combined form and function, one that would be “worthy of Canada’s greatness.”\textsuperscript{45} Moreover, the new plan for the nation’s capital was meant to serve as a living memorial to those Canadians “who lost their lives in the service of their country during the Second World War.”\textsuperscript{46} While the physical manifestation of this symbolic act never occurred, the intent was to create a lookout point on the Gatineau Hills, across the river from Ottawa, allowing visitors a panoramic vista of the capital. According to the plan, this memorial terrace “would lie at the foot of a large wall visible from the city, and formed of the natural stone of the grounds, and on which inscriptions and symbols would portray the glorious deeds of the Canadian forces, while the National Capital Plan would appear, \textit{in reality}, from the terrace. A memorial room would be incorporated in the design, and therein would be perpetuated the names of Canada’s heroes.”\textsuperscript{47} Thus, the design of the capital city would be a reflection of, and testimony to, the sacrifices made by Canadian servicemen and women.

The Federal District Commission (FDC) replaced the Ottawa Improvement Commission in 1927, only to itself be replaced by the National Capital Commission (NCC) in 1959, with each commission holding more power and authority over the plans for urban design than its predecessor. “With the creation of the FDC, but more importantly with the NCC, the organization of the urban landscape – or urban design – became as important a polemical vehicle as building design. The NCC was, in particular, responsible for conveying a sense of national unity in capital design, as well as making the capital a symbol of the two ‘founding’ cultures, the

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid. Original emphasis.
French and the English.” As such, the NCC was the agency most directly responsible for carrying out many of the recommendations made by Gréber for Ottawa’s evolution.

According to the National Capital Commission, “The role of a national capital is to reflect the character, identity, symbols and values of its people. Commemorations play a key role in achieving these goals, as they express enduring values, connections to the past and aspirations for the future.” By the 1980s, in order to fulfill the vision of what Ottawa could and should be, the NCC decided that the capital required a ceremonial overhaul, and needed a unifying feature. The solution was found in the concept of Confederation Boulevard, a “ceremonial and discovery route” designed by the NCC and fully completed in 2006. This route consists of a primary loop, moving from Wellington Street to Sussex Drive and MacKenzie Avenue, crossing the Alexandra Bridge to Gatineau, continuing down Rue Laurier, crossing over the Ottawa River once more via the Portage Bridge, and reconnecting with Wellington. The boulevard includes two spurs, one proceeding further up Sussex to 24 Sussex, the residence of the Prime Minister and to Rideau Hall, the official residence of the Governor General, while the second spur “leads up Elgin Street in a grand approach to the National War Memorial.”

Despite a polished finished product, the planning and design of Confederation Boulevard did not start off smoothly. The initial name, the “Ceremonial Route,” while an apt description for the symbolic trail, was considered “a fancy-pants name” that either “sounded like a pretty parade path for marching bands and stretch limos” or “smacked of the imperialist state sending its armies jackbooting off to war.” Although the idea was met with praise in certain circles,

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48 Taylor, 92.
51 Ibid.
eventually winning awards from *Progressive Architecture* magazine, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, many balked at the idea of spending millions of dollars to create a route which one critic said would make Grigori Potemkin proud, thereby equating the efforts of the NCC with the creation of a false-fronted illusion of prosperity and harmony.⁵³

Preliminary design schemes were also considered foolish and ill timed. Early on, the NCC envisioned repaving the streets comprising Confederation Boulevard with red asphalt. As one reporter at the time asked, “If a yellow brick road could lead Dorothy to Oz, why can’t a red brick road guide Canadians around the heart of their capital city?”⁵⁴ However, by the mid-1980s, Canada’s federal government was running a high fiscal deficit. The idea of spending $60,000 to repave streets seemed not only irresponsible, but would also visually underscore the fact that the government was “in the red.” One news article noted, “*Ottawa Citizen* columnist Roy Macgregor accused the NCC of ‘applying a bit of rouge for a lot of cheek.’”⁵⁵ Even Prime Minister Brian Mulroney voiced his opinion when his office phoned NCC Chairwoman Jean Pigott to recommend she “Drop the red, but keep the road.”⁵⁶ In the end, rather than red asphalt, the NCC chose to visually connect Confederation Boulevard through the use of a consistent style of benches, street lights, information kiosks, wider sidewalks, rows of trees, and bronze three-dimensional maps of the boulevard.

Additionally, Confederation Boulevard features a unifying display element that is altered each year. “Every summer, the National Capital Commission lines Confederation Boulevard with a new set of colorful banners. The banners celebrate distinctive aspects of Canadian

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⁵⁶ Egan, C1.
geography and culture and, every year, a different theme is chosen. In previous years, banners have commemorated: the 400th anniversary of Acadia; the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Museum of Civilization; the 175th anniversary of the Rideau Canal; Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial capital cities; the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, held in Vancouver and Whistler; and the centennial of Canada's Navy. When foreign dignitaries visit Ottawa, Confederation Boulevard is decorated with the Canadian flag and the flag of the visiting country.

As described, Confederation Boulevard ties together a number of federal buildings, museums, and national sites of importance in an endeavor to create a reflection of Canadian history and character. By taking a winding path, the boulevard connects major federal, cultural, and historical institutions such as the National War Memorial, the National Archives, the Supreme Court, Parliament Hill, the National Gallery, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and the Peacekeeping Monument. This list also includes the Château Laurier, the Rideau Canal, the American Embassy, the adjacent ByWard Market, the National Arts Centre, the Bank of Canada and Royal Canadian Mint, the Canadian Human Rights Monument, and other monuments and memorials found on and around Parliament Hill itself.

The statuary along Confederation Boulevard further reinforces ideas of Canada and a distinct Canadian character. Just outside the gates to Parliament Hill is a statue of Sir Galahad, erected by Mackenzie King in tribute to a friend who drowned when attempting to save a woman who had fallen through the ice of the Ottawa River. Across Wellington Street from this monument symbolizing a heroic deed is a statue depicting another Canadian hero, another individual who sacrificed comfort and personal health for a larger cause. The statue of Terry Fox features the young man in full stride, as he appeared during the Marathon of Hope, his attempt to

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run across Canada in support of cancer research. Fox ran west from the Atlantic coast of Newfoundland, making it almost as far as Thunder Bay, Ontario, before the cancer that had already taken his right leg returned, forcing him to prematurely end his quest. Although Fox died shortly afterwards, before he was able to complete his run, his legacy carries on, with Terry Fox Runs held annually in over fifty countries to raise money for cancer research. When the 2010 Winter Olympics were held in Vancouver, Terry’s mother Betty was one of the eight significant Canadians chosen to carry the Olympic flag into the stadium during the Opening Ceremonies. These two statues located right in front of the main entrance to Parliament Hill – Sir Galahad and Terry Fox – attempt to convey the heroic nature of Canadians, and further inspire the populace to great deeds.

Within the grounds of Parliament Hill, the history of Canadian politics is constructed in bronze and granite. There are statues of former Prime Ministers Sir John A. Macdonald, Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Sir Robert Borden, William Lyon Mackenzie King, John G. Diefenbaker, and Lester B. Pearson; early Canadian politicians and “Fathers of Confederation” Robert Baldwin, Sir Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine, Sir George-Étienne Cartier, George Brown, and Thomas D’Arcy McGee; as well as Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II. In addition, the memorial titled Women Are Persons! “celebrates the joint efforts of five women who won a legal challenge to have women considered ‘persons’ under the British North America Act, making them eligible for appointment to the Senate.” The large memorial, which features the five women toasting the occasion with tea, is level with the ground, allowing visitors to interact with the statues and join in the celebratory gathering.

58 Leading up to the Games, there were rumors surrounding which famous Canadian would be the final torchbearer and light the Olympic Cauldron. One such rumor involved a plan where a holograph of Terry Fox would “light” the cauldron. While this did not come to pass, Fox’s parents, Betty and Rolly, were chosen to carry the torch into the stadium for the 2010 Paralympic Games.
Behind the Centre Block, along part of the fence overlooking the Ottawa River, is the Police and Peace Officers’ Memorial. Backed by a low granite wall are twenty-eight glass panels, engraved with the names of the law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty since 1804. According to a pamphlet published by the NCC, “This includes police officers from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), provincial and municipal police services, and peace officers from organizations such as Parks Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and other provincial or federal law enforcement officers.” The pamphlet continues in noting that, “These brave men and women sacrificed their lives protecting Canada’s communities, as well as its aquatic and natural life, its oceans, forests, borders, national parks and historic sites.” The memorial is similar to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington in that it, too, simply lists the names of the dead, absent any rank or hierarchy. Instead, the memorial lets the power and symbolism of the nearly eight hundred names speak for themselves.

Nestled within the Peace Tower, itself a part of Parliament Hill’s Centre Block, is the Memorial Chamber (described in greater detail in the previous chapter), Canada’s lasting memorial to all Canadians who have served, sacrificed, and died in the military service of their country. Although cemeteries offer a place for one form of remembrance, the Memorial Chamber provides something more; the names of the fallen are displayed in a place of pride and honor, within an extraordinarily beautiful room located in a national landmark.

Unlike many other sites of memory located along Confederation Boulevard, the Memorial Chamber is indoors, and away from the noise and traffic of the city. However, despite the chamber’s location within the Peace Tower providing a certain cachet, this site can still be problematic. The chamber may be easily overlooked due to a lack of signage informing the

60 Ibid.
public of the chamber’s location, or even its very existence. Moreover, access to the chamber is restricted to hours that can vary depending on the day of the week and whether or not Parliament is in session. And, because the chamber is accessed via the Centre Block of Parliament Hill, all visitors must pass through metal detectors, which, while providing a level of understandable security measures, can be a time consuming irritation. All of these factors can combine to give the impression that the chamber is distant or removed from the public sphere.

Further down Confederation Boulevard, situated on Sussex Drive between the American Embassy and the National Gallery of Canada, is the Peacekeeping Monument. Formerly titled “The Reconciliation,” the monument, unveiled in 1992, was created “in honour of Canada’s leading role in peacekeeping” and “to remind current and future generations of the significance that Canadians place on maintaining and restoring peace around the world.” The National War Memorial is meant to promote the idea of self-sacrifice and the lengths to which Canadians went to bring an end to war; it ultimately is a reminder of a terrible, consequence-filled event. Standing in contrast to this, the Peacekeeping Monument originated from a desire to commemorate and celebrate a humanitarian trait endorsed and nurtured by Canadians, as manifested in the nation’s prominent involvement in peacekeeping missions.

The Peacekeeping Monument includes three human figures, two men and one woman. All three are posed as observers, with one man holding a pair of binoculars and the woman crouching down and speaking into the communications unit carried on her back. The only discernible weapon found anywhere in the monument’s design is a rifle slung over the shoulder.

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of the second man, which, again though, suggests a more relaxed, at-ease stance, rather than one of aggression or force.\textsuperscript{62}

In addition, the entire monument is composed of three different zones, shaped like a triangle, square, and circle. The triangular area is formed by two rising walls, with the three peacekeepers placed where they meet. At the base of the walls, “an area of jagged rubble signifies a war-torn landscape.”\textsuperscript{63} On the other side of the site is the circle, the Peace Grove, an area ringed by a low wall with an attached bench, while the land in the center is raised and filled with trees – someone sitting on one side of the circle would not be able to see someone sitting opposite them. This space is meant for the reflection of the sacrifice made by Canadian soldiers in the effort to secure peace around the globe. To get from one side of the monument space to the other, one must cross through the square, meant to represent a public square, and which includes a wall engraved with the names of peacekeeping missions undertaken by Canadian forces throughout the years.

The idea of Canada as a nonaggressive nation is widely held, and, as evidenced by the Peacekeeping Monument, has also been encouraged. However, questions have been raised as to not only the motivation behind the actual construction of the monument, but also Canada’s involvement in peacekeeping. According to scholar Marc James Léger, the monument was built:

\begin{quote}
    at a time when peacekeeping not only provided a positive image for national unity [in the face of growing Québec separatism], it came at the height of a media campaign that presented UN missions as a rationale for continued military spending. Yet, as many defence critics are wont to prove, the Canadian Armed Forces are not defined by peacekeeping activity. According to one source, for instance, Canada’s 1991-1992 expenses for peacekeeping amounted to less than 1% of a $13 billion defense budget.\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{62} Interestingly, in the original plans, the first man was also designed with a rifle slung over his shoulder, yet this detail is absent in the final structure. Instead, he is solely equipped with binoculars, and bears a slight smile on his face.


\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 59.
It deserves to be said, though, that, “As of 1990, Canadian servicemen and women have taken part in virtually every [United Nations] peacemaking initiative, and in four non-UN missions as well. The blue beret of the UN has been worn by more servicemen and women from Canada – some 80,000 of them – than from any other nation.”

Barely five months after the dedication of the Peacekeeping Monument, however, the notion of the virtuous Canadian peacekeeper was tainted by the revelation of what became known as the Somalia Affair. In March of 1993, during a peacekeeping operation in Somalia, members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment captured and tortured a Somali teenager named Shidane Arone; the severe beating resulted in Arone’s death. Videotapes later surfaced that showed Canadian peackeepers using racist language and describing the Somali people as lazy and worthless. Due to the resulting outrage and backlash, legal actions were taken against those responsible for Arone’s death, and Canada began to seriously reconsider its participation in any future peacekeeping activities. However, the Peacekeeping Monument remained in Ottawa, continuing to stand for a central facet of the Canadian identity, despite real-world actions to the contrary.

Confederation Boulevard also passes by other memorials to war, conflict, and resolution, further connecting the monuments, and their themes and subjects, to the national narrative being told. A number of memorials are grouped in proximity to each other a few blocks down Elgin Street from the National War Memorial. These include the South African War Memorial and the Northwest Rebellion monument, two examples of the traditional and most common form of commemoration: the heroic, figurative statue. Nearby is the National Aboriginal Veterans

65 National Capital Commission, Creating a National Symbol, 4.
Monument, a “richly symbolic monument” honoring the contribution of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people to Canada’s military efforts in both World Wars, the Korean War, and peacekeeping missions. The monument features various elements, including four human figures and a number of animals. The four animals surrounding the humans – a wolf, a bear, a buffalo, and a caribou – “represent spirit guides.” Perched at the top of the monument, with its wings outstretched, is an eagle, which “embodies the spirit of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.”

Similar to the Vietnam Women’s Memorial in Washington, the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument is an illustration of a long-marginalized community insisting that their service and sacrifice be honored and acknowledged as part of the national capital’s ceremonial landscape.

Although the dates for World War II and the Korean War have been added to the National War Memorial, there are still independent memorials to those wars in Ottawa, near to or on Confederation Boulevard. Located between Elgin Street and the Rideau Canal, behind the Ottawa City Hall, the Monument to Canadian Fallen honors those Canadians who served in the Korean War, and is inscribed with the names of the 516 Canadians who died in that conflict. The official description of the monument, as published by the NCC, states:

The monument features a Canadian volunteer, facing toward Busan, Korea, where an identical monument watches over the graves of 378 Canadians in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery. Accompanying the volunteer are two Korean children, both holding symbols: the girl, a bouquet of maple leaves symbolizing Canada; and the boy, a bouquet of maple leaves and roses of Sharon, the national flower of Korea.

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67 National Capital Commission, Street SmART (Ottawa: NCC, 2010), 12.
69 Ibid.
World War II is commemorated through multiple monuments and structures, apart from the National War Memorial. The Ottawa Memorial, also known as the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial, honors the men and women who gave their lives during World War II while serving in the Air Force. The memorial, a large metal globe surmounted with an eagle, is surrounded by walls listing the names of those killed, those individuals “who have no known grave, or were buried at remote crash sites that are deemed to be unmaintainable.” Along Confederation Boulevard, across Wellington Street from the Supreme Court Building and the National Archives, are the twin Memorial Buildings, East and West. Constructed in the late 1940s and early 1950s to house the new Department of Veterans Affairs, the buildings are currently occupied by National Defence and the Department of Justice. Connecting the Memorial Buildings is the Memorial Arch, a bridge, like the buildings it links, dedicated to those Canadians who served in the Second World War. Located beneath the Memorial Arch is the Canadian Phalanx, a marble relief of a row of World War I soldiers, rifles and bayonets at the ready, seemingly charging the enemy. This merging of memorials to multiple wars, while obviously seen in the National War Memorial, is also readily apparent in another monument, one located on the edge of Confederation Square.

The Valiants Memorial is a grouping of nine busts and five statues, representing fourteen significant individuals in, and across, Canadian military history. A plaque describing the memorial states, “From its colonial beginnings in the sixteenth century to its emergence as a modern state in the first half of the twentieth century, Canada has passed through five major periods of war. Each has marked a decisive turning point in the country’s history.” The memorial thus commemorates the individuals on display, but also “all Canadians who have served their country in war.” The five military eras depicted are the French Regime (1534-1763), the

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American Revolution (1775-1783), the War of 1812 (1812-1814), the First World War (1914-1918), and the Second World War (1939-1945). The statues, busts, and accompanying descriptive plaques, including those of Mohawk warrior Thayendanegea (also known by his European name, Joseph Brant), World War I Army nurse Matron Georgina Pope, General Sir Isaac Brock, Laura Secord, and General Sir Arthur Currie “[add] human faces and stories to Canada’s War Memorial in downtown Ottawa.”

The memorial’s plans also included a broad opening and wide, sweeping staircase – known as the Sappers’ Staircase – leading from street level down to the Rideau Canal. Climbing the first set of stairs leading up from the canal and towards the Valiants Memorial and Confederation Square, one is faced with a large bronze wall featuring a quote from Virgil’s Aeneid, which reads “No day will ever erase you from the memory of time,” and, again in Latin, “Nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevō.”

The construction of the Valiants Memorial was considered by some to “complete the process of making [Confederation Square] a memorial to Canada’s war dead.” Several stone plinths had been constructed on Confederation Square, yet remained empty for decades, supposedly awaiting the future addition of statues. For the proponents of the memorial, the repatriation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier “changed the thrust of the square, and [made] it a much more effective commemorative place.” Early in the planning stage, there was even a proposal put forward to rename Confederation Square “Memorial Square,” to better reflect the nature of the space. According to one supporter, “Confederation Square draws away from the idea of a memorial to our military heritage because ‘Confederation’ is political. We would rename the whole area as a tribute to the fallen.”

Obviously, the name change was not

74 Ibid.
successful, but the motives behind it are illustrative of the ways in which the area is viewed and considered, and how the public interacts and engages with the site.

Slightly removed from the main route followed by Confederation Boulevard lies the Canadian War Museum, opened in 2005 so as to “inform Canadians about their military heritage, preserve artifacts of national significance, and encourage reflection on the service and sacrifice of our veterans.” With a sweeping roof that points towards Parliament Hill, the building features a series of windows that, in Morse code, spell out “Lest We Forget” and, in French, “N’oublions Jamais.” Inside the building are exhibits detailing the history of Canada’s involvement in warfare, from First Nations conflicts and the Seven Years’ War up to the Cold War and ongoing War on Terror, as well as a large gallery space featuring aircraft, artillery, tanks, and other war machinery. Memorial Hall is a small room just off of the museum’s lobby, accessible to the public at no charge. With grooved concrete walls evocative of rows of headstones, the hall is stark and empty save for one object: the original headstone for Canada’s Unknown Soldier. The headstone is mounted on the wall, situated across the room from a small bench and a single window placed far up the wall. The room, window, and headstone are positioned in such a way that every year on Remembrance Day, at 11:00 a.m., sunlight shines directly on the headstone. The museum has described the chamber appropriately, stating, “A peaceful and undecorated space, Memorial Hall is a place for quiet remembrance of the sacrifices made by those who have and continue to serve Canada.”

Canadians have attempted to find a way to construct their national identity and symbolize a nation born through both war and peace with the creation of Confederation Boulevard. In the

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official description of the boulevard, the NCC states, “Perhaps no other development in the Capital region so clearly defines the distinctive nature of Canadian culture.” Nonetheless, the Commission never explicitly states what this “distinctive nature” truly is, instead leaving it to the visitor to learn about the sites through interpretive panels, brochures, and unifying symbols. Beyond these signs or guides, for the most part it seems left to the buildings and monuments themselves to inspire in the visitor an awareness of what it means to be a Canadian. Granted, the route followed by Confederation Boulevard is quite impressive; the architecture and landscape is breathtaking at times, and Confederation Boulevard therefore celebrates this setting. However, if the structures are meant to instruct, the lesson they advocate, particularly concerning the memorials to war and to peace, is cloudy and unclear. The idea of a “Confederation Boulevard” can also raise the larger question as to what events and which individuals or groups of people should be commemorated in the built environment, particularly when the structures are to be placed within a nation’s capital. The ability, or possibility, to commemorate the flattering or popular, without acknowledging the more unsavory chapters in history, appears uncertain. The absence of any mention of Shidane Arone from the Peacekeeping Monument is one indication of this dilemma. To acknowledge Arone’s death, a death at the hands of Canadian Peacekeepers, would run counter to the ideals of humanitarianism and benevolence encapsulated in the monument.

Conveniently, the Canadian War Museum serves as one potential solution to this issue, by providing the space and time needed to explore and explain some of these topics. For instance, two paintings showing the torture and beating of Arone hang in the museum. Their inclusion in the museum elicited debates reminiscent of those surrounding the Smithsonian’s proposed Enola

Gay exhibit; however in this instance, the War Museum did not back down. Cliff Chadderton, leader of the National Council of Veterans Association and the War Amps of Canada, called the paintings a “trashy, insulting tribute,” and said, “The commission of these paintings was completely [contrary] to the mission of the new war museum.”

Other critics argued that the torture and killing of Arone was not representative of the typical Canadian soldier, and that the paintings were instead highlighting an isolated, perverted incident. Moreover, museum officials were seen as detached from the main issues at hand, viewed as a group of people that seemed “to have an academic rather than a personal feel for wars and those who fought in them,” and that in an effort to avoid “glorifying” war, had tipped the balance too far in the opposite direction.

On the other side of the debate, the museum’s curator of war art, Dr. Laura Brandon, responded that the Somalia Affair, and the paintings, are “part of Canada’s military history. We’re a military history museum: our job is to tell…military history, warts and all.” And Bruce Poulin, of the Royal Canadian Legion, voiced his support for the inclusion of the paintings in the museum; “I don’t think we need to gloss over anything. It's important to portray the realities and the history that in fact made Canadians who they are today.”

Again, one is reminded of the Enola Gay controversy and the words of Tom Crouch, the curator of the National Air and Space Museum, when he said, “Do you want to do an exhibit intended to make veterans feel good, or do you want an exhibition that will lead our visitors to think about the consequences of the atomic bombing of Japan? Frankly, I don’t think we can do both.” In this case, the Canadian War Museum could either appease critics and create a museum that only showcased heroic and

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81 Peter Worthington, “Bitter War at the Museum,” Toronto Sun, 29 May 2005, 43.
82 CBC News, “War Museum’s Paintings Anger Veterans Group.”
83 Ibid.
valiant wartime deeds, or introduce an exhibit that reminded visitors of the atrocities sometimes, albeit rarely, committed in the name of so noble an ideal as peacekeeping, and what that means for the Canadian identity and character.

In the end, the Canadian War Museum maintained its position and kept the paintings as a part of the museum exhibit, providing an opportunity for further education and discussion about the topic. The glory of the Peacekeeping Monument, with its long list of Canadian involvement in peacekeeping missions, is thus juxtaposed with the paintings detailing what can happen when any military mission, peacekeeping or otherwise, can become warped by even a small handful of individuals. With the paintings, the Canadian War Museum is able to demonstrate that evil is not something to only be confronted in foreign wars against distant enemies, but also an aspect in Canadian society that must be acknowledged, addressed, and eradicated.

It is clear that Confederation Boulevard is the NCC’s attempt to transform Ottawa into Laurier’s hoped-for “Washington of the North,” with the boulevard standing in for Washington’s National Mall – the monumental core of the city that serves as a meeting and gathering place, an educational and instructional device, and a national symbol. However, Confederation Boulevard faces additional challenges due to inter-provincial tensions and the geographic location of Ottawa. As described, Ottawa sits on the Ottawa River, on the opposite shore from Gatineau, Quebec. Federal buildings are found on both sides of the river, with the sprawl of Ottawa not confined by provincial boundaries. This has been the cause for some concern, particularly when the issue of Quebec independence gathers steam. The idea of turning Ottawa into an independent federal district, akin to Washington, DC, has been bandied about for nearly a century, but never really gaining the traction needed to become a reality. In effect, and as an alternative to the “single political entity for both sides of the river,” Confederation Boulevard can be viewed as the
Canadian version of the Washington Beltway, encompassing the capital region and binding both sides of the river together, and “[unifying] two provinces and cultures.”

Along with its symbolic meaning, Confederation Boulevard is used as a parade route and a gathering place during national holidays. Canada Day celebrations turn Confederation Boulevard into a mainly pedestrian walkway, as the streets are closed to vehicular traffic in deference to the thousands of people visiting the capital. Similarly, on Remembrance Day, when the national ceremony occurs at the National War Memorial, veterans, dignitaries, and active military members parade along Confederation Boulevard, moving past Parliament Hill towards the memorial. During the summer, the Canadian Forces’ Ceremonial Guard performs the daily Changing the Guard ceremony on the grounds of Parliament Hill. The Ceremonial Guards march from the Cartier Square Drill Hall to Elgin Street, moving towards and past the National War Memorial as they head towards Wellington Street and Parliament Hill. After the roughly thirty minute ceremony, the Guards retrace their steps, again passing the National War Memorial, saluting it and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as they return to the drill hall.

The NCC has big plans for Confederation Boulevard, foreseeing future expansion and additions with commemorative statues, monuments, and parkways. Unlike Washington’s National Mall, Confederation Boulevard is far from being considered “closed” and complete. As part of the urban design plan for Ottawa, the NCC has identified seven “Landmark Nodes” along Confederation Boulevard:

A Landmark Node is an area of great visual prominence and symbolic power, reserved for monumental commemorations that celebrate key events or ideas of national symbolic importance. Located at an intersection of principal streets found at critical turning points along Confederation Boulevard, it provides a strategic focus and identity to the area. The Landmark Nodes...are the prime sites, destined to operate as key points of reference and to communicate the values and identity of the nation.

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86 National Capital Commission, Canada’s Capital Commemoration Strategic Plan (Ottawa: NCC, 2006), 16.
Currently, only two of the nodes are developed: the sites of the National War Memorial and Confederation Square, and the Peacekeeping Monument. Accompanying the Landmark Nodes are lesser sites, known as Gateway Nodes, “a significant site that signals the approach to Confederation Boulevard and to a Landmark Node…These Gateway Nodes, seven in total, provide opportunities for commemorative installations that are complementary to their adjoining Landmark Nodes.”87 Only one of these seven Gateway Nodes is occupied; the site of the Canadian Human Rights Monument, at the intersection of Elgin and Lisgar Streets, serves as the Gateway to Confederation Boulevard leading up towards the National War Memorial.

Moreover, the NCC classifies memorial sites into three different orders based on their “physical, symbolic, urban and scale characteristics.” Order One sites, of which the National War Memorial is an example, are those sites that:

constitute major points of reference in the urban structure or environment and in the image of the Capital. These sites are considered to be primary sites and are reserved for commemorations to ideas and events of overarching themes of national and international importance to Canada and Canadians. Located in the most visible places, their primary function as commemorative sites is to contribute to the urban form of the area and communicate Canadian values and identity. These sites are best suited for large scale commemorations with sufficient area for gatherings and ceremonies of national interest and scope.88

Further, the NCC has created a commemorations policy that ensures the desired face and fabric of Ottawa is upheld and protected. Among its purposes, the policy is meant to “facilitate the commemoration of individuals, events or ideas of national symbolic importance on visible and accessible lands owned by the federal government,”89 as well as “ensure that commemorations in Canada’s Capital Region are representative of all Canadians and encourage the presence of

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., 18.
89 Ibid., 23.
under-represented themes as identified in the plan.” 90 Any future commemoration built on federal land, those monuments and statues that are meant to add to the national narrative being constructed and shaped, must “be of national symbolic importance, uphold Canadian values and identity, and be relevant to Canadians in their lives today.” 91 It is apparent that the NCC is attempting to further fulfill Laurier’s vision of turning Ottawa into the “Washington of the North” by almost recreating the National Mall, an urban, civic art project that demonstrates and promotes a distinct national identity and character. One main difference is that, while the Mall is considered “closed,” the NCC does not view Ottawa and Confederation Boulevard in the same light. According to an article detailing the official dedication of Confederation Boulevard in 2000, “‘Someone asked me, is the job ever going to be finished?’ said Gerald Lajeunesse, chief landscape architect for the National Capital Commission. ‘The answer is no,’ he said, citing upgrades and repairs that will continue indefinitely.” 92 Then-NCC spokesman Gilles Le Breton further elaborated, explaining, “A living symbol just can’t be finished.” 93 The concept that Confederation Boulevard is “living” allows Ottawa and the NCC to continuously reprise and revisit the definition of a Canadian identity, modifying it as time and circumstances require. This stands in contrast to the National Mall, preserved, as if in amber, in a late-twentieth century vision of America.

Critics have described Confederation Boulevard as an example of “Theme Park History” littered with “Tombstones of Waste,” an expensive, elaborate design that “tends to be windswept and deserted after 6pm” and unable to “disguise the fact that its primary function is to keep

91 Ibid., 6.
93 Ibid.
traffic moving.” Additionally, the intent of Confederation Boulevard appears to be similar to that of Boston’s Freedom Trail, the 2.5-mile walking path winding through the city and connecting sites significant to the American Revolution and early American history.

Coincidentally, the Freedom Trail is marked by a red line – sometimes by red paint, but often by red bricks set into the sidewalk, not unlike the early ideas for a red-paved Confederation Boulevard. Confederation Boulevard also faces the very real problem experienced by the Freedom Trail, that “Buildings do not ‘speak for themselves’ or the events that took place within them.”

The NCC has attempted to alleviate this issue, particularly around Confederation Square, with the Valiants Memorial, a sort of visual timeline of Canadian military history, and the recent addition of guides and descriptive panels around the National War Memorial. There is an attempt to bring an instructional, museum-like exhibit to the outdoor space, educating visitors on what is being commemorated, why it is important to the nation and to the individual, and the proper decorum to be followed. As will be explained in the next chapter, however, the guides are also the NCC’s response to a perceived disinterest or apathy regarding the National War Memorial.

Washington’s National Mall and Ottawa’s Confederation Boulevard have been constructed in ways that display the history, people, and events that each nation believes are most symbolic. The National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial are not simply located within national capital cities; they occupy central, privileged sites within either city’s memorial core. Upon examining not only how the two monuments are positioned in either city, but also how those locations compare to, and are favored over, other memorial sites, it is

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evident that the memorials under review here are seen as essential to the national narrative being told by either ceremonial landscape.

While agencies and organizations can present the memorials, and the larger urban fabric, in specific ways, the public’s interaction with the space, with the memorials and monuments that supposedly expound a national identity, can differ dramatically from the desired response. Thus, the analysis of the memorial sites must also consider the ways in which visitors perceive the memorials and how the memorials are treated. As such, the following chapter will explore how the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial are used, in both official and informal capacities.
CHAPTER III – MEMORY IN THE PUBLIC EYE: FUNCTION AND RECEPTION

This chapter examines the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial in light of how the public engages with either site. It reveals how these interactions conform or differ from not only the dominant position, but also in comparison to other memorial sites, in either capital city.

Beyond the official, or intended, meaning behind the National World War II Memorial and National War Memorial, the question remains as to how the memorials are actually used, and how the public perceives either location. Are the sites treated with respect or reverence? Do they harmonize with the respective fabric of their city and surrounding area? In what way does a memorial’s designer or a governing agency intend the memorial sites to be treated or “read” by those who view it? Do visitors engage with either memorial in a manner that is in opposition to the desired approach? Based on their central locations, do the sites of memory serve as meeting places, rallying points, and elements of the public sphere, or are they inviolate sites, kept free from dissent or protest? Or, does the reality fall somewhere in between these two poles, between the sacred and the profane?

This chapter will address these questions, attempting to determine the different ways people relate to and interact with additions to the built environment, particularly those additions that carry such national significance as the National World War II Memorial and the National War Memorial. In order to meet these goals, news articles, as well as reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations will be examined, exploring how the citizenry has historically received and treated the memorial sites. Additionally, the analysis will include personal observations and informal interviews with guides and visitors, conducted during research trips taken during the summer of 2010. Over the course of six-day visits to Washington and Ottawa, I walked around each city, exploring not only the National World War II Memorial and the National War Memorial, but also the broader memorial landscape surrounding them,
watching how visitors behaved towards and around the memorial spaces within each city, and how that behavior compared and contrasted with the specific memorials under review. As my ultimate goal was to gain a better understanding of how visitors interacted with the National World War II Memorial and the National War Memorial, I conducted a very small-scale, rudimentary ethnography, as described in the Introduction. I arrived in each city on a Wednesday and departed the following Monday, visiting the memorials each day during my stay in either city. I typically spent four to six hours a day at the memorials, spacing my visits across the mornings, afternoons, and evenings. In addition, I informally interviewed guides, park rangers, officials, and visitors, asking questions concerning the memorial and people’s attitudes about the site and surroundings. These responses and observations will further be reviewed in light of Stuart Hall’s discussion of the different methods of encoding and decoding meanings transmitted through texts.

Public Interactions in Washington

As described in previous chapters, the National Mall has long been used as a meeting space, as a location for public and private celebrations and exhibitions. The Mall is considered a “great civic stage” and “a place for [Americans] to speak to [their] national leaders in the spotlight.”¹ The open space has served as the grounds for concerts and festivals, presidential inaugurations and a Papal Mass, and demonstrations of every size and political bent. The Mall has also functioned as a large urban park, hosting games of baseball, softball, football, rugby, and other similar team sports and leagues. For years, polo matches have been held on the Mall, in West Potomac Park. In the 1920s, the matches would often pit military units against each other; “Originally Polo was used by the military as a means to train officers to determine their ranks

prior to World War II.”2 More recently, the annual America’s Polo World Cup Championships carries on the tradition of playing polo on the Mall, with the U.S. team challenging an international competitor.

In decades past, the Mall was used in a number of different ways, some of which might raise eyebrows today. Up until the early 1980s, when the Reflecting Pool froze over in the winter, ice-skating took place on the shallow basin. Between 1910 and 1935, public swimming pools were located on the Mall, “just to the northwest of the Washington Monument.”3 When the public pools lacked operational funding for a brief spell during the 1920s, the Reflecting Pool was seen as an apt replacement. And a photograph in the Library of Congress’ National Photo Company Collection, dated 6 April 1923, shows a seaplane landing on the Reflecting Pool, with the Lincoln Memorial in the background.

The Mall’s combination of different roles – the sacred monumental core, the national public square, the urban recreation area – have created a complex setting in which the National World War II Memorial is used and approached. As described, the Mall is quite large, and during a Washington summer, offers only a few refuges from the heat and humidity. As a result, the National World War II Memorial has been transformed into a place of respite, an urban oasis. The Rainbow Pool and its fountains create a cooling effect, with seating all around where visitors can rest their tired feet. Moreover, the physical location of the memorial adds to its appeal as an optimal place to take a break.

We can imagine visitors to the Mall – a family of four, for example, parents and their two school-age children – walking around and seeing the sights during the summer, when school is out. They start out at one of the Smithsonian museums, and after exploring the exhibits, move on

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to the Washington Monument. The walk from even the closest museum – the National Museum of American History – to the base of the Washington Monument takes at least ten minutes, despite what the National Park Service claims. After looking at the monument and taking some photographs, the family moves on toward the Lincoln Memorial, nearly a mile away. Along the walk, down the curving paths that camouflage the new security measures, the family bakes under the hot summer sun. Near 17th Street, they encounter a vendor’s cart, selling beverages and ice cream novelties. In order to slake their thirst, and possibly silence the grumblings from the kids, the parents buy everyone a bottle of water and an ice cream treat. After the purchase, they cross the street and find themselves at the National World War II Memorial. At this point, they have been out walking in the sun for probably close to forty-five minutes to an hour, want to stop, relax for a bit, and consume their food, and the memorial offers a perfect solution. The family is able to sit for a while, enjoy the sights and sounds of the memorial, and cool off from the spray produced by the fountains. As a result, we can see a combination of location, weather, exhaustion, and human needs and desires determining how the memorial space is used. The agency of the visitor takes precedence over the perceived sacredness of the memorial.

During my time in Washington, I saw some version of this scenario played out countless times. Crowded with families, tour groups, and school children on end-of-the-year field trips, the memorial plaza looked more like a park than a solemn memorial to one of the most significant events in American history. There are signs posted at the different entrances to the memorial, reminding visitors that there is no smoking, food or drink, skateboarding, bicycles, or running allowed in the memorial, and that wading in the pool is also prohibited. There are also smaller signs scattered around the edges of the Rainbow Pool asking visitors to “Please Respect the Memorial – No Wading, No Coins.” Despite this, the rules appear lightly enforced. I saw a
number of people carrying beverages, which is understandable in light of the oppressive Washington humidity. Moreover, the nature of the memorial can amplify the summer weather; because the memorial is sunk six feet into the ground, the walls and pillars can prevent refreshing breezes from reaching visitors, and the wide open granite plaza reflects and intensifies the heat and sun. Nevertheless, many visitors to the memorial relaxed around the pool, sitting on the edge and, removing shoes and socks, rested their bare feet in the water. Some people – children, teenagers, and adults – waded in the shallow water, some even going so far as to play and splash in the fountains, or stand in the powerful jets of the fountains, as if they were at a water park. Park rangers would often walk around the memorial plaza, telling people to get out of the water or, if they had food, to take it outside the memorial space. I asked a park ranger about the situation, about people playing in the water despite the signs asking them to refrain. One ranger claimed, “It’s a never-ending battle,” and appeared resigned to the Sisyphean task of trying to keep people out of the Rainbow Pool. As a result, while wading is not allowed, dipping ones feet in the water is tolerated.

In order to safeguard against outright vandalism, however, the park rangers I talked to mentioned that rangers are on duty from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. daily, after which time the city police patrol the area. However, no ranger was willing or able to discuss any acts of vandalism that may have occurred, nor any other specific measures – beyond patrols – that are in place to prevent such misconduct.

The idea that the memorial serves mainly as a rest stop is reinforced by a number of other scenes I witnessed. Over the course of six days, I saw quite a few men walking around shirtless, people sunbathing next to the Rainbow Pool, and children playing. In spite of the best efforts of the park rangers, I also saw people eating or smoking while within the memorial grounds. I only
heard one man remind his children that the memorial was a special place, and that they needed to behave themselves. In comparison, for the large numbers of school children, the memorial is a playground, allowing their adult chaperones a moment of relaxation. Tour buses are able to park right along Home Front Drive, the new access road on the southern end of the memorial, and deposit their riders at the memorial, right near the restrooms. From there, the children seemed to have free range of the site, able to wander around without much adult supervision or instruction. It is unclear what the children actually learned from their visit, beyond being able to say that they were there. After a short while, many of the students looked bored and tired, sitting by the pool and texting on their cell phones, seemingly biding time until it was time to move on to the next monument or museum.

The National World War II Memorial also functions as an irresistible photo opportunity and backdrop. Of course, it is natural that visitors would take pictures of the memorial, and of themselves at the site. However, it is where and how they pose, and the sorts of group photos taken, that further calls into question the ways in which people view the memorial. As described, the memorial includes fifty-six granite columns inscribed with the names of the (wartime) forty-eight states, seven federal territories, and the District of Columbia. Typically, during my observations, it was easy to determine where the visitors to the memorial were from – they would pose for a photograph in front of the pillar representing their home state. For example, after playing a game of softball nearby on the Mall, a team comprised of University of Delaware alumni – sweaty, dirty, and exhausted from their athletic endeavors – posed for a group picture in front of the Delaware pillar.

On a Friday evening, I observed high school students gathering at the National World War II Memorial for a group photo, yet this was different from many of the school groups and
field trips I had been seeing. These students were all formally dressed, and I realized they were on their way to their high school prom. It definitely seemed pre-planned, as a number of parents were also on hand to take pictures of the group. While the memorial and the fountains are quite stunning, and the landscape is aesthetically pleasing, it is interesting that the group chose a war memorial as the setting for their photo shoot. What is more, I wondered if any of the students thought about the fact that, if they had been high school seniors in 1942, rather than 2010, some of them may have been heading off to fight in World War II, rather than to their high school prom, a carefree right of passage. They may have been facing an uncertain future consisting of life and death situations, rather than the teenage drama over who asked whom to a dance.

That Friday evening brought a number of other diverse groups to the memorial. Earlier, a high school band had set up at the bottom of the ceremonial entrance, playing a casual concert, without any signs or indication of why they were there. Their set list included the patriotic “America the Beautiful,” but also the Spencer Davis Group’s “Gimme Some Lovin’” and Iron Butterfly’s “In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida.” Later in the evening, a group of people began congregating in front of the Freedom Wall. After a short while, a group of soldiers and military personnel joined the crowd. Surrounded by family and friends, in such a symbolic location, a young woman was commissioned as an officer in the Army.

As expected with any war memorial, the National World War II Memorial attracts large numbers of veterans. Every Wednesday and Saturday, Honor Flight groups usually visit the memorial, accompanied by volunteers and family members. The Honor Flight Network works to fulfill the one of the main goals first put forward by Roger Durbin, and one of the strongest motivations behind pushing for the completion of the memorial: to build and complete a World War II Memorial in time for World War II veterans to visit, before the generation passed away.
According to the organization’s website, “The Honor Flight Network program was conceived by Earl Morse, a physician assistant and Retired Air Force Captain.” As the National World War II Memorial was nearing completion, Morse, who had been working for the Department of Veterans Affairs at a medical clinic just outside of Dayton, Ohio, realized that many of his patients, World War II veterans themselves, lacked the means to ever visit the memorial dedicated to their efforts. “[It] was clear to most that it simply wasn’t financially or physically possible for them to make the journey.” Beginning in 2005, Morse, a private pilot, began to work with local pilot’s clubs, soliciting donations and volunteers to organize free visits to Washington for World War II veterans. Demand for flights grew, and soon the organization had too many passengers to continue transporting veterans via small private planes, eventually transitioning to commercial flights. The Honor Flight Network has also teamed up with Southwest Airlines, with the airline providing thousands of free tickets for veterans and the volunteers who accompany them.

The veterans, many bowed by age and using walkers or wheelchairs, are often greeted with expressions of gratitude. During my observations, I saw many people, young and old, approaching the World War II veterans to shake their hands and thank them for their service. When an Honor Flight group posed for a picture in front of the Freedom Wall, bystanders broke out in spontaneous applause.

One gentleman in particular caught my attention. He was a tall – well over six feet – and powerfully built middle-aged man, with a shaved head and wearing jeans and a leather motorcycle club vest; he was a tough-looking guy, no doubt about it. What was striking, though,

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5 Ibid.
was that he was quietly talking with a World War II veteran, holding the older man’s hands and looking at him tenderly. It was an interesting juxtaposition, this burly, intimidating biker treating a veteran with such gentle respect and care.

When the two men were finished talking, and the biker had shaken the hands of other veterans sitting nearby, I felt compelled to approach the younger man in order to interview him. In response to my questions, I found that he is himself a twenty-year Air Force veteran, serving from 1984 to 2004. He is also a member of the Patriot Guard Riders, a motorcycle club whose “main mission is to attend the funeral services of fallen American heroes as invited guests of the family.” As the biker explained to me, the Patriot Guard Riders have taken it upon themselves to stand between the family of a fallen service member and protesters, usually from the vile Westboro Baptist Church. The Patriot Guard works to shield the mourners, using non-violent methods to counter the signs and chants of the protesters.

When asked for his impressions of the memorial, the gentleman responded that “It’s about honor, sacrifice, service…[the] current generation – the ‘Me’ generation – doesn’t get it. The current war is just a blip, a distraction, and they can turn the channel if they want to.” I also asked him what the younger generations, the groups of school children and young adults, could learn from the memorial. He replied that “They have to learn about the war, have to learn about what happened and what these men did, what they went through.” He made it very clear how important it is to him to express his appreciation for the veterans’ efforts. As he said, as we were about to part ways, “If I have to stand here all day to shake their hands, it’s worth it.”

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8 Interview with National World War II Memorial visitor, 12 June 2010.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
While some visitors acknowledge the veterans in person, shaking their hand or spending a few moments talking to them, others do so in a more silent, anonymous way. There is a well-known tradition at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial of visitors leaving items behind, a collection “contributed by living participants, surviving friends, and relatives of those who died on the battlefields of Vietnam.”11 Thousands of objects – from medals and military gear, letters and photographs, to stuffed animals, religious symbols, bottles and cans of alcohol, cards, and numerous other tokens or reminders of those lost in the war – have been collected by volunteers. The volunteers note the time and date the objects were collected, the panel at which they were left, and a short description of the object, before the items are eventually sent to the National Park Service’s Museum and Archaeological Regional Storage Facility in Lanham, Maryland, where they are preserved. It is worth noting that letters and cards left in a sealed envelope are never opened or read; it is understood that those are private messages intended solely for the dead and missing.12 In her analysis of the Wall and the items left there, Kristin Ann Hass has written, “The Wall elicits a physical response. It has inspired visitors to represent their own grief, loss, rage, and despair. Contributing their private representations to public space, they cross a boundary between the private and the public, the nation and the citizen, powerfully claiming the memorial as their own.”13 Hass goes on to say that “Leaving something at the Wall is a communicative act, a complicated kind of speech. To offer something at the monument is to imply that the thing has meaning and value beyond its intended function; and yet the particular function of the offered thing gives it the values that are speaking at the Wall.”14

12 Allen, 11.
14 Ibid., 30.
When I visited the Wall, I witnessed this practice firsthand. Among the flowers and memorial wreaths left behind, I also saw letters and notes, some in sealed envelopes. In the small gap where two panels met, someone had inserted a felt poppy that bore a tag from the RSA, the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association, an organization created in 1916 to provide care for returning soldiers and ensure that memorial efforts are carried out. At the base of the Wall there was also a 12-inch Ken doll – as in Barbie and Ken – outfitted in the Marine Corps Dress Blues uniform, complete with gold buttons, white gloves, and the red trimmed coat and white belt of an enlisted member. The only thing missing was his white cap, which might have blown away in a breeze. I was struck by how intensely personal some of the objects were, but also at the intriguing lack of explanation. These private acts of remembrance are placed at the memorial, and are then left for others to interpret. In the case of the Ken doll, it might have been left behind by the child of a deceased service member, a toy turned into a symbol. When someone leaves behind cigarettes or cans of beer, what is the message or intention? Is it honoring a tradition of sharing a smoke or a drink? Acknowledging an earlier pledge to quit an addicting habit? Hinting at a private joke? As Haas implies, these objects exist across multiple thresholds, between the public and private, the known and unknown, the intimate and the shared.

A similar practice of leaving objects behind is followed at the National World War II Memorial, but on a lesser, more informal scale. During my time in Washington, I saw only a few items left behind at the memorial, ranging from the personal to the more general tokens of remembrance. School groups and military units place wreaths and flowers at the memorial, some at specific state pillars or near the inscriptions for battles and fields of operation, and others at the ceremonial entrance. At the Maryland pillar, I found four pictures, weathered by time and the elements, and in different frames, of four U.S. servicemen. According to the hand-written labels
attached to each picture, two of the men had served in the Navy, one in the Army Air Force, and another had served in the Army’s 82nd Airborne Division. One of the pictures included a more detailed label, describing where the Army Air Force veteran had served, medals awarded, highest rank achieved, and his date of discharge. The other three pictures offered only a name, leaving me wondering the fates of these men and whether or not they had survived the war, and who had left their pictures as a silent tribute. When I arrived at the memorial on a Friday afternoon, I found that someone had placed carnations at each of the fifty-six pillars – the flowers were not there the day before, and were removed by later that evening.

When talking with Frederick Schreiner, one of the National Park Rangers stationed at the memorial, I asked him questions regarding items left at the memorials, what were some of the objects and mementos he had seen, and what is done with the material. According to Schreiner, many of the items, such as photographs and more permanent artifacts, are kept in a location on site and treated with respect and care, but are not documented or archived in the same way as the mementos left behind at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Schreiner said that visitors typically leave items without any great fanfare or ceremony, and that those on the Honor Flight trips seem to bring most of the objects placed at the memorial. While Schreiner could not explain why the objects left behind were not subjected to the same archival process as those found at the Wall, he speculated that it is because far fewer items are left at the National World War II Memorial, and that such efforts are not seen as essential. Thus, it appears that each memorial is associated with a separate practice and culture of commemoration.

Park rangers also offer guided tours, given fairly regularly on the hour. I took two of the tours, on different days and led by two different rangers. I found that the information provided was roughly the same, as the rangers basically just explained some of the memorial’s major
components, such as the pillars and bronze wreaths, the Freedom Wall, and some of the relief panels depicting scenes from the war. Each talk lasted approximately twenty to thirty minutes, and the audience for each was largely comprised of veterans and older adults.

At the end of both tours, I took each ranger up on his offer to answer any additional questions. I asked both men to describe how visitors interacted with the memorial, in either “good” or “bad” ways. Park Ranger Schreiner answered that he believes the National World War II Memorial is treated the way it is – with children running around, people wading in the pool, and the site largely serving as a resting spot – “because it is so big, so open. The memorial is almost park-like.”¹⁵ This echoed the sentiments of Park Ranger Robert Steele, who replied that the “Lincoln Memorial is a very public, noisy memorial. The Vietnam [Veterans] Memorial is solemn and quiet. The World War II Memorial is somewhere in between.”¹⁶ Steele continued, stating that he believes this is due to “generational differences,” that “older people show more respect [at and to the memorial], those who actually remember the war.”¹⁷

The observation by Steele, comparing the Lincoln, Vietnam Veterans, and National World War II Memorials to each other, deserves further review. A study of each site reveals differences that can help explain why the public perceives the memorials in divergent ways. Although the site of the Lincoln Memorial is large, it also includes the staircases and roadways in front of the memorial, hence allowing for a “public, noisy memorial” as people sit and sun themselves on the stairs, taking in the iconic scene of the National Mall, looking out towards the Washington Monument and Capitol Building beyond. However, the actual building, containing the sculpture of a seated Lincoln and engravings from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address, is not nearly as “noisy” as the exterior. For starters, sound easily

¹⁵ Frederick Schreiner, National Park Ranger, Interview with author, 12 June 2010.
¹⁶ Robert Steele, National Park Ranger, Interview with author, 10 June 2010.
¹⁷ Ibid.
bounces around the marble interior, so parents, chaperones, and park rangers are quick to hush any rowdy children. Moreover, although the marble memorial offers a cool, shaded resting spot, there are no benches inside the memorial. Some people may sit awkwardly against the walls, beneath the inscribed quotes, but largely, the visiting public does not use the Lincoln Memorial as a rest area in the same way as they do the National World War II Memorial. What is more, although Abraham Lincoln was the first U.S. president killed in office, and is obviously closely associated with the Civil War, the Lincoln Memorial is not specifically a war memorial, and thus does not carry with it the same implications of death and destruction found at other sites.

The Korean War Veterans Memorial occupies a large site, but the area accessible to the public is not nearly as big as that at the National World War II Memorial. The statues of the servicemen consume much of the memorial space, with visitors confined to the walkways. Access to the memorial is also limited to the two walkways; as such, a park ranger stationed at either entrance point can easily curtail any misbehavior or remind visitors that certain activities, such as running, smoking, or eating, are not allowed at the memorial. Additionally, the Korean War Veterans Memorial appears to not draw the same sized crowd as other memorials on the Mall; it is not as iconic and is located off of the main axis. A refreshment stand, located across the street from the memorial, serves as a mixed blessing for the memorial. For example, after visiting the Lincoln Memorial, tourists might head over to the refreshment stand for a cool beverage or a small bite to eat. Visitors are thus drawn to the area, and subsequently find themselves walking past the Korean War Veterans Memorial on their way back to the main axis of the Mall. And this is where the dilemma occurs; I often saw one of two scenarios play out when observing recently-refreshed tourists resuming their sightseeing. Sometimes, the tourists, having relaxed for a few minutes and rested their feet, were anxious to get to other memorials
and museums, and would bypass the Korean War Veterans Memorial in favor of the other, more well-known memorials. Unfortunately, the Korean War is often overshadowed in American history by the wars that came before and after, a trait also shared by its memorial. The other scene I witnessed were tourists who left the refreshment stand before finishing their food or drink, carrying with them ice cream treats or other snack foods. Although there are benches and trash barrels at the entrances to the memorial, where visitors can pause to finish their food, properly dispose of the trash, and then explore the memorial, oftentimes people chose to instead just skip the memorial and continue walking to a different site while enjoying their snacks along the way.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial is like no other on the Mall; it is, as Park Ranger Steele described, “solemn and quiet.” The Wall is considered a “healing” monument, a memorial built to help alleviate the pain and memories from the war, rather than a celebratory monument to a glorious cause or event. As such, the Wall is similar to a cemetery or a crypt, with the black granite walls towering over visitors, the thousands of names engraved on its surface, and the fact that a visitor descends into the memorial site, only to ascend as they exit, returning to ground level and the world around them. The lawn facing the Wall is cordoned off, prohibiting anyone from sitting or playing on the grass. And it is difficult to imagine anyone shouting or running around the Wall; any misbehavior is quickly kept in check, although most people appear to understand the somber decorum called for. The sight of the parents, children, or friends of those killed in the war, those with their names engraved on the Wall, breaking down and crying serves as a stark reminder that the Wall is more than a mere tourist attraction for many.

In comparison, the National World War II Memorial is much bigger than the other memorials, with a fairly contained open-air plaza at its center. With the Rainbow Pool and
fountains, the memorial is more engaging and “park-like” than its counterparts. Like the other memorials, the National World War II Memorial has limited access points – three entrances total – yet due to its huge, sprawling nature, it is harder for park rangers to police inappropriate behavior. At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, visitors interact with the memorial when they touch the Wall, leave an item behind, or make a paper-and-pencil rubbing of a name. At the National World War II Memorial, the interaction is markedly different, due in part to the nature of the monument itself. The memorial honors the “Good War,” a war that the United States emerged from victorious. And whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial focuses on death and the cost of war, when designing the National World War II Memorial, Friedrich St.Florian envisioned the fountains adding “life and movement to the site.”  

According to Benjamin Forgey, when looking at the Rainbow Pool and the surrounding plaza and memorial, “you can hardly help but contemplate the vastness of the oceans over which the war was waged, or be reminded of water’s life-giving power.”

Rather than names and reminders of specific losses, the National World War II Memorial’s Freedom Wall is comprised of stars, each star representing one hundred anonymous Americans killed during the war; visitors cannot get too close to the wall, separated from it by a small pool. Instead, visitors are able to interact with, touch, and pose next to the state pillars, the engravings of battles and war campaigns, and the bas-relief panels. Life, unity, sacrifice, and victory are emphasized over death, loss, and defeat.

Despite the potential for the public’s varied use of the site to override, ignore, or mask the memorial’s full depth and meaning, it appears that that was one such intention of the designer. As previously described, St.Florian “envisioned the plaza as a place that is full of joy and full of

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18 Ibid.
happiness, and where people can interact and have discourses and disagreements.”

Perhaps visitors treating the memorial as an extension of the Mall, as a quasi-park “full of joy,” and not as a somber site of remembrance and mourning, is exactly how the memorial is to be used. Prior to the construction of the memorial, the Rainbow Pool was in a state of disrepair, with crumbling edges and broken fountains; it was hardly an attractive area to rest or reflect during trips to the Mall. The memorial has turned this derelict site into one enjoyed by thousands of people each year, while also filling in the narrative described by the Mall and augmenting the landscape. The significant and visually appealing memorial replaced and revitalized the neglected void that was the old Rainbow Pool.

Due to the fact that the National World War II Memorial was constructed and dedicated in the early years of the 21st century, it obviously has less history attached to it, and less public interaction, than does Ottawa’s National War Memorial. Regardless, as evidenced by observing the memorial over the course of one week in June, it is clear that the National World War II Memorial has fit into the fabric of the National Mall and Washington, DC. And the three to four million people who annually visit the memorial seem to agree, using the space in a variety of ways – from a rest stop and photo opportunity to a location to reflect on the sacrifices made by previous generations.

Public Interactions in Ottawa

North of the border, the National War Memorial, a part of the Ottawa landscape for over seven decades, has served as a location for demonstrations, fundraising efforts, remembrance ceremonies, and, in recent years, has also been incorporated into the larger effort to construct a Canadian national identity via Confederation Boulevard. And, much like the National World War II Memorial, the site has been the topic of debates and disagreements concerning how it

should or should not be used, and whether or not those uses honor or disparage the veterans being commemorated.

Considering that the National War Memorial was officially dedicated just months before the opening shots of the Second World War, it would seem only natural that the site would be used in support of Canada’s efforts during this new conflict. In a memorandum dated June 4, 1940, N. Desjardins, the Acting Deputy Minister of Public Works, wrote that he “Received a telephone message from Mr. Henry this afternoon, June 4th, 1940, that the Prime Minister is agreeable to a flower sale being held at the foot of the monument through Miss Chadwick. The Prime Minister is under the impression that it is a flower sale which will be conducted on behalf of the Red Cross.”21 A seemingly innocuous flower sale, however, was only the beginning of a trend that quickly soured those in Ottawa.

In March of 1941, D.P. Cruikshank, the Campaign Chairman for the Canadian War Services Fund, wrote to J.B. Hunter, the Deputy Minister of Public Works, asking for permission to “use the grounds in front of the War Memorial to erect Mobile Canteens and Service Huts as established by the Auxiliary Service Organizations…for use of the soldiers abroad.”22 For Cruikshank and his organization, the canteens and huts would “demonstrate to the people of Ottawa what [the soldiers] are doing and what the funds are used for.”23 A day later, Hunter wrote back, granting the Canadian War Services Fund permission to erect the structures on the National War Memorial site for one week, provided that “no damage is done to Government property and that the site must be left in the same condition when entered upon.”24 Furthermore,

23 Ibid.
J.A. Heisler, the Acting Superintendent of Government Buildings, requested the services of two electricians for two days, to connect the lighting needed for the canteens and huts to the electrical system already installed and used to illuminate the National War Memorial. The Chief Architect of Ottawa tacked on a message of endorsement to Heisler’s request, writing “Deputy Minister; As this is a good cause I would recommend that all work in connection with the lighting be done by this Department and that we bear all costs.”

It seems, however, that despite the structures being for, and representing, a “good cause,” and the well-meaning intentions of the Canadian War Services Fund, many in Ottawa disapproved of how the endeavor altered the National War Memorial’s appearance. On April 8, 1941, the Ottawa Citizen reported that Ottawa Mayor Stanley Lewis “has written to Prime Minister King on the subject of the War Memorial disfigurement.” The Citizen went on to state, “Residents of the city will be strongly behind Mayor Lewis in this matter and it may be assumed that the prime minister is in full sympathy with His Worship’s protest. There has been much comment in the last two weeks upon the uglification of the War Memorial base, but because the defacement was in a great and patriotic cause the criticism was not pressed.” In voicing his own concerns, the mayor declared, “If the defacing of this shrine, as I call it, is to be permitted, we might just as well forget what we are fighting for and use its base to sell our building lots and post my voters’ list.” Mayor Lewis, perhaps presciently, added, “I have made my stand on that matter clear and I don’t intend to change my mind. The spirit of the unknown Canadian soldier is

26 “War Memorial Behind Billboards,” Ottawa Citizen, 8 April 1941.
27 Ibid.
28 “War Memorial Will Be Given Fullest Respect,” Ottawa Citizen, 24 April 1941.
there.” Lewis could not have known that nearly sixty years later, the literal remains of an unknown Canadian soldier would also be found at the memorial site.

Concerns voiced by the mayor and the public over the use, or misuse, of the National War Memorial grounds extended into the landscaping and year-round appearance of the site. In his letter to the prime minister, Mayor Lewis asked that the memorial be cared for in the winter months, in addition to the summer. “As one [Ottawa] Citizen writer asked some time ago, why should the grounds be a beauty spot all summer and an eyesore all winter?” At that time, during the winter, snow had “not been removed from the stone floor of the base,” or, when it was removed, “merely dumped in unsightly mounds to await the spring sun.” Further, to protect them from the weather, shrubs and plants around the memorial had been covered with burlap and canvas sacks. As the Citizen recommended, “If the shrubs are not hardy enough to get along without this burlap shelter…native shrubs [should] be planted in place of the exotic growths.” Within two years of its dedication, the people and politicians of Ottawa began to reconsider how the National War Memorial should be treated and regarded, what the memorial truly stood for, and how that meaning fit into the broader urban fabric.

In an interesting twist, however, the location of the National War Memorial may have helped prevent any future demonstrations. Rather than staging antiwar protests or other similar displays of dissent, or even patriotic exhibitions such as those put on during World War II, at the National War Memorial, Canadians instead seem to have overwhelmingly chosen the nearby grounds of Parliament Hill as the favored site for demonstrations or protests. Canadians appear

29 Ibid.
30 “War Memorial Behind Billboards,” Ottawa Citizen.
32 “War Memorial Behind Billboards,” Ottawa Citizen.
33 During a 2001 meeting in Ottawa of the G20, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, protesters did spray paint parts of the National War Memorial. However, this vandalism received only passing coverage and was mainly
to have decided to air their grievances directly at their legislators, right outside their office buildings, rather than down the street at Confederation Square. One notable exception to this involves the ceremonies and rituals that take place on Remembrance Day.

The National War Memorial continues to serve as the main site of memory for Canada. Every year on November 11th the National Act of Remembrance occurs in Confederation Square. Thousands of Canadians attend the event, as the prime minister, governor general, and various other government and military officials, as well as representatives from family groups and public organizations, lay wreaths at the base of the pedestal and honor all of Canada’s fallen soldiers. After the conclusion of the official ceremony, veterans and regular citizens crowd around the memorial to pay their own respects in what has become an impromptu tradition; visitors leave their poppy lapel pins on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as a personal act of remembrance.

On July 1, 2006 – Canada Day – the National War Memorial became the focus of a news story, but unfortunately not due to any of the patriotic festivities occurring in the region around the site and Parliament Hill. Rather, three young men had been photographed urinating on the memorial. The photographer, bystander Dr. Michael Pilon, also reported, “most of the crowd reacted with cheers and laughter.” The incident cast new light on how the public had been treating, or mistreating, the location, with one news organization reporting, “Skateboarders and stunt cyclists have also used and abused the site, and veterans complain [that] ‘amorous encounters’ have taken place around the granite and bronze memorial.” This new act of vandalism, however, went far beyond any common sense of decency, and elicited a strong reaction from across the nation – veterans groups, politicians, and general citizens all expressed seen as a minor disturbance, particularly in comparison to other similar protests, such as the Battle of Seattle during the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting; “Well done, Ottawa: We show others how meetings and protests can co-exist,” Ottawa Citizen, 19 November 2001, A16.

their outrage. As a result, beginning in 2007, two members of the military service now stand guard at the memorial and tomb from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer months. The Honour Guards are changed every hour, and each branch of the military provides guards. Since each branch is represented in the memorial, it is believed that each branch should thus have the opportunity to serve in this ceremonial position.

The National War Memorial does not leave much room for personal or individual interpretation. It has been constructed in such a way so as to reinforce the concepts of both nation building and myth creation. Although Canada gained independence from Great Britain in 1867, the nation still had little to no control over its foreign policy and did not truly become a recognized international power until World War I. This acknowledgement was motivated not only by the sheer number of Canadians who served and died in the war, but also the noteworthy contributions Canadian soldiers made during decisive battles. One of the more striking examples of this was the Battle of Vimy Ridge, a bloody, destructive, yet successful attack by the Canadian Corps against German fortifications. In the Canadian War Museum’s exhibit on World War I and Vimy Ridge, one caption summarizes the implications of this victory: “Victory at Vimy was a defining event for Canada. Many later considered it the moment when Canada left Britain’s shadow and became a country in its own right.” What is more, Canadian military success has often been credited for Canada’s earning “a separate signature on the Versailles Peace Treaty ending the war.”36 As a result of World War I, “Canadians proved that they could pull their weight, and by their effort earned for Canada a new place among the nations of the world.”37

37 Veterans Affairs Canada, A Day of Remembrance (Ottawa: Veterans Affairs Canada, 2005) 14.
Thus, the National War Memorial does not only memorialize those killed in war, but also symbolizes the establishment of the modern Canadian nation. Canada came of age after World War I, and the National War Memorial serves as a constant reminder of the implications that the war had on the development of an independent Canada.

One of the supposed benefits of Confederation Boulevard is also one of its biggest drawbacks, particularly as it pertains to the National War Memorial. When visitors to Ottawa travel along the boulevard, they can stop at a number of locations that are considered “important aspects of Canada’s government, culture, heritage, landscape and relations with other nations of the world.”\(^\text{38}\) However, while the boulevard includes some historic and culturally compelling stops, it also has the potential to turn the entire route into what feels like one long tourist attraction, thereby eliminating or glossing over many of the educational and reverential aspects. During my time at the National War Memorial, I observed this trend, with people seeming to stop at the site just long enough to take a few pictures of the memorial and the tomb before heading off to either Parliament Hill or the Rideau Canal Locks. Very few people took the time to explore Confederation Square, read the interpretive plaques, or even spend a few moments in quiet contemplation regarding what the memorial represents.\(^\text{39}\) The addition of Honour Guards perversely turns the memorial into an even greater tourist destination, particularly when the guards are members of the Canadian Army and are wearing their full dress uniforms, consisting of a scarlet tunic and bearskin cap. Posing with the two guards standing duty over the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier makes for a fine photo opportunity for many tourists.


\(^{39}\) This was a pattern I frequently saw during my week in Ottawa. While I made a concerted effort to visit the site at different times and on different days, I may still have missed the occasional visitor who interacted with the memorial in a more intimate, reflective manner.
The addition of the Honour Guards, however, further changed the National War Memorial in terms of how visitors are actually able to physically interact with the site. The Honour Guards stand on either side of a long rubber mat, placed in between the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the memorial, with a rope cordon behind them. As a result, the memorial appears slightly less approachable than in the past. Visitors are unable to get close to the front of the memorial, by the dates for World War I. While the Honour Guards would not necessarily prevent someone from walking behind them for a closer view of the memorial, their presence creates a separation and distance – obviously physical, but also on a cognitive, more emotional level – between the observer and the National War Memorial. Visitors are well aware that they are being watched, and seem to act accordingly, hesitantly approaching the tomb or not really lingering at the site.

During the summer months, guides working for the National Capital Commission are also stationed at the National War Memorial. The guides answer questions, provide directions, and generally oversee the site. Unlike the National Park Rangers at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, the guides actively move around the site and approach visitors to see if they can be of assistance, but they do not offer descriptive tours of the memorial. Instead, the NCC has created a mobile exhibit, consisting of four small double-sided display panels, about four feet tall and wide, designating the National War Memorial and Confederation Square as “Canada’s Place of Remembrance.” Both sides of the exhibit panels feature information pertaining to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Remembrance Day ceremonies, as well as pictures, war medals, and a replication of a scrapbook originally assembled by the mother of a fallen World War II Canadian soldier, detailing her son’s service and death, and her subsequent efforts to commemorate all those who died during the war.
I asked one of the guides, a young woman named Maude, what would happen if someone made an attempt to disrespect the tomb. She replied that it is up to the NCC guides or an observing military officer to first step in and say something. Nonetheless, she also said, with a bit of a smile, that “The guards can defend themselves, though, if it came to it.” Regardless, Maude asserted that it was unlikely to ever come to that, since “[The guards’] being there sort of keeps people off [of the tomb].”

However, as described earlier, the guards are only at the site for specific periods of time, during certain months of the year. And even then, only when weather permits. According to Maude, the guards have other duties that prohibit them from being on site year-round, and it is too cold in the winter for guard duty. While I was in Ottawa, the city was experiencing unusually hot and humid weather. When visiting the National War Memorial, I noticed an impressive looking weather gauge positioned behind the Honour Guards, right up against the memorial itself. I asked a medical officer on duty about the device, and he said that the device measures not only the temperature, but also factors in the humidity, sun glare, wind, and ambient temperature in order to accurately determine how the weather may be affecting the guards. He mentioned that a guardsman’s core body temperature could increase by as much as six degrees Celsius (over ten degrees Fahrenheit) after one hour of duty; thus, considering how hot and humid it was, overheating and the safety of the Honour Guards were serious concerns. According to the officer, due to the extreme heat, “[During the] last three days, [those in charge] have been calling [the guard duty] off early…[The guards’] health and well-being is more important…[and the duty] will probably be called off today soon.”

By 11:30 a.m., the Honour Guards had, indeed, been pulled from duty.

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41 Interview with Canadian Army Medical Officer, 8 July 2010.
These restrictions and modifications to the Honour Guard schedule are starkly different than that at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the United States, located at Arlington National Cemetery. Despite the fact that public access to the cemetery, and thus the tomb, is itself restricted to certain hours of the day, the tomb is guarded twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, regardless of the weather. In Ottawa, depending on the time of day or the season, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier might be left unguarded, despite the fact that Honour Guards were originally installed in response to the aforementioned late-night vandalism.

As a result, one must wonder if the Honour Guards at the Canadian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier are more symbolic and reactionary than anything else. They stand on duty, but only during daylight hours, and not when drunken passersby might stumble by late at night – the very reason for the addition of guards in the first place. Guards are present during the summer months, when Ottawa sees an increase in tourist traffic, but only when weather permits. While it may be much more practical and sensible to not subject Honour Guards to dangerously high temperatures or the blistering cold and snow of a harsh Canadian winter, the entire undertaking seems less thought out, particularly when compared to what occurs in the United States.

The Changing of the Guard ceremony at Arlington is a detailed affair, often attended by a number of tourists taking pictures and video. As described by Arlington National Cemetery:

An impeccably uniformed relief commander appears on the plaza to announce the Changing of the Guard. Soon the new sentinel leaves the Quarters and unlocks the bolt of his or her M-14 rifle to signal to the relief commander to start the ceremony. The relief commander walks out to the Tomb and salutes, then faces the spectators and asks them to stand and stay silent during the ceremony.

The relief commander conducts a detailed white-glove inspection of the weapon, checking each part of the rifle once. Then, the relief commander and the relieving sentinel meet the retiring sentinel at the center of the matted path in front of the Tomb. All three salute the Unknowns who have been symbolically given the Medal of Honor. Then the relief commander orders the relieved sentinel, “Pass on your orders.” The current sentinel commands, “Post and orders, remain as directed.” The newly posted
sentinel replies, “Orders acknowledged,” and steps into position on the black mat. When the relief commander passes by, the new sentinel begins walking at a cadence of 90 steps per minute.42

In contrast, the ceremony in Ottawa appears less somber, due in large part to the location in which it occurs. The guard quarters are located near the Rideau Canal, underneath Elgin Street, accessible via the Sappers’ Staircase near the Valiants Memorial, as described in the previous chapter. As a result, though, when it is time for the guard duty to change, the relief guards, a duty commander, and a bagpiper assemble at the top of the staircase. It is here, on the sidewalk, with vehicle traffic on Wellington Street passing by and a few pedestrians pausing to watch, that the duty commander reviews the relief guards. After the review, the bagpiper strikes up a tune and the guards march along the sidewalk to the front of the National War Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, at which point the duty commander instructs the new guards on their orders, the current guards are relieved, and the procession reverses itself, back along the sidewalk and down the stairway.

When I was in Ottawa, I only ever witnessed a small handful of people watching the Changing of the Guard ceremony; it was nothing like the crowds in Arlington, in which people were lined up four and five deep from the rope lines. This difference may be attributable to a number of reasons: Arlington National Cemetery is, for better or worse, a popular tourist attraction; the ceremony at Arlington is more widely advertised and publicized than that in Ottawa; the Canadian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has only been guarded for a few years, since 2007, so the practice may be less known than in America, where the tomb has been continuously guarded since 1937; the Canadian ceremony is less elaborate and rigidly structured; and, Washington simply draws more people than Ottawa on an annual basis – it is estimated that

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three to four million people visit the National World War II Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, and other sites each year, whereas in Ottawa, in the summer of 2009, roughly 18,000 people visited the National War Memorial, with 300,000 people stopping by the National Capital Commission’s Visitor’s Centre, located across Wellington Street from Parliament Hill. In a study undertaken in the summer of 2005, over 72 days, 15,141 people visited the National War Memorial, with 4,308 (28%) taking pictures and only 1,150 (8%) stopping long enough to read the plaques around the site.

These figures highlight the fact that Ottawa is not the same sort of tourist destination as Washington, particularly in terms of annual visitors. According to the NCC’s *Tourism in Canada’s Capital Region [CCR] – 2009*, “In 2009, 7.5 million visitors came to [the Capital region],” with 6.7 million of these visitors from Canada. However, while the “average length of stay ranges between 1 and 3 nights,” over half of the Canadian visitors only stayed in the area for one day. What is more, the NCC reports, “Trips taken by Canadians to CCR were primarily for ‘visiting friends or relatives’” and that “Tourists to CCR tend to visit alone or in couples.” This stands in stark contrast to Washington, where recent surveys indicate that, of the 14.8 million Americans who visited the city in 2008, 54% were there for “Leisure.” And, of the 12 million domestic visitors who stayed overnight in Washington, they stayed, on average, three nights and had an average travel party size of 2.6 people. While both capitals attract visitors for business

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43 Interview with NCC guides, NCC Visitor Centre personnel, and National Park Rangers.
44 National Capital Commission, *Research in Review: 2005-2006* (NCC: Ottawa, 2006), 10. The number of people taking pictures at the National War Memorial is likely higher now, with the addition of the Honour Guards creating the aforementioned popular photo opportunity. And, although the numbers from Ottawa only cover the summer months, it is easy to extrapolate that Ottawa’s memorial sites do not receive nearly as many visitors as do those in Washington.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
and conferences, Washington’s numbers indicate that the city also receives a larger number of tourists whose sole purpose is to sightsee for a number of days, usually with children.

This is not to say that Canadians, much less the Honour Guards, somehow lack a sense of duty, patriotism, or pride in their nation’s capital, or that Americans possess more of these qualities. Instead, it is a consideration of the differences found between the two countries, and possibly more a reflection of the relative infancy of the practice of Honour Guards in Canada, a practice that might require additional fleshing out to adequately convey the solemnity of the tomb and what it represents. Also at issue is the question of whether that which is more popular is somehow better, more significant, or of a higher caliber. It could be suggested that the hundreds of people who watch the Changing of the Guard at Arlington National every day, crowding around the site to snap a few pictures before wandering off to see other well-known tombstones and gravesites or hopping back on a tram to head off to another memorial or site, might largely be missing the point of the tomb and the guards, instead attending the ceremony merely to cross it off their list of things to see on their vacation to Washington.

A similar occurrence can be found in Ottawa when, every day during the summer, the full Ceremonial Guard – consisting of roughly 400 members of the Armed Forces and the Band of the Ceremonial Guard – conducts a larger Changing the Guard ceremony, parading up Elgin Street from their quarters at the Cartier Square Drill Hall and marching past the National War Memorial on their way to Parliament Hill. Here, on the grounds in front of Parliament’s Centre Block, the Ceremonial Guard is inspected and marches across the lawn while the band plays, finishing with *O Canada*. Following the thirty-minute ceremony, the Ceremonial Guard parades back the way they came, again passing the National War Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was during this ceremony that I saw crowds similar to those found at
Arlington. Tourists were lined all along the grounds, with many arriving early to secure a good spot. While not imbued with the same symbolism as a ceremony located in front of a tomb, the ritual on Parliament Hill does include a fair amount of pomp and flourish, the sort of eye-catching details that make for an interesting demonstration, and, a quality photo opportunity. It is worth noting that, as the Ceremonial Guard left Parliament Hill and marched back down Wellington and Elgin streets, some tourists did follow along and ended up stopping at the National War Memorial for a short while, almost as if the guard was a pied piper, leading the crowd towards a site of importance and significance.

Whether or not visitors actually comprehend the significance of the site is up for some debate. An article in the *Ottawa Citizen*, published in 1995, reported that, “Veterans, government officials and some tourists are concerned that the presence of skateboarders is damaging both the [National War Memorial’s] stonework and the atmosphere at one of the national capital’s tourist attractions.”54 Five years later, a letter submitted to the *Ottawa Citizen* recounted one family’s visit to the site, and how the parents were disturbed to see many children playing around and on the memorial and tomb. The letter’s author agreed with earlier statements that “children should definitely not be forbidden from playing there, but should be taught how to play, keeping in mind respect for all that the War Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier represent.”55 During my visit, much as in Washington, I saw men walking around the National War Memorial shirtless. However, unlike the National World War II Memorial, the National War Memorial site did not appear to be a rest stop or a de facto playground. This may be due in large part to the presence of the Honour Guards and NCC guides, but is also partly due to the setting itself. As previously described, Confederation Square is open to the elements and basically situated on a traffic island.

As a result, particularly on days with weather similar to that of when I was in Washington – with a forecast of hot and uncomfortably humid temperatures – the heat and automobile noise do not create a restful atmosphere. Much of the space is out in the open, away from any trees that provide shade. What is more, the area around Confederation Square does not provide much in the way of immediate, easy access to restrooms or refreshments. The Rideau Centre shopping mall – with its drugstores, food court, restaurants, and restrooms – is about a five-minute walk away, and the Château Laurier, across Wellington Street, also includes public restrooms, but these are not exactly openly advertised. The nearby Sparks Street Mall, an open-air pedestrian mall, does not include nearby convenience stores or similar locations where snacks or beverages can be purchased. And, unlike the National World War II Memorial, the National War Memorial does not have fountains or other water features that could provide a respite from the heat – for that, tourists have to venture down to the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River. As such, Confederation Square is not really a place where tourists or others might find a quiet location for lunch or for resting their feet while walking along Confederation Boulevard.

The National War Memorial’s place on Confederation Boulevard is further complicated by the proximity of the Valiants Memorial. The National Capital Commission describes the memorial as “a kind of pageant of our past, showing how certain key turning points in our military history contributed to the building of our country. The memorial is therefore intended to acknowledge and honour the role that military participation, and the men and women who contributed to that participation, have had on nation building.” While the Valiants Memorial is located on the northeastern end of Confederation Square, and is visually and physically separated from the National War Memorial by short walls, trees, and shrubs, it is still a part of

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Confederation Square, and thus can be associated with the National War Memorial. The situation can be viewed as similar to some of the objections raised concerning the placement of Washington’s National World War II Memorial, in that a new memorial would be too close to an existing memorial, and would thus encroach upon, and alter, the meaning and magnitude of the older monument.

The Valiants Memorial singles out fourteen people for individual acclaim, while trying to also construct a timeline of Canada’s involvement in warfare. And yet, the National War Memorial has already been explicitly rededicated as the national symbol of Canadian military service and sacrifice. It is a matter of debate and personal opinion whether or not the Valiants Memorial therefore adds to, or detracts from, the spirit of the National War Memorial, and if the National War Memorial was somehow lacking a component thereby satisfied by the addition of the Valiants Memorial. Moreover, the Valiants Memorial faces the same issue as the National War Memorial in terms of how to address, and honor, more recent – or future – wars in which Canadians are involved. As discussed in a previous chapter, it is an ongoing question as to how Canada’s participation in Afghanistan – and the more than 150 fatalities suffered during that conflict – will be honored at, and possibly incorporated into, the National War Memorial. In terms of the Valiants Memorial, will additional busts or statues be included? Is World War II – the most recent war commemorated in the Valiants Memorial – considered the final word in warfare’s influence on Canadian nation building, despite the dates for the later Korean War included in the National War Memorial? Or, is the Valiants Memorial meant to serve as a sort of physical and psychological bridge between the National War Memorial and the Peacekeeping Monument, signaling Canada’s move towards serving as a peacekeeping force in the mid-
twentieth century?\textsuperscript{52} Regrettably, the answers remain undefined; while leaving it to the visitor to interpret the sites for themselves may be seen as beneficial, the overall intention of Ottawa and the National Capital Commission in terms of commemorating Canada’s involvement in war and peacekeeping is largely unclear and seemingly diluted, spread out as it is over a number of different memorials and sites.

Returning to the benefits and drawbacks of Confederation Boulevard in a larger context, and how the ceremonial pathway through Ottawa affects the perception of the sites located along its route, similarities can again be found with Boston’s Freedom Trail. Much like Confederation Boulevard, the Freedom Trail links significant sites related to Boston’s, and Colonial America’s, history along a manufactured route. In Boston’s case, the Freedom Trail has been physically added to the urban landscape, with a pathway incorporated into the sidewalk, in either red brick or red paint. However, as Alfred Young points out, “there is no narrative logic to the trail; the sites can not be arranged in a sequence of Revolutionary events.”\textsuperscript{53} Similarly, Nina Zannieri has written that “It is critical to note that the Freedom Trail was established as a wayfinding device and a marketing tool, not an interpretive framework…The goal was to help visitors find important Boston sites – nothing more and nothing less.”\textsuperscript{54}

Likewise, Ottawa’s National Capital Commission, for all its rhetoric of Confederation Boulevard acting as an “expression” of Canada, seems more concerned with how visitors interact with, and navigate around, the boulevard, rather than with what sort of lessons about Canada are gleaned from the various buildings, institutions, and memorials linked by the boulevard. In the

\textsuperscript{52} Nothing on the website for the memorial’s advisory foundation indicates plans for future expansion, and email inquiries sent to the foundation went unanswered.


\textsuperscript{54} Nina Zannieri, “Report From the Field: Not the Same Old Freedom Trail – A View from the Paul Revere House,” \textit{The Public Historian}, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Spring 2003), 46.
NCC’s report titled *Research in Review: 2008-2009*, the findings of a Confederation Boulevard visitor survey are detailed, highlighting the level of visitor awareness of the boulevard’s existence. It is mentioned that a small percentage of those surveyed “indicated that the boulevard has enriched their overall visit to the capital,” but the report fails to explain how Confederation Boulevard enriched this experience.55

The idea that Confederation Boulevard is, like the Freedom Trail, solely a wayfinding device is reinforced by an earlier annual report produced by the NCC, *CAPITALizing on Research: A Compilation of Findings on Canada’s Capital Region – 2004*. In response to the self-imposed question, “Confederation Boulevard – An Informative Experience?” the report focuses on the use and effectiveness of bronze map-models and other orientation tools, as well as interpretation panels. While a reported “88% of users of the interpretation panels said they learned something from them,” what is not described is what sort of information is provided.56 Again and again, in its own reports, the NCC focuses more on the form and function of Confederation Boulevard, rather than the message or content of the sites being linked together throughout the region.

To that end, when taking the broad view of Confederation Boulevard, that of a route winding through Ottawa and Gatineau and connecting different and disparate sites, one must wonder what sort of Canadian story the NCC hopes the visitor discovers. Although Boston’s Freedom Trail lacks a “narrative logic” and an “interpretive framework,” it still possesses one overarching theme, that being the city’s role in the events leading up to and surrounding the American Revolution. Contrastingly, Confederation Boulevard’s theme appears to be a more vague “Canada!” leaving it to the visitor to decipher Canada’s history, its place in the world, and

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what exactly it means to be Canadian through a collection of buildings and monuments. The NCC admits as much when it describes part of its mission, in a broad manner, as “providing a national context for the Boulevard by making sure that all Capital themes (political, cultural, international, green, heritage and representational) are expressed there.” With such a wide range of topics meant for display, and for all of the time and effort that has gone into creating and branding Confederation Boulevard, it is questionable if the connections between all the sites are as strong as they could possibly be. To complicate matters further, the NCC has produced a booklet, Discover the Heart of the Capital: Exploring Confederation Boulevard, featuring a map of Confederation Boulevard and short descriptions of many of the sites. The booklet also proposes four possible tours of Confederation Boulevard: three walking tours and one bicycle tour. However, these tour routes merely group nearby sites together, and are not based on any similarities or connections each location might have to others on the same tour. For example, it is unclear what the Bank of Canada and Currency Museum has in common with the Garden of the Provinces and Territories, both of which are part of one of the NCC’s suggested tours of Confederation Boulevard.

Perhaps one solution would be to produce sub-trails within the existing Confederation Boulevard structure, thereby linking sites with greater relevancy to each other while not overlooking the larger design of the route. For instance, a “Canadian Military/Armed Forces” Trail could include the Canadian War Museum, the Memorial Chamber on Parliament Hill, the National War Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Valiants Memorial, the National Aboriginal Veterans Memorial, the Peacekeeping Monument, the Ottawa Memorial, and the other memorials, monuments, and statues dealing with Canada’s military involvement in

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wars, rebellions, and peacekeeping missions. In this way, a narrower, focused theme would be presented to the visitor, one where a more specific lesson about Canadian military history and sacrifice could be imparted. Likewise, a “Canadian Settlement and Exploration” Trail might include the Colonel By statue, the Rideau Canal, and the statue of Samuel Champlain, while a “Canadian Politics and Politicians” Trail would involve stops at Parliament Hill, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and 24 Sussex Drive, among others.\footnote{The structure for these themes already exists: the National Capital Commission’s \textit{Canada’s Capital Commemoration Strategic Plan} lists a number of themes and subthemes used to classify any proposed commemoration, as well as identify over- and under-represented themes in existing commemorations. These themes are “Political Life,” “Peace and Security,” “Canada and the World,” “Intellectual and Cultural Life,” “Social and Community Life,” and “Developing Economies” (p 12-13). Although a bit broad, and dry, the themes, along with their subthemes, such as “Migration and Immigration” or “Confederation,” could very easily be adopted to create thematic routes and stops along Confederation Boulevard.} Obviously, many sites would cut across multiple themes and trails, such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization or even the Rideau Canal, depending on how these sub-trails were designed. Each site could be clearly labeled according to which theme applies, and how that site fits into the narrative of a specific trail. Nevertheless, this solution might at least provide some much-needed cohesion, and a greater level of identity creation, to the various sites located along Confederation Boulevard, in lieu of the current standard, which appears to be merely any significant building, memorial, or site simply located along – or in close proximity to – the streets designated as Confederation Boulevard.

Decoding the Memorial Narrative

When considering how visitors interact with either site, be it the National War Memorial or the National World War II Memorial, one is reminded of reception theory and Stuart Hall’s discussion of encoding and decoding texts. Although Hall focused on mass communication, specifically television programs, his methods for defining meaning and understanding discourse are still relevant to this topic. Hall’s article, “Encoding/Decoding,” describes the different ways
concepts and ideas are communicated and interpreted by parties on both sides of the communication – the senders and the receptors. Hall argues that ideas are “encoded” with certain messages, and these coded ideas are then “decoded,” in differing ways, by those who receive the ideas. These interpretations may not always see eye-to-eye; “What are called ‘distortions’ or ‘misunderstandings’ arise precisely from the lack of equivalence between the two sides in the communicative exchange.”

Hall describes three different ways a message could be decoded: the dominant-hegemonic position, whereby the receiver “decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded”; the negotiated code, which “accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to ‘local conditions’”; and the oppositional code, wherein the receiver understands and recognizes “both the literal and the connotative inflection given by a discourse” but chooses to “decode the message in a globally contrary way.”

The dominant-hegemonic position is encoded into each memorial in a number of ways, including the presence of National Park Rangers and Honour Guards to enforce and regulate the behavior and actions of visitors. Familiar memorial tropes and conventions, such as plaques and panels, and symbols connected to each country – stars in America and maple leaves in Canada – are found throughout each memorial site. What is more, these memorials, which build on well-established designs and themes, are placed in a central, significant, and highly visible position within the national capital. Their very location embeds in each site the belief that, as a part of the larger capital city built environment, they are special and important aspects of the nation and the national narrative.

60 Ibid., 136-38.
Visitors to the memorials can be observed decoding the site through the dominant-hegemonic lens with such examples as the Honor Flight members, those American World War II veterans who visit the memorial dedicated to them and their efforts. For those Americans, a trip to the National World War II Memorial is one filled with personal memories and patriotic sentiment. Although these memories might be different than the larger narrative – for instance, many World War II veterans repeatedly stress in interviews that they do not consider themselves, or their actions, heroic – their presence is a reminder of the human effects and cost of the war. Similarly, the ceremony for the young woman commissioned as an Army officer was held in front of the Freedom Wall, with its gold stars and engraving reminding visitors that “Here We Mark the Price of Freedom.” The ceremony’s location is a clear indication that the woman understood not just what was expected of her, but also the traditions and history that were to be respected and carried on. Likewise, at the National War Memorial, during the National Remembrance Day Ceremony or when visitors take the time to stop and read the plaques or talk to the NCC guides to learn more about the memorial and what it represents, decoding the memorial via the dominant-hegemonic position is clearly evident.

Visitors can be observed employing a negotiated code, one adapted to “local conditions,” at the National World War II Memorial when they stop and rest at the site, possibly dipping their feet in the Rainbow Pool. They are visiting the memorial and are surrounded by the state pillars and reminders of the war, and are, as St.Florian hoped, interacting with each other in discussion. However, by treating the site as a rest stop, where they can relax and cool off, they are using the memorial space in a way more suited to their immediate needs and desires, perhaps even using it in a way that celebrates the very freedoms fought for during the war.
Similarly, when visitors to the National War Memorial pose for pictures next to the Honour Guards, they are acknowledging the presence of the guards, but not what they represent and are protecting. For the visitors, the Honour Guards are an enjoyable adornment for their souvenir pictures. The National War Memorial, when viewed as a part of a negotiated decoding, becomes just another stop along Confederation Boulevard, a place to briefly visit before moving on to the next site, without much interpretation or understanding of the official narrative on display.

Although both memorials have not been the site for overt exhibitions of oppositional decoding – in terms of protests or demonstrations that run counter to the ideas of national unity, pride, and patriotism – some visitor behavior can be seen as veering close to this definition. When visitors in Washington play in the water and fountains of the Rainbow Pool, doing more than dipping their feet or wading in the shallow water, or when they bring ice cream and snacks to the memorial, they are acting in a manner contrary to the rules and restrictions observed at the site. However, in light of Hall’s definition of the oppositional code, these visitors may not “understand” or “recognize” these rules, and thus may not actually realize that their behavior is not allowed; it is unlikely that parents are letting their children eat ice cream at the memorial as an act of resistance towards the memorial’s message – they may simply be hot, and attempting to cool off. In Ottawa, when the three young men were photographed urinating on the National War Memorial, they were drunk. And when teenagers skateboard at the site, using the steps and curbs for tricks, they are young and possibly ignorant of what the memorial represents and means for other people. Again, in these instances, these acts do not neatly fit into Hall’s definition in that the individuals, due to young age, inebriation, or indifference, likely are less aware of the dominant position encoded into the memorial and, as such, are not actively behaving in a way
that challenges that position; that is to say, they are not mistreating the war memorial because it is a war memorial. While intoxication or youthful ignorance are not excuses for misbehavior, neither the skateboarders nor the urinating vandals, in any news interview, gave any indication that they were motivated by a desire to behave in an openly contrary or dissenting way; instead, for them, it seems the National War Memorial has simply become any other part of the urban fabric.

There are a number of ways in which the memorials are “intended” to be read, either from the perspectives of their designers or the official bodies currently overseeing each site, be it the National Capital Commission in Ottawa or the National Park Service in Washington. For the National War Memorial, Vernon March intended to create a memorial in line with the design guidelines, one that would not glorify war or victory, but rather “to perpetuate in this bronze group the people of Canada who went Overseas to the Great War, and to represent them, as we of today saw them, as a record for future generations....” The NCC, particularly after the addition of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and, in light of the vandalism incident, the inclusion of Honour Guards at the site, has made a concerted effort to renew the importance of the memorial and its surroundings, attempting to carve out of the Ottawa cityscape a place of remembrance and solemnity. The presence of the Honour Guards and the NCC guides at the National War Memorial create an increased sense of authority at the site, the implication being that inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Moreover, the guards and guides have therefore been granted the power to judge what is and is not considered “inappropriate.” Obviously, straightforward examples include the aforementioned public urination incident (an event highly unlikely to occur during the daylight hours when the guards and guides are at the memorial) and

skateboarders using the site, with its benches and low walls, as an urban skate park. However, it is unclear what other sorts of activities – such as eating, running, or smoking, all of which are prohibited at the National World War II Memorial in Washington – and to what level, are and are not tolerated at the National War Memorial.62

Conversely, it is through the addition of another element that the National War Memorial has also become more sacred – the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Prior to the year 2000, the site was meant to be revered, but solely due to the presence of the memorial and what it stood for. With the repatriation of Canada’s Unknown Soldier, the ground has become even more hallowed, as it is now also the resting place for not just the remains of an individual, but also for what Veterans Affairs Canada declares those remains stand for, namely “all Canadians, whether they be navy, army, air force or merchant marine, who died or may die for their country in all conflicts – past, present, and future.”63

Therefore, an odd paradox has been created at the National War Memorial. The inclusion of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier has made the site more sacred, with any acts of vandalism appearing much more severe or disrespectful. As such, a need arose for the tomb and the memorial to be watched over by Honour Guards, adding an even greater air of authority and solemnity to the site. However, visitors now walk right past the tomb in order to pose next to the Honour Guards, with their regal red jackets and bearskin hats.

At the National World War II Memorial, there appears to be a sort of compromise in effect, as the park rangers realize they are in a losing battle to keep visitors totally out of the

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62 By “level”, I mean that, for example, if someone visiting the memorial is eating an apple, they may be reminded to dispose of the core properly, but probably would not be asked to leave. However, if someone decided to lay out a blanket and have a picnic lunch at the site, even if off to the side, they would likely be told to take the picnic elsewhere.

Rainbow Pool, instead allowing feet to be dipped in the water, but drawing the line at wading – a marginally thin line, at that. There are even four small wooden signs placed around the pool, asking visitors to “Please Respect the Memorial” and reminding them to not wade in the water or throw coins into the pool, as they can stain the stone. Not surprisingly, I often observed people wading right in front of these signs, while the bottom of the pool is littered with coins. Park rangers are also there to enforce the rules against eating or running at the memorial, somewhat minimizing the site’s park-like character. Attempting to find a balance between designer St. Florian’s intention to create “a place that is full of joy and full of happiness, and where people can interact and have discourses and disagreements,” and one with a display of some modicum of respect for the people and events being remembered, is clearly a difficult one.64

Both memorials, the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial, have in effect become photo opportunity locations for tourists, yet largely as a by-product of the actions and decisions of the officials in charge of either site. At the National War Memorial, visitors now pose next to the recently added Honour Guards. Certainly, visitors still take pictures of the entire memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; but it is via the Honour Guards that they now predominantly directly interact with the site. Likewise, in Washington, tourists take pictures of the entire National World War II Memorial and the various elements – the fountains, the Freedom Wall, the bas-relief panels, and so on. And, I saw a number of people posing for pictures while standing in the pavilions dedicated to either theatre of operations, with the fountains of the Rainbow Pool providing an attractive backdrop. However, these are still the typical touristy type of pictures seen in summer vacation slideshows. What is more unusual, though, is the ways in which people would pose next to the pillars representing the various states and territories. It is in these pictures that visitors, much like with the Honour Guards in Ottawa,

64 America’s Greatest Monuments, Smithsonian Channel.
more directly interact with the memorial space, often in a more casual, less reverential manner. The University of Delaware alumni softball team, discussed earlier, did not pose for a group picture in front of the relief panel depicting the Lend-Lease Act, but instead in front of the pillar representing Delaware – the one part of the memorial space to which they obviously felt the most connection.

These types of interactions with the memorials are largely unique to each site, and were not widely seen at other memorials in either city. To be sure, while in Ottawa and Washington, I observed people taking pictures of other memorials and monuments, and oftentimes posing in front of or next to them. The difference, however, lies in the location of each type of picture and pose. Typically, tourists would only take a general picture of the war-related memorials, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, and the Peacekeeping Monument and Valiants Memorial in Ottawa. Yet, when it came to other monuments, such as the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, or the different statues located on Parliament Hill, it appeared that visitors were more likely to pose with or in front of these monuments. The National World War II Memorial’s state pillars and the Honour Guards at the National War Memorial blur the line between these two distinctions, creating the space and opportunity for visitors to gather and informally pose at a war memorial. I did not see people standing in front of the Freedom Wall for a group photo, or, once the Honour Guards were gone for the day, at the base of the National War Memorial. As such, those particular elements, the state pillars and the Honour Guards, seem to run counter to the intended meaning of each memorial, modifying the typical behavior exhibited not only at war memorials in general, but also at these specific sites.
Decoding the Official Literature

It is also possible to interpret the “official” narrative of each memorial by examining the books, pamphlets, and websites created by the agencies responsible for each memorial space. Both the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial are often used as the public face, or “image,” for relevant agencies and organizations. The American Battle Monuments Commission, on its website, offers its Fiscal Year Annual Reports from 2004 to 2010. Each report features a cover image, typically of a military cemetery, with the rows upon rows of white marble tombstones. However, the cover of the 2004 report stands in stark contrast to this trend, as it showcases the National World War II Memorial, with its fountains and pillars, illuminated against the night sky. Likewise, the cover of the National Capital Commission’s *Comprehensive Commemoration Program and Policy for Canada’s Capital*, published in June of 2006, features a photograph of the National War Memorial, coincidentally, like the National World War II Memorial, also taken at night, with the memorial’s figures lit by spotlights.

The National Park Service produces brochures for the various parks, historic sites, battlefields, and memorials in its care. According to the National Park Service, these brochures serve a vital role: “As park visitation increases and personal services decrease, the onsite portability of publications gives them a significant role in providing visitors with interpretive, logistical, and safety information. Publications are also the one interpretive medium visitors can take with them as a souvenir and handy home reference.”[^65] The brochure for the National World War II Memorial briefly describes many of the memorial’s elements and features a visitor will commonly encounter. More significantly, though, the brochure promotes the concept of World War II being a “Good War” fought by the “Greatest Generation,” a war that America entered

“not to conquer, but to liberate a world fast falling to forces of tyranny.”\textsuperscript{66} The publication discusses the effects the war had on the United States, such as the creation of the G.I. Bill and emerging industries and technologies. The text goes on to explain that, “through the innovative Marshall Plan, the United States helped both its allies and former foes rebuild. America continued to play a strong leadership role in world arenas as peacetime life returned.” Additionally the memorial “reminds future generations that we must sometimes sacrifice for causes greater than ourselves” and “continues America’s story of striving for freedom and individual rights.”\textsuperscript{67}

Not only does the brochure advance the idea that Americans united behind the war effort in order to bring freedom to the world, but it also, like the memorial itself, evokes nostalgic thoughts of American military might and global dominance. While this furthers the common narrative that World War II was a fight between democracy and tyranny, the language used might also be related to the era in which the memorial was created. Although the planning and designing of the National World War II Memorial began in the late 1990s, the memorial was constructed and dedicated in a post-9/11 America. Americans looking for historical reassurances of the country’s benevolence and supremacy – two attributes that can often be at odds with each other – had to reach back to the Second World War for a possible example; the Korean War and the Vietnam War did not leave legacies of a clear American victory coupled with domestic unity. And the terror attacks of September 11 cast into question the idea of a dominant America, a nation whose economy, military, and culture were the envy of the world. Instead, the attacks left Americans feeling vulnerable and threatened. The National World War II Memorial, and the


\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
accompanying brochure produced by the National Park Service, allow for those sentiments of power, command, and altruism to be re-created and reimagined.

However, although no memorial can include a complete historical account of an individual, a war, or an era, it is striking that the National World War II Memorial and the brochure produced by the National Park Service both use language and imagery that largely glosses over the reality experienced by many people during World War II, specifically women, African Americans, Japanese Americans, and other minority groups. In an effort to promote the idea that Americans were the “good guys,” there is no mention anywhere of the discrimination, racism, and sexism in the work force, military, and American society faced by women and minorities. Nor are there any discussions or bas-relief panels depicting the relocation of thousands of Japanese and Japanese Americans to internment camps during the course of the war, or of the decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those aspects of American history are excluded from the memorial’s narrative so as to portray the United States in a more positive, noble, and heroic light.

In Ottawa, the National War Memorial is used as the primary national site of commemoration, indicating the government’s view that the site is central to the national narrative of military service, sacrifice, and honor. And in the beginning, it appears as if the public agreed with this sentiment, as seen in the site’s use as the staging ground for efforts to raise funds during World War II. Fundraisers attempted to link the ideals and history represented in the National War Memorial with the drive to support the Canadian soldiers who were yet again fighting a war in Europe. And this narrative, that the memorial is the physical embodiment of honoring Canadian soldiers, and their fight for freedom and liberty, is repeated in the government’s literature regarding the memorial. Although Veterans Affairs Canada does not produce brochures
similar to those published by America’s National Park Service, the agency’s website includes a considerable amount of information regarding the memorial’s history, elements, and design, as well as the symbolism and importance of the memorial to Canada and Canadian society. According to the Veterans Affairs Canada website, concerning the National War Memorial, “The very soul of the nation is here revealed.”

The narrative being conveyed by the National War Memorial has been slightly amended over the years. As previously described, the dates for World War II and the Korean War were added to the memorial’s pedestal in 1982, initially expanding the memorial’s scope of commemoration from solely World War I to all of the twentieth-century wars in which Canada had been involved. In 2000, when the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was repatriated and placed at the base of the memorial, the site was further imbued with a sense of reverence and an acknowledgement of the sacrifice made by members of the Canadian military. Confederation Square was again transformed with the completion of the Valiants Memorial in 2006, becoming a deeper, more involved site of memory, honoring significant individuals in Canada’s military history.

Nevertheless, the decision over how best to commemorate those who served and sacrificed in more recent conflicts calls into question the future of the site, and how the government intends the site to be viewed and understood by the public. A now-scrapped CAD$2.1 million Defence Department plan to incorporate a commemoration of the war in Afghanistan into the National War Memorial was unusual in a number of ways, perhaps helping to explain why it was not pursued. The proposal suggested not only to include the dates 2001-2011 to the pedestal, but also, according to one report, “called for the word Afghanistan” to be

added to the memorial\textsuperscript{69}; every other war is only represented by dates, and not words or names. What is more, the Defence Department’s plan would have also added an eternal flame to the monument site, but reports did not indicate where exactly on the site it would have been constructed. Regarding the official reasoning for mothballing the plan, according to a spokesman for Defence Minister Peter MacKay, “it is clearly inappropriate to commemorate a mission which has yet to be completed. When the last troops return home to their families at the conclusion of the mission, the full scope of Canada’s contributions in Afghanistan, including all the work of those who have sacrificed and fallen in the service of their country, will be appropriately recognized and commemorated.”\textsuperscript{70}

Despite the official explanation, delaying the official commemoration of Afghanistan elicits other debates surrounding commemorative policies in Ottawa, and what is or is not to be included in the national narrative of military sacrifice. As described in one of the articles regarding the postponement of the memorial plan, there are questions surrounding whether or not Afghanistan, “with 157 casualties qualifies to stand alongside the much larger sacrifices of earlier wars.”\textsuperscript{71} Another concern was raised that the plan excluded “those who died during the Cold War and on other missions since the Korean war.”\textsuperscript{72} These issues could have far-reaching consequences in determining Canada’s commemorative future. Will a war or conflict require a certain body count or level of destruction before it can be considered for inclusion on the National War Memorial’s pedestal? At what point will a war be deemed “worthy” of being added to the national narrative? What about other conflicts where Canadian soldiers served and

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{72} Canadian Press, “Debate needed on the inclusion of Afghan mission on war memorial, Legion.”
sacrificed? In 1982, when Canada added the dates for World War II and the Korean War to the memorial’s pedestal, it created the present scenario of picking and choosing which wars would be officially recognized on this national level. On a purely aesthetic matter, should the dates of Afghanistan, or any other war, be added to the National War Memorial, where would they be placed? The pedestal is crowded, with the dates for World War I on the front and back, and the dates for World War II and Korea on the sides of the pedestal, with each war flanking the archway, creating a visual balance. Would it be better if some other element were added to Confederation Square, such as a wall or marker, where dates or plaques acknowledging other wars could be located? Yet, by being separate from the actual National War Memorial, would these other conflicts be seen as “less than” or undervalued?

The Defence Department’s suggestion for adding an eternal flame to Confederation Square also raises some questions, and is a further indication that the ultimate goal for Canada’s military commemoration is undetermined and in a state of flux. Between the National War Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Valiants Memorial, the benches and explanatory plaques, and the proposed eternal flame, what more could be added to the site? How many other memorial markers, signifiers, or displays could be incorporated? When is a tipping point reached, at which time Confederation Square becomes a Canadian military statue park, a hodge-podge collection of memorials, their only common theme being war and sacrifice? Would these additions enhance the site, or would they cheapen the message that is attempting to be conveyed?

Both capital cities are at a crossroads concerning how best to acknowledge current, and future, wars. In Washington, the National Mall is considered a completed civic work of art, with no further additions allowed. The National World War II Memorial is one of the last memorials
to be constructed in this singular urban space, and the final monument built on the Mall’s main axis. Likewise, officials in Ottawa have experienced difficulties in determining how best to incorporate the war in Afghanistan into the National War Memorial. While the National Capital Commission has not declared Confederation Square to be closed, the site is getting crowded, and any possible additions or changes could alter the larger narrative that is being told.

In Washington and Ottawa, the war memorials are intended to be seen and used as spaces for reflection, discourse, and remembrance. Park rangers, NCC guides, and Honour Guards are on hand to regulate and monitor visitor behavior. America’s National World War II Memorial has been designed, and located on the National Mall in relation to existing monuments and memorials, in such a way as to reinforce and uphold the constructed narrative of unity, sacrifice, and liberty. The goal for Canada’s National War Memorial is much the same: a memorial honoring those who served and sacrificed for their country, located in a central, highly visible location. Yet for each site, existing in an urban environment, and becoming a part of the city’s fabric, has led to some deviation from the intended use and perception of either memorial. From being treated as a park or play area, to serving as the backdrop for group photos, to acts of vandalism and disrespect against the memorial, the public has not always treated the memorials in the manner their designers and governing agencies anticipated and have in mind.

In Washington, visitors interact with the National World War II Memorial in ways that seem to best suit their own needs and desires, with the site serving as either a photographic opportunity, a resting spot, or a symbol of a triumphal event in the country’s past. These uses overlap in ways not visible at other Washington memorials, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial or the Lincoln Memorial. On the other hand, in Ottawa, with the addition of the Honour Guards and temporary exhibits produced by the NCC, there has been a deliberate
attempt to implement a stronger sentimentality and solemnity to the site, drawing more attention to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, as well as the ideals of sacrifice, honor, and remembrance that are represented in the National War Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Whereas in Washington, the National Park Rangers allow visitors to dip their bare feet in the Rainbow Pool, or stage band concerts in the memorial plaza, in Ottawa there is an effort to re-establish Confederation Square as a sacred space separate from the everyday urban environment.

The final chapter will therefore assess the National World War II Memorial and National War Memorial in light of these differing meanings, interpretations, and ideas. The design of the memorials, the larger city and memorial landscape around them, and the ways in which the public approaches and encounters either site, when considered as a whole, reveal how each memorial strongly factors into the construction, representation, and dissemination of a national identity and cultural narrative.
CHAPTER IV – MEMORY IN NATIONAL IDENTITY:
CULTURE AND COMMEMORATION

The final chapter examines how the form and function of the National War Memorial and National World War II Memorial contribute to the construction of a respective national identity. The chapter reviews the position of specific wars within each country’s popular culture and public memory, and demonstrates that the memorials to those wars reflect and amplify those sentiments.

When examining either the National World War II Memorial or the National War Memorial, a valid series of questions revolves around the idea of what is learned at each site. What sort of history is actually being conveyed through granite and marble? What messages and histories are being transmitted about the memorial, about the event and people being commemorated? What is learned about either capital city? About each nation? About the citizenry at large, and what the population thinks of themselves? What is the role war plays in the construction of a national identity? According to Jim Zucchero, “A transcendent idea such as ‘national identity’ seeks, craves, demands lofty words and ideals on which to fasten and feed if it is to sustain itself, and the theatre of war is surely one of the few stages that is capable of providing the background, the scene, the action and the emotional pitch required to sustain such a weighty and, some would say, unlikely concept.”

Memory and memorialization are complex issues. When battlefields are commemorated, it is because of the momentous struggle and sacrifice the land witnessed; people fought and died on that ground. However, war memorials, particularly those under review here – national memorials set in urban, national capitals – are far removed from the physical locations and settings being remembered. The land on which they are situated does not hold the same history or memory as the battlefields, in Europe or in Asia, which are commemorated. Therefore, the

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question then involves who or what is memorialized, why and how that memorial takes shape, the scale of loss deemed worthy of commemoration, and who is given the authority to make those determinations. This final chapter will critically analyze the form and function of the two memorials and examine the role each structure plays, not only in the urban environment, but also in terms of its relation and position in the larger national psyche. Moreover, the chapter will place these questions and related ideas within not just existing scholarly literature, but also within popular culture and media.

Evolving and Conforming Meanings

For all the similarities between the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial, between Confederation Boulevard and the National Mall, between Ottawa and Washington, there are still distinct differences between the memorials, their locations, and the city in which they are found. The National World War II Memorial is a more static memorial in a static environment. It is a memorial built to honor only one war – nearby are other memorials for other wars – and its location on the National Mall is part of the area that is considered “closed” to further expansion or construction. In contrast, Canada’s National War Memorial, while initially built to honor veterans of World War I, has been modified to also commemorate World War II and the Korean War, and there is a persistent debate regarding whether or not other conflicts, such as Afghanistan, should also be included for recognition. Moreover, the National War Memorial is not only a part of the ever-evolving Confederation Boulevard, but its very site within Ottawa, Confederation Square, has been modified multiple times since the turn of the twenty-first century. The addition of both the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Valiants Memorial suggest that the nature of Confederation Square is fluid and open to change. As a result, the meaning of the National War Memorial can be amended and rewritten as other
memorials and monuments are added in the near vicinity, and as any other dates are added to the memorial’s pedestal.

Brian Osborne has described Canada as a “nationalizing-state,” rather than a nation-state or state-nation, because, “While the [other] two categories imply some sense of achieved cohesion, the term ‘nationalizing-state’ is intended to convey the sense of the state’s ongoing involvement in identity-building projects.”2 This concept is evident in the ways in which the Canadian government uses and alters the National War Memorial. The changes made to the memorial and its environs since the 1939 dedication demonstrate a continuing effort to define and shape Canadian military history and sacrifice. As Osborne continues, in a nationalizing-state, “identities are constantly being re-constituted according to the needs of the present, through selective appropriation, manipulation, and even imaginative invention: the objective is always some ideologically driven sense of a desired future.”3

Nevertheless, the National War Memorial, with the years of war displayed on its pedestal, is currently freezing Canadian war commemoration in the first half of the twentieth century, making it difficult to include more recent wars or conflicts. Likewise, it also excludes any wars involving Canadian forces that took place prior to 1914, including the War of 1812 and the Boer War. This is of particular note due to the bicentennial of the start of the War of 1812, and the Canadian government’s focus on that anniversary. Discussions are taking place regarding plans for celebrations, commemorative events, and the potential construction of a new memorial to the war, including one in Ottawa.

These discussions, however, are occurring under great scrutiny, and in a deliberate fashion. While there is a desire, and for Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his government, a

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3 Ibid., 152.
compelling need, to highlight the power and noble exploits of Canada’s military history, any attempt to make a full-throated exhibition of Canadian victory and success is dampened by the fact that the opponent in the war was the United States, now Canada’s strongest ally. Any memorial, reenactment, or celebration must be designed in such a way so as to minimize any anti-American attitudes or posturing. As noted in *The Globe and Mail*, “While [the 1812 commemorations] will celebrate historical icons such as Isaac Brock and Laura Secord, the government is preparing to play up the lack of relative conflict with the United States since. In more than one news release on remembering the war, the Tories also mention ‘two centuries of peaceful co-existence with the United States’ that followed.” As a result, any memorial might likely follow the same design parameters as those created for the National War Memorial, in that the memorial should not “glorify war or suggest the arrogance of a conqueror. While the spirit of victory is essential it should be expressed so as to not only immortalize Canada’s defenders, but convey a feeling of gratitude that out of this great conflict a new hope has sprung for future prosperity under peaceful conditions.”

Taken in that light, a Canadian memorial to the War of 1812 would not foreground the burning of the White House, but rather how the war played a large part towards Canadian unity and Confederation. Canada is thus choosing to remember the past in a way that conforms to present-day political needs. Altering or restraining how an event is memorialized is evocative of James Loewen’s assertion that memorials exist across a number of temporal moments. In *Lies Across America*, Loewen states:

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Every historic site tells two different stories about two different eras in the past. One is its manifest narrative – the event or person heralded in its text or artwork. The other is the story of its erection or preservation. The images on our monuments and the language on our markers reflect the attitudes and ideas of the time when Americans put them up, often many years after the event. Americans have typically adjusted the visible past on the landscape to make what we remember conform to the needs of the time.\textsuperscript{6}

Loewen later adds to this a “third age that comes into play whenever one visits a historic site – the viewer’s own era.”\textsuperscript{7}

Loewen’s claim that history, as writ onto the built landscape, has been shaped and molded in such a way as to meet the present needs of a society, is proven true when examining these memorials. As previously described, the National World War II Memorial highlights the ways in which America was either victimized, with panels depicting news of the sudden attack on Pearl Harbor and American Prisoners of War, or unified and empowered, seen in the panels displaying American industrial strength and military might. Any atrocities or controversial acts committed by Americans, most notably the nuclear bombing of Japan, are omitted. Moreover, one of the quotes engraved on the memorial wall, from General George C. Marshall, reads “We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle our flag will be recognized throughout the world as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of overwhelming force on the other.” The memorial thus positions World War II as a “Good War” and, in a post-9/11 America, reaffirms the idea that the United States is a benevolent, righteous nation that only goes to war when it is warranted; but, if the country is compelled to go to war, does so with a powerful and awesome military.

Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott evoked the framework laid out by Loewen when they added a fourth temporal moment, “that of the interventions and deployments

\textsuperscript{6} James Loewen, \textit{Lies Across America} (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 36.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 40.
in and of the place between its construction and the visitor’s present.”

Additionally, “The ‘production’ of memory places is ongoing. Their rhetorical invention is not limited to simply their initial construction. We must attend as well to the intervening uses, deployments, circulations, and rearticulations in the time between the establishment of a place and our current practices in and of the place.” The authors point to the Lincoln Memorial, and how visitors to that site not only reflect on Abraham Lincoln, but also the site’s usage during the Civil Rights Movement, notably serving as the stage for Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech (an event likewise commemorated by the National Park Service on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial).

Building from these points, that a memory place is also a reflection of how it has been used since its construction, it can be seen that visitors to the National World War II Memorial do not just reflect on the war itself, but also how the memory of that war fits into their pre-existing notion of that war, and what it meant for America and Americans. Moreover, after observing how the public largely interacts with the memorial space, it becomes clear that visitors will also incorporate personal memories into their interpretation of the memorial; the high school students who posed for pre-prom pictures at the memorial might forever connect the memorial and World War II, in some strange manner, with a high school dance. Due to the relative newness of the National World War II Memorial – having been dedicated less than a decade ago – it has not had a chance to serve as the stage for any larger, national-scale event, similar to Martin Luther King’s speech. However, with its central location on the National Mall, and World War II’s central position in American memory and identity, it is not out of the question that an event of

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9 Ibid., 31.
similar magnitude or historical importance might occur at the National World War II Memorial in the future, thereby adding to the levels of memory and remembrance encountered at the memorial site.

Visitors to the National War Memorial and Confederation Square encounter a site that has been steadily physically evolving over the past thirty years. First, the dates for World War II and the Korean War were added to the pedestal so as to honor veterans of later wars. With the addition of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Valiants Memorial, a more complete display of Canadian war efforts has thus been created. Individuals, both famous and literally unknown and anonymous, and multiple wars are now subjects of commemoration, meeting the demands and desires of the Canadian public.

What is more, the National War Memorial has long been evolving in a conceptual manner. Dedicated just months before the renewed outbreak of hostilities in Europe, the National War Memorial would serve as a site of military support and aid during World War II, a visible reminder of Canada’s earlier wartime efforts. With the addition of other war years to the pedestal, the memorial represented more than just one war, becoming a site of memory for later generations of Canadians. The repatriation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier transformed the space into a more solemn site, one that not only housed the figurative memories and remains of those lost to war, but now, also the actual remains, having become a grave site.

For Canadians and other visitors to the National War Memorial, personal memories can also be associated with their perceptions of the site. Whereas America’s National World War II Memorial has yet to serve as the location for any massive, national event, Canada’s National Remembrance Day Ceremony takes place at, and is televised nationwide from, the war memorial, linking the day, its implications, and the site in the public sphere. The National Capital
Commission and Confederation Boulevard have further indicated the importance of the National War Memorial to the story of Canada, helping to make the site an important destination for Ottawa citizens and tourists. And the popularity of posing for pictures with Honour Guards posted at the memorial could mean that visitors later associate the National War Memorial with their picture of a stern-faced soldier in the formal bearskin hat.

Layers of Memory

The construction of any addition to the existing built environment is worth taking note of for a number of reasons. The cost, effort, time, and discussion that go into such an undertaking are not inconsiderable; why, then, do people pursue such a course? What motives drive them to exert their energies to have a statue or monument built? What event, group, or individual inspires such an endeavor? Deciding on, and securing, a site for a memorial is almost as important as what is actually built; a monument is not effective if the public is not readily aware of the monument’s location or existence. Moreover, they are meant to last; James Loewen has argued, “What one generation puts on the landscape thus becomes a force imprisoning the minds of the generations that follow.”10 When the event or individual commemorated is of national importance, and the location is in a national capital, the significance is magnified. The resulting memorial is layered in meanings, including the actual subject of the memorial – and the personal, national, and global significances of that subject; the physical location within the city – and that site’s history and social relevance; and the cultural cachet connected to the capital city itself.

War memorials serve a distinct function as sites of both mourning and celebration, presenting cautionary tales along with virtuous narratives. The memorials are also the physical manifestation of a number of cultural concepts and theories. They add to the memoryscape found in a national capital, strengthening the “imagined community” of a national citizenry, and

10 Loewen, 28.
employ the symbols, histories, and mythos associated with “invented traditions.” Eric Hobsbawm defines an “invented tradition” as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past.”\(^\text{11}\) Thus, war memorials are not meant to just honor the past, but also to create links and “continuity” with the past, oftentimes in an attempt to reassert earlier values and sentiments in present-day society.

The idea of layered meanings is central to the idea of a memoryscape, a concept coined by Mark Nuttall, which he defines as a “specific, bounded localised area…which links persons, community and landscape and the contemporary, historical and mythical activities, events and stories that invest the environment with meaning.”\(^\text{12}\) According to this theory, not only do individuals remember physical locations, but they also incorporate those memories with the existing history, as well as their own lived experiences, of those places. As it applies to this project, the idea of memoryscape is readily evident when visitors to the National Mall, for example, do not simply tour the area, but also consider Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech given from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, or remember loved ones lost in World War II, the Korean War, or the Vietnam War. Similarly, when an individual visits the National War Memorial, they might not just think about Canada’s participation in World War I, or the effects that that war had on the nation, but also later wars of the twentieth century, and any personal connection they might have to those events. Or they might be reminded of times when they had

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watched the National Remembrance Day Ceremony on television. Or they might reflect on war and politics, with Parliament Hill serving as a visual backdrop to the National War Memorial. Or, if they had been following Confederation Boulevard and had recently visited the Peacekeepers Monument, they might consider the contrasting ideas of war and peace, and how both have shaped Canada’s, and Canadians’, character and identity. As Nuttall’s concept of a memoryscape explains, the visitor might ruminate on any and all of these possibilities. It is these varied, layered, and at times personal meanings, these memoryscapes, which add to the complexity of a memorial site, especially when it is located in a national capital city.

These layered meanings, coupled with the important role differing wars played in either nation’s evolution, are further bolstered by the actions of each populace. Remembrance Day ceremonies in Canada are national affairs, with poppies worn on lapels in the days and weeks leading to November 11th, culminating in a nationally televised, and heavily-attended, ceremony at the National War Memorial. The legacy of World War I weighs heavily in Canadian society and culture, with frequent references to such critical battles as Vimy Ridge, Passchendaele, and the Somme appearing in film, song, literature, and architecture.

In American culture, the celebration and remembrance of World War II has become an industry all its own. Erika Doss has dubbed this interest “war porn,” describing it as “the general fetishization of war itself on every conceivable level of American society.”13 For Doss, war porn has become “the great American cultural expression, not as a form of sexual fantasy and social transgression but as an instrument of national consensus, conformity, and normalcy.”14 A number of books, television mini-series, films, and video games recounting the efforts of the “Greatest Generation” have been produced since the end of the war, an amount seemingly

14 Ibid., 220.
increasing in the past two decades. This outpouring of acknowledgment, appreciation, and commercialization has accelerated as the World War II generation ages and passes away in larger numbers. Much like the time crunch to construct the National World War II Memorial before those who served were all gone, so too is there a sense that society must make its best effort to fully recognize the various experiences and sacrifices made by those who lived and served during the war while those individuals are still alive.

**War and Popular Culture**

In 1992, Stephen Ambrose published *Band of Brothers*, a book recounting the experiences of the members of E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne Division of the U.S. Army. The book followed the soldiers through basic training, the invasion of Normandy, Operation Market Garden, the Battle of the Bulge, encountering Nazi concentration camps, capturing Hitler’s Eagle’s Nest retreat, and the end of the war. Ambrose’s book can be seen as the starting point for all the World War II cultural nostalgia to follow in the ensuing years. Ambrose would follow up with *D-Day, June 6, 1944*, published in 1994, and again, three years later, with the release of *Citizen Soldiers*, with each book revisiting World War II’s European Theatre of operations and often focusing on the individual efforts of American soldiers. In 1998, Tom Brokaw published *The Greatest Generation*, in which he coined the well-known phrase when he boldly wrote that the World War II generation “is the greatest generation any society has ever produced.”15 That year also saw the release of two films that further solidified the drive to venerate and celebrate the World War II generation: the Steven Spielberg-Tom Hanks collaboration “Saving Private Ryan” (with Ambrose as an historical consultant), and the Pacific Theatre-focused “The Thin Red Line.” “Saving Private Ryan” was particularly heralded for its

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opening scene depicting, in graphic, gritty detail, the American invasion of Omaha Beach on D-Day.

Ambrose would also spearhead the efforts to build the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, which opened its doors on June 6, 2000 – the 56th anniversary of D-Day; the museum would later expand its scope to include the larger war effort and be renamed the National World War II Museum in 2003. Around this same period, Ambrose published *The Wild Blue* (2001), a book about American World War II bomber pilots and crews in Europe. On Memorial Day 2001, the Michael Bay-Jerry Bruckheimer film “Pearl Harbor” was released in theaters, partly in an attempt to link the film with the upcoming 60th anniversary of the attacks; the film, and the event it portrayed, took on even more significance when the September 11 attacks occurred months later. Additionally, James Bradley’s *Flags of Our Fathers* was published (2000), recounting the flag raising on Iwo Jima so famously “captured” on film by Joe Rosenthal, and the *Medal of Honor* video game was first released (1999), along with upwards of ten sequels throughout the early 2000s, in which players could repeatedly “experience” World War II through their game consoles.

Another video game series, *Call of Duty*, hit the shelves in 2003, and included three later installments in which the player “fought” in World War II. In 2006, Bradley’s book was turned into a film of the same name, and released almost in conjunction with its sequel, “Letters from Iwo Jima,” with the first film examining the Battle of Iwo Jima from the American standpoint, and the sequel looking at the battle from the view of the Japanese soldiers. In 2010, HBO, Steven Spielberg, and Tom Hanks worked together to recount the American experience in World War II through the miniseries “The Pacific,” which looked at U.S. Marines serving in the Pacific Theatre.
Most notable, however, was the creation of the HBO miniseries “Band of Brothers,” based largely off of Ambrose’s book. Spielberg and Hanks would again team up, both serving as executive producers on the series which also included interviews with the actual veterans depicted on screen. The much-anticipated and heavily advertised big-budget production premiered on September 9, 2001, to an audience of millions; less than 48 hours later, the 9/11 terrorist attacks would cast American military supremacy and the idea of fighting a “good” or noble war in a new light. HBO went so far as to “halt the mini-series’s marketing campaign immediately out of sensitivity to the effect such images might have.”

In the wake of 9/11, a day that politicians and commentators referred to as a latter-day Pearl Harbor, World War II would repeatedly serve as a reference point and benchmark for “appropriate” levels of patriotism, military reaction, and national unity. Writing in *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* about the tendency of the Bush Administration to frame the 9/11 attacks and subsequent War on Terror through the use of World War II analogies, historian David Hoogland Noon noted, “it offered a compelling reaffirmation of national purpose by characterizing the attacks as an opportunity for younger Americans – those who could not possibly have fought in World War II, but who are quite capable of imagining it – to fulfill their role in a drama in which, as Denise Bostdorff writes, a ‘blameless, exceptional community…had been attacked because of its goodness.’”

Following the 9/11 attacks, young Americans who grew up watching *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers*, and playing *Medal of Honor* and *Call of Duty* – the first-person shooter video games in which they “fought” in World War II – were now being told that this was

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their moment to step up, that September 11 was “a moment in which the character of the World War II generation was transmitted to its successors.” Unlike their parents’ generation, whose “moment” had been clouded by the uncertainty and dissent surrounding the Vietnam War, the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon reaffirmed for later generations that they were taking part in a “good” war, with all the accompanying narratives that had been attached to World War II over time.

In Canada, the level to which the country’s involvement in war is portrayed in popular culture is less than that found in the United States, yet this may be due in part to the overall pervasiveness of American culture in Canada. Nevertheless, Passchendaele, the 2008 film directed by Paul Gross, which portrayed the Battle of Passchendaele and Canada’s success, won the 2009 Genie Award for Best Picture and was a box-office success. In “The Recruiting Sergeant,” a song by Great Big Sea, the popular folk-rock band from Newfoundland, the story is told of the hundreds of Newfoundlanders who enlisted to fight in World War I and never returned. And a number of the Heritage Minutes, a series of minute-long historical short films which air during television commercials and film previews, detailing significant events in Canadian history and produced by the Historica Dominion Institute, focus on Vimy Ridge, John McCrae and In Flanders Fields, and other accounts from the Great War.

Possibly the most visible and prevalent representation of World War I in Canadian culture can be seen in the nation’s currency. In 2004, the Royal Canadian Mint issued a commemorative quarter that featured a red poppy inlaid on a maple leaf. And the Canadian twenty-dollar bill, redesigned by the Bank of Canada in early 2012, now prominently includes an illustration of the Canadian National Vimy Memorial on its reverse side.

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18 Noon, 358.
Symbolizing War

Despite the reverence bestowed upon the World War II generation, at the National World War II Memorial those who actually served in the war take a backseat to the ideas of victory, national unity, and strength, displayed through the state pillars, wheat and oak wreaths, and other symbols scattered throughout the site. The wall of gold stars representing those who died in the effort becomes another feature of the memorial, similar to the inscribed battles, theatres of operation, and notable quotes. Human figures, and any actual depiction of wartime service and sacrifice, are only found in the bas-relief panels bordering the east entrance, and many of those are placed either too high or too low to be adequately viewed. Contrastingly, the most prominent component of the National War Memorial is the grouping of figures passing through the memorial archway; men and women, representing different groups and factions within Canada, their faces, when visible, showing the strain and hardship brought about by war.

Consider, even, the very name of the National World War II Memorial, in contrast to the other nearby war memorials on the National Mall: the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The memorials to the latter wars nominally reference those who actually fought in either war – the veterans – whereas, as based on its title, the National World War II Memorial only commemorates war itself. Although the memorial is supposedly meant to recognize the “Greatest Generation,” very few representations of this group even appear at the site. Whereas the Vietnam Veterans Memorial primarily consists of the inscribed names of war dead, and the Korean War Veterans Memorial features life-size figures and a wall etched with actual images of American servicemen, the National World War II Memorial displays over 4,000 gold stars, each representing approximately one hundred American war dead. Rather, where the
fighting took place, military and political leaders, and the United States – and the literal united states – are the more prominent aspects of the memorial site.

It is also worth noting that, for a memorial that posits itself as commemorating a singular event, a war, and not necessarily those veterans who fought in the war, the National World War II Memorial does not readily recognize or acknowledge any other countries – Allied or Axis – who also fought in the war. The memorial “erases the global dimensions of the war: framed by the states of the Union and its territorial acquisitions, inscribed with the names of Asian and European battles but not those of America’s allies or its foes, the National World War II Memorial implies that the U.S. single-handedly won a war against some unknown enemy.”

With its emphasis on victory and honor, the National World War II Memorial does not, and cannot, adequately serve as a potential site for protest. The overall message conveyed by the memorial is that the Greatest Generation went to war to make the world safe for democracy and freedom. The actual toll taken by that fighting is largely downplayed, as are any historical facts that run counter to the noble history being told. Moreover, because the memorial is so deeply linked to the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial – and the ideals those men stand for in the public mindset – the memorial is also connected to the ideas of nation-building and American exceptionalism, and thus to question or protest against or at the memorial is to question what many believe to be the very foundation of American society and culture.

In Ottawa, the National War Memorial, like the National World War II Memorial, does not acknowledge the allied forces Canadian soldiers fought alongside, yet neither does it list the fields of battle on which those soldiers served. Rather, the National War Memorial at least provides an acknowledgement of the cost of war, that war is not all heroic deeds and selfless acts of bravery. The memorial also does not explicitly and directly link the sacrifices made during the

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19 Doss, 216.
First and Second World Wars and the Korean War with the actions of John A. MacDonald or Wilfrid Laurier in creating and uniting the Dominion of Canada. Instead, through the additions to Confederation Square and the creation of Confederation Boulevard, the National War Memorial is associated with sacrifice and notable individuals – as found in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Valiants Memorial – and to the broader ideas of Canadian nationalism and identity, seen in the inclusion of the Parliament buildings, the Peacekeepers Monument, the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, and other buildings and monuments along the route.

Symbolizing More Than War

The difference is subtle yet crucial, and factors into how visitors – both foreign and domestic – can perceive the memorials and, subsequently, the city and nation. As previously described, the National World War II Memorial is also a part of the National Mall, bounded as it is by such iconic buildings as the U.S. Capitol and White House, the Smithsonian museums, and the various monuments and memorials found throughout the area. However, in Washington, the National World War II Memorial not only prominently features an announcement stone outright declaring the memorial’s connection to the legacies of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, but the site of the memorial, in such a prime location on the National Mall, is indicative of the sentiments surrounding World War II in American history and culture. A proposal to place the memorial off of the Mall’s main axis was deemed insufficient; as J. Carter Brown, Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, stated, “The magnitude of World War II and the ideals for which it was fought necessitated a memorial site that was more prominent than the sites for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Korean War Veterans Memorial.”

Memorial has thus become a centerpiece of the National Mall, itself a centerpiece in the nation’s capital.

While the National War Memorial in Ottawa is also in a central location, at a site favored over others – such as Major Hill Park or across the Ottawa River in Gatineau – considered less impactful, the city has grown around the memorial site in Confederation Square. It would be a reach to say that Ottawa has grown organically, but the city lacks the same rigid planning design as found in Washington. That being the case, Confederation Boulevard travels throughout the capital region in a winding fashion, with the National War Memorial recognized as just one of seven planned landmark nodes along the route. The narrative surrounding the National War Memorial, and the one presented to visitors, is that it is one element of a larger, composite Canadian national identity, unlike the National World War II Memorial, which is positioned as recognizing an event seen as critical to, but also a natural evolution of, an American sense of nationalism.

The timing of each memorial’s design and construction must also be accounted for, considering that the National War Memorial was dedicated just over two decades following the conclusion of World War I, a mere seventy-two years after Canadian Confederation, and over a decade prior to the publication of Jacques Gréber’s 1950 Plan for the National Capital. In comparison, construction on the National World War II Memorial in Washington was finished almost six decades after the war was over, and in a national capital that had had a design plan in place, in some manner – from the L’Enfant Plan to the McMillan Plan – since the city’s early days. The National War Memorial was built to remember and honor service in a war that was still a recent memory, for a population in which many were still living with the scars – both physical and emotional – of the war. The National World War II Memorial, on the other hand,
originated in an era in which the war was viewed through the golden lenses of time and Hollywood fiction. The memorial was built to honor the “Greatest Generation” before they all passed away, and designed in a post-9/11, post-Saving Private Ryan America.

Moreover, as Erika Doss has noted, the National World War II Memorial is itself constructed around the false premise that World War II, and those who served in the war, had “never been honored in American memorial culture.” This notion that the war and its veterans were not commemorated exists in an interesting paradox with another impression of the World War II generation, one perpetuated by Tom Brokaw and others, that this group of people was selfless and asked for nothing in return for their service. In no way do I question the motives or sincerity, or sacrifice, of those who answered their nation’s call to duty. However, whereas the campaign to raise funds for the memorial declared that it was “time to say thank you,” Doss lists a number of ways in which veterans had already been commemorated, often times immediately after the war’s conclusion, with local and national memorials in the form of war materiel, museums, statues and plaques, military cemeteries, and service memorials, as well as living memorials – civic buildings, parks, and other additions and improvements to the nation’s infrastructure.

The area immediately surrounding the National World War II Memorial also hints at one of the ways in which the public is meant to understand and perceive the memorial. Home Front Drive, itself named in a nod to the war effort and experience, is an access road off of 17th street, providing a place for tour buses to park and discharge their passengers. For these visitors to the National World War II Memorial, restrooms are conveniently located right as they step off the bus. The site’s designers clearly understood that the memorial would be a popular tourist

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21 Doss, 191.
22 Ibid., 191-92.
attraction, and accordingly included facilities to meet their needs. There appears to be a trend to provide certain services to tourists visiting the Mall, as there are now refreshment stands and souvenir stores nearby the Korean War Veterans Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. However, these other buildings were added after the memorials were built and are either far enough away, or concealed by trees, so as to be fairly removed from the larger memorial site. In the case of the National World War II Memorial, however, the restrooms and information center were designed in conjunction with the memorial, and are thus more integrated with the site. It is this overt recognition of memorial-as-tourist-attraction that characterizes the National World War II Memorial, setting it apart from the other memorials on the Mall.

In Canada, the National War Memorial, along with the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and, more broadly, the whole of Confederation Square, has been said to be “not only emerging as the centre of Ottawa, but also as the symbolic centre of an imagined and performed Canada.”

Additionally, Jim Zucchero has written:

The fact that the Memorial was unveiled to recognize specific past events and has since come to symbolize the sacrifices of later generations of veterans who served in other conflicts, suggests that its original meaning has been added to, that it has somehow metamorphosed as Canada became involved in successive great conflicts, and that it participates, in this way, in a national evolution that nevertheless remains true to the first principles of ‘peace and freedom.’ The Memorial, installed in a prominent public space in 1939, has now become an element of the landscape that is absorbed and reflected, almost in an organic way, by the society in which it exists.

Similarly, the National War Memorial was not constructed so as to herald Canada as a nation that had gone to war and emerged an immodest victor, cowing the world with its might. Instead, built in an era in which World War I was still a recent memory, and in a country whose citizens were still very much dealing with the after-effects of that tragic war, the National War Memorial was not intended to be a monument to victory, but rather to recognize the sacrifice of the fallen and to serve as a reminder of the promise of peace.

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24 Zucchero.
Memorial portrays a military, and a populace, that took action when called upon, but by the end were fatigued and mainly looking to return to their lives.

In *Death So Noble*, Jonathan Vance describes the impact World War I has had on Canadian nationalism and memory, and the ways in which the memorials built to commemorate the fallen reflected these influences. As Vance writes, “Only the memory of the Great War could breathe life into Canada, giving birth to a national consciousness that would carry the country to the heights of achievement.”\(^{25}\) According to Vance, the reason why World War I could have such an effect was due to a number of factors. Most critically, “Canada’s memory of the war conferred upon those four years a legacy, not of despair, aimlessness, and futility, but of promise, certainty, and goodness. It assured Canadians that the war had been a just one, fought to defend Christianity and Western civilization, and that Canada’s sons and daughters had done well by their country and would not be forgotten for their sacrifices.”\(^{26}\) With these meanings applied to the war, that the war had been fought “not just as a defence of good or right, but as a defence of humanity and civilization,” survivors and family members of the dead could find some justification in what many were already seeing as a potentially needless slaughter of human life.\(^{27}\)

Moreover, the First World War was increasingly held out as providing important lessons in Canadian citizenship and the duty citizens had to each other, to their country, and more crucially, to the legacy of those who did not return from the battlefield. Vance illustrates the ways in which these lessons were transmitted, writing:

The memory of the war could act as a citizenship primer for children and immigrants, providing a means of Canadianization unlike any other. It could even reconcile the

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\(^{26}\) Ibid., 266.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., 27.
seemingly unreconcilable and forge the basis of unity between Canada’s founding peoples. In doing so, the myth of the war would achieve what Confederation had not yet been able to do, for one simple reason: Confederation was merely a political incident. The Great War was a national force.\textsuperscript{28}

History has shown that World War I did not necessarily heal all wounds and animosities between Canada’s Francophone and Anglophone populations, and was not a salve for long-held grievances originating with the Conquest. Nevertheless, at the time, it was seen as an event that had the potential to achieve such lofty aims and hopes.

As such, it is clear that the National War Memorial is viewed as symbolic not only of Canada, but also of its people and culture, one that has grown and evolved over the years. As declared in a video produced by the National Capital Commission, “In the middle of a busy city [the National War Memorial] quietly evokes our history.”\textsuperscript{29} The National War Memorial encapsulates the idea of Canada as a nation that does not seek out conflict, but answers the call to duty when so presented with the task. However, the memorial does not provide any lessons of Canada’s actual involvement in war; missing are accounts of battles or names of the fallen. Although the NCC has created exhibits providing additional information about war and remembrance, they are temporary, and not a permanent installation at the memorial site. Moreover, while World War I remains the central subject matter of the memorial, World War II and the Korean War, having been added to the memorial via their dates, have thus been folded into the narrative presented by the memorial. Any messy or inconvenient aspects of those wars are thereby minimized and eliminated entirely, with the focus returning to one of peace and freedom achieved by a battle-weary, humble populace, one that presents itself as not seeking glory or desiring to lord a victory over its foes. The National War Memorial also serves a dual

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 227.
function by tacitly symbolizing the freedoms enjoyed by Canadians, and the costs incurred to secure those freedoms, while also acknowledging the sad reality of today’s society, that war will never be truly eliminated and losses will always be suffered.

With both male and female figures featured moving through the archway, a kilted soldier representing the twenty-eight Scottish-Canadian regiments who fought in the war, and the possibility that another of the figures “might well represent one of the 3,500 native Canadians who served in the war overseas,” an attempt has been made to somewhat write Canada’s multiculturalism into the National War Memorial.30 It is an open, apparent display of diversity for a nation that now proudly publicizes and nurtures its multiculturalism, with federal and provincial departments and policies in place devoted to the principle.

Likewise, the National World War II Memorial, when it features human figures at all – namely in the bas-relief panels – does include women and African Americans. However, the panels also reflect America’s more troubled racial and gendered history. African Americans are not shown as soldiers or airmen in battle, but instead in the crowd during a war bond drive or as individuals enlisting in the military and swearing an oath of service. Women are presented slightly more prominently, with two panels solely dedicated to them; one panel shows women involved in the construction of aircraft, while another panel displays women in the military, preparing to board a military personnel carrier. Both instances, however, demonstrate the marginalization of either group, with the majority of the panels showing white men fighting and sacrificing during the war; no other visible minority groups appear in the bas-relief panels.

In terms of the actual human cost of the war, at some point since 2010, a sign was added to the National World War II Memorial, placed in front of the Freedom Wall. The sign, titled

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“The Price of Freedom,” explains, “Freedom Wall holds 4,048 gold stars. Each gold star represents one hundred American service personnel who died or remain missing in the war. The 405,399 American dead and missing from World War II are second only to the loss of more than 620,000 Americans during our Civil War.”\(^{31}\) For over six years, since its dedication, the Freedom Wall lacked any sort of description, leaving it to National Park Rangers or guidebooks to shed light on so critical an aspect of the memorial. With the inclusion of the sign, not only is the Freedom Wall finally given a clear purpose, but it also highlights the importance and significance of World War II, pointing out the high cost of lives incurred by the war effort and the high ranking of this loss when compared to other American conflicts.

Beyond these aspects of the memorial, and as previously discussed, the National World War II Memorial largely concerns itself with the uniting of the American states and territories to win the war, and the eventual emergence of the country as a superpower in the wake of a global struggle. Omitted, though, are the less noble tactics taken to secure such a victory. Instead, American involvement in World War II is filtered through a nostalgic lens. The panels show American citizens learning of the attack on Pearl Harbor, volunteering for duty and preparing for war by building weaponry and vehicles, fighting in significant battles and theatres, such as Normandy and D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge, and the jungle warfare of the Pacific theater, and finally, celebrating the war’s end on V-J Day. The hazards of war are on display, such as the dead and wounded soldiers in the Normandy Beach Landing and Amphibious Landing (Pacific Theatre) panels, the panel depicting a field burial of war dead, or the panel showing the liberation of a Prisoner of War camp, with emaciated prisoners, some missing limbs or wearing slings, gratefully thanking their rescuers.

\(^{31}\) There is no explanation as to why the math is incorrect. If each star represents 100 dead or missing Americans, and there were almost 405,400 personnel who fit this description, there should be six more stars on the wall, totaling 4,054.
Nevertheless, due to the overwhelming amount of media representations of World War II – the movies, mini-series, video games, and other cultural artifacts – many of the panels seem to just rehash the common narrative of the war. Visitors to the memorial do not necessarily learn anything new about the war, but instead simply have their pre-existing awareness of what had happened during the war, and what they have “learned” by watching movies and television programs, reinforced. As far as the National World War II Memorial is concerned, Americans are not meant to critically analyze wartime experiences beyond, for the most part, the noble, good, and iconic imagery that has become associated with the war. The memorial promotes the idea of an America filled with honorable men and women who only went to war when necessary, fighting a war with clear demarcations between friend and foe, between good and evil.

**Moral Elevation and the Virtuous Memorial**

When analyzing the significance memorials play in the creation and reaffirmation of a national identity, the concept of moral elevation must be taken into consideration. As defined by professor of psychology Jonathan Haidt, “elevation” is an emotion “elicited by acts of virtue or moral beauty; it causes warm, open feelings in the chest and it motivates people to behave more virtuously themselves.”

Haidt pulls from history to support this theory, quoting Thomas Jefferson who wrote:

> [E]very thing is useful which contributes to fix us in the principles and practice of virtue. When any…act of charity or of gratitude, for instance, is presented either to our sight or imagination, we are deeply impressed with its beauty and feel a strong desire in ourselves of doing charitable and grateful acts also. On the contrary when we see or read of any atrocious deed, we are disgusted with its deformity and conceive an abhorrence of vice. Now every emotion of this kind is an exercise of our virtuous dispositions; and dispositions of the mind, like limbs of the body, acquire strength by exercise.

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With the writings of America’s third president as supporting evidence, Haidt states “It is also a basic fact about human beings that we are easily and strongly moved by the altruism of others.”\textsuperscript{34} Likewise, in the midst of World War II, at the celebration of the bicentennial of Thomas Jefferson’s birth, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter made a speech in which he not only evoked the names and memory of Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson, but also asserted “we come to sacred shrines and celebrate the permanent leaders of a nation not to vaunt new ideas but to draw strength from the past…Strength to endure comes from confidence, and confidence is rooted in faith. But faith is not self-generated. It is moral energy stored up in the past.”\textsuperscript{35}

With certain war memorials serving as such open reminders, displays, and at times, celebrations, of altruism and virtue, they can likewise serve to further the ideas of moral elevation amongst a population. For example, when people visit the National World War II Memorial, they are confronted with ideas of sacrifice and unity, with engravings that honor those who served on both the battlefield and the home front, and by the notion of a country that “came to liberate, not to conquer, to restore freedom and to end tyranny.” The memorial thus becomes a physical manifestation of a grand virtuous act and era in America’s history, and particularly in a post-9/11 United States, can reassert or reawaken similar feelings in visitors. The memorial is transformed into a tool by which visitors can “exercise” and strengthen their emotions and beliefs concerning gratitude, patriotism, and national unity.

Haidt also discusses physical contact or proximity, as it concerns elevation, in that “elevated people, such as saints, are sources of positive contamination (i.e., people want to touch

\textsuperscript{34} Haidt.
or have things that touched the saint…” This desire to touch or view relics, and the efforts taken to accomplish such goals, can also be applied to war memorials in a number of ways. The whole notion of the Honor Flights, the network established to make sure World War II veterans can visit and observe the National World War II Memorial, is itself reminiscent of a pilgrimage, a journey to a sacred or revered site. When visitors travel to Washington, they will sometimes bring objects and mementos to leave behind – most notably at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, but also at the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the National World War II Memorial. They will frequently touch the memorials in an act of remembrance, seeking out a specific name (as is often the case at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial) or a particular battle or theater at the National World War II Memorial.

The notion of proximity and visiting or viewing these “sources of positive contamination” is even stronger at the National War Memorial, inasmuch as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is now located at the base of the memorial. Visitors to the memorial are literally visiting the sacred remains of an individual whose very service and sacrifice encapsulate the idea of moral elevation. Confederation Square has become hollowed ground, with the National War Memorial standing over, and, in effect, guarding, the tomb, as both objects are linked through the common ideas of peace, freedom, virtue, honor, sacrifice, and national unity. In the heart of Ottawa, they are a constant reminder to citizens and tourists alike of the literal and figurative costs war has had on not only Canadian history and identity, but also on the Canadian people themselves. The poppies Canadians wear on their lapels in the days and weeks leading to Remembrance Day similarly serve as a visual indicator of moral elevation, as citizens make a conscious effort to remind themselves and others of the sacrifice made by servicemen and women in the name of Canada, and that their efforts must not have been made in vain.

36 Haidt.
Writing further about elevation, Sara Algoe and Jonathan Haidt note, “In sum, elevation is a response to acts of moral beauty in which we feel as though we have become (for a moment) less selfish, and we want to act accordingly.”

This is a familiar component of the architecture and urban design of either national capital city, Washington or Ottawa, and particularly with the more specific locations of the monuments herein discussed. Washington’s National Mall is meant to showcase American history and values on a grand scale, and the National World War II Memorial is the new centerpiece of this landscape. Likewise, Ottawa’s Confederation Boulevard serves to display the core of not only the Canadian Capital Region, but also the various buildings, institutions, and memorials that supposedly comprise and exemplify Canadian culture and identity. The monuments, memorials, and structures are intended to convey a sense of grandeur and importance, instilling in the visitor these same concepts. The war memorials, located in such central positions in either city, further communicate those convictions and work to galvanize visitors to “act accordingly,” to perpetuate the legacy of those who came before and served their country. “In the very least, collective or social memory insists upon some form of shared past whose preservation and retelling are supposed to inspire, sustain, and instruct the people.”

In the end, considering all that the memorials represent and stand for, we must return to questions asked earlier regarding what is truly learned by examining the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial. After studying each memorial, it becomes clear that they are appropriate reflections of their respective nation, their citizenry, and the role war – and certain wars in particular – play in either nation’s history and collective memory. Canadians are often stereotypically portrayed, especially in popular culture, as a quiet, modest group of people. This is further highlighted when they are contrasted with Americans, who are typically seen as

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38 Noon, 341.
brash, loud, and arrogant; America’s nuclear Super Power compared to Canada’s peacekeeping Middle Power. And to a large extent, the memorials under review here support and reinforce those conceptions. The National War Memorial features war-weary veterans, returning from battle, along with the emblematic figures of Peace and Freedom, representing the values those soldiers supposedly fought, and in some cases died, to defend. While one bronze figure is holding a laurel wreath of peace, the other holds aloft a torch. The torch does not just stand for the light of freedom secured by Canada’s military, but can also be seen as a constant reminder for Canadians that they need to be worthy of the sacrifices made during the war, that they must always remember the words of John McCrae’s *In Flanders Fields*: “To you from failing hands we throw / The torch; be yours to hold it high / If ye break faith with us who die / We shall not sleep.”

In contrast, the National World War II Memorial is large, a commanding presence on the landscape. It emphasizes the power of the United States, of the country’s military might and abilities, and the particular battles and theaters of operation where the nation was victorious. Likewise, the memorial connects World War II to other military high points, while at the same time pushing aside the wars in Korea and Vietnam, those conflicts that are viewed as darker moments in American military history. The unity of the states and territories is given prominence, with veterans and those belonging to the “Greatest Generation” taking a backseat. The visitor is meant to remember those who served, but only with regards to the war in which they served; the actions, instead of the players, take precedence.

Canada’s National War Memorial serves as a way for the nation to commemorate and honor those who served and sacrificed in its name. Its location in the national capital city further reinforces not only the memorial’s importance, but also the importance of the causes, events, and
principles it stands for. If World War I is seen as the pivotal, nation-building moment in Canada’s history, it is fitting that later wars, such as World War II and Korea, are merely added to the National War Memorial’s pedestal; the Great War is still the main focal point, and the primary subject matter on display. Similarly, the important role World War II plays in American history, memory, and culture makes it only natural that a memorial to that war would receive such a prime location on the National Mall. In Washington, it is the Second World War, not the First World War, not Korea or Vietnam, that is positioned as the heir to the ideals, stature, and martial tradition first established by George Washington and the Revolutionary War, and then later by Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Any other events, occurring before or after World War II, do not – and physically cannot – fit into the Revolutionary War-Civil War-World War II dynamic now constructed on the National Mall.

Each nation thus constantly and consistently reinforces the master narrative of its collective memory and history, foregrounding specific wars and events to further promote the dominant perception each has of itself. By comparing the memorials to these favored wars – their respective history, design, location, and the urban environment in which they exist – these revelations are made even more clear and distinct. Canada and the United States are allies to an extent seldom seen; the economic, historic, and political ties connecting the two countries are some of the strongest in world history. Despite these bonds, however, there are still differences between the two nations, between their citizens and their outlook on global events and, more significantly, the ways in which they choose to commemorate war and peace, memory and sacrifice. Canada’s National War Memorial and America’s National World War II Memorial are two examples of how these differences are manifested and forged into a tangible reality.
CONCLUSION

Memorials and acts of commemoration are all around us; we encounter them, in various forms and layers, every day. They include the formal and traditional, such as war monuments and statues in city parks and town squares, to the informal and impromptu, such as roadside markers at the site of a fatal automobile accident, to the commonplace and unassuming, such as streets and buildings named after individuals.

Adding to the built environment is no small undertaking. What is built, where it is built, what it looks like, and what is not built are all issues that are carefully considered and debated, costing time and treasure. Those issues take on more importance when war and loss is memorialized, and even more so when said memorial is located in a national capital.

Memorials are not created in a vacuum. They reflect and represent not just a society’s history, but also how that history is viewed through the nostalgic lens of time and bias. The noble and virtuous are typically more likely to be memorialized than the terrible or horrific. Memorials have the power to influence and promote ideas of altruism, patriotism, and nationalism. By learning about the memorials a nation constructs to bolster these principles, we simultaneously learn about how that nation views itself and how future memorials might be designed to advance this vision.

Despite this study comparing memorials in different countries, built at different times to commemorate different wars, there are still similarities that are both useful and crucial in understanding either country more completely. This includes the fact that both the National War Memorial and the National World War II Memorial are visual centerpieces of their respective capital cities, recognize wars that are pivotal in either country’s history and culture, and, although utilizing different methods and languages of commemoration, are meant to convey the
same basic concepts – to memorialize war, to honor those who contributed to the war effort, and to serve as symbols for the nation.

What is more, Canada and the United States are incredibly strong allies, with shared histories, economies, and cultures, as well as similar political and social structures. However, although each country has a national capital city with an organized ceremonial landscape, the memorials at the center of these landscapes, the ones located in positions of privilege and prestige, vary in noticeable and meaningful ways.

As such, through an examination and comparison of the history, design, location, and reception of Canada’s National War Memorial and America’s National World War II Memorial we are able to gain a deeper understanding of how each country uses its memorial landscape to express the desired dominant narrative and further shape its national identity. By combining the theoretical and historical uses of memorial sites with the ethnographic everyday observations taken directly at the National World War II Memorial and National War Memorial, this dissertation provides a more comprehensive study not only of how the visiting public interprets and engages with the memorials, but also how each nation chooses to literally and figuratively frame its history for public consumption.

This entire project took on an increased relevance in light of events that occurred as it was in progress. In December of 2011, Canadian forces fully withdrew from active military engagement in Afghanistan; after many years, Canada’s armed conflict in that country had concluded. Further, around the same time, all U.S. military forces had withdrawn from Iraq. As a result, by the end of 2011, the United States and Canada had both ended their involvement in wars that they had been fighting for nearly a decade, costing lives, money, and global political capital. Additionally, in December of 2010, the U.S. Congress overturned “Don’t Ask, Don’t
Tell” (DADT), with the policy officially repealed on September 20, 2011, thereby allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military. In so doing, the United States removed a practice that not only had silenced and closeted countless individuals, but had also led to the discharge of thousands of servicemen and women, across all branches of the military.¹

The impact of these events, and their relation to a study on memorialization, is quite strong. As previously described, the idea of adding a commemorative acknowledgement of the war in Afghanistan to the National War Memorial has been discussed and judged problematic and premature. However, now that Canada’s involvement in that war has officially concluded, the question remains, and becomes even more pertinent – how will Afghanistan be memorialized in Canada, and specifically, in Ottawa and along Confederation Boulevard? Will the memorial effort be folded into the larger National War Memorial, as World War II and the Korean War have been? And if it is not, what does this say regarding the place that Afghanistan, or any other future conflict, has within the Canadian identity and collective memory?

In the United States, the end of the Iraq War leads to many of the same questions pertaining to how the conflict will be memorialized. However, with the U.S. still involved in Afghanistan, will a memorial to Iraq be delayed until military forces are out of Afghanistan? Will a broader, all-encompassing “War on Terror” memorial instead attempt to commemorate both wars, despite the questionable connection between Iraq and Afghanistan? How will these recent wars ultimately be included in Washington’s memorial landscape? Where will any potential memorials to the September 11 attacks, and the wars that resulted, be placed on the “closed” National Mall? Some may point to the memorials at the sites of the attacks – the Pentagon Memorial, the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and the National 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero in New York City – as being sufficient, and thus

fulfilling the need for any additional national memorials. Yet, it is easy to imagine this idea facing similar opposition to that of turning the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, into the national memorial to World War I – that such a momentous incident is worthy of being commemorated in the national capital, on such a significant plot of land as the National Mall.

Moreover, with the repeal of DADT, will a memorial be constructed in honor of those Americans who wished to serve their country, but were either discriminated against or driven out of the military entirely, and thus denied the chance to serve? Will existing memorials be amended to acknowledge that there were undoubtedly individuals who proudly and nobly served, sacrificed, and died in service to their country, yet who were also prohibited from being able to fully and freely live their lives? Or, will they simply join the ranks of other minority groups who have routinely been marginalized and treated unfairly by their government? What is most likely is that an additional, separate memorial might eventually be built to commemorate that segment of American veterans who were forced to hide and lie about such a central facet of their identity.

Additionally, this project coincides with a number of notable military anniversaries, namely the bicentennial of the start of the War of 1812, the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, and the centennial observance of the beginning of World War I. As celebrations and reenactments are planned and take place in the United States and Canada, how will these events be remembered? How will existing memorials be used in the commemoration of the different anniversaries? In Canada, the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 has sparked a renewed interest in constructing a national memorial to that war in Ottawa. What shape will such a memorial take, and how will it not only fit into the current memorial landscape and urban fabric, but also the collective memory Canadians already hold about that war, and what the conflict means to the nation? Could the First World War’s impending centennial cause a similar reaction
in the United States, with the idea of a national memorial to the war finally gaining enough public traction to come to fruition in Washington?

It is this particular aspect where I envision this project progressing in the future, towards areas of further examination and expansion. By no means are American or Canadian societies finished with constructing memorials. Despite the “closing” of the National Mall, additional monuments will still be built in Washington, possibly in certain areas close to the monumental core, or, if the desire and support is strong and vocal enough, in the Reserve. Ottawa’s Confederation Boulevard is far from being complete, with room for expansion already factored into the city’s master commemorative plan. How might any future memorials similarly reflect the attitudes and prevalent collective history of either nation?

The capital cities are themselves also open for closer review and comparative analysis. While this project focused on only one memorial in each city – those memorials that it contends are positioned as being some of the most important in their respective capitals – other additions to the built environment are possible topics of study. How does the physical layout of each city, in terms of the position of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, compare in relation to each other? Was Canada’s Supreme Court placed down Wellington Street from Parliament Hill in the same representational, deliberate manner as the U.S. Supreme Court was in Washington? What about 24 Sussex Drive and the White House?

Moving beyond these buildings of such power and influence, both capital cities are filled with memorials that are not directly related to war, but rather to individuals and groups. As previously described, Parliament Hill also contains a number of statues commemorating significant politicians, monarchs, and individuals in Canada’s founding and history. How do these statues compare to memorials in Washington? At first glance, Ottawa does not possess
striking, imposing monuments on the same scale as the Washington Monument, the Lincoln
Memorial, or even the Ulysses S. Grant memorial, located at the base of the U.S. Capitol. The
National World War II Memorial occupies a 7.4-acre site, while the Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Memorial features outdoor “rooms” on a 7.5-acre plot of land. Nevertheless, despite these huge,
sprawling examples, Washington also contains many traditional statues, the typical “human
figure on a pedestal,” found in Ottawa and countless other cities and towns around the world.
Can any significance be uncovered by comparing who is chosen for memorialization, how they
are depicted, and where a certain memorial is located, in Ottawa and Washington? What events
and individuals, which causes or organizations, have the political clout and social capital behind
them to successfully be memorialized in a nation’s capital, especially those that are not as pivotal
or momentous as a world war?

To keep the analysis within each capital, future studies could include a deeper
examination of the commemorative spaces, specifically the National Mall and Confederation
Boulevard. Although I delved into these topics a bit, I mainly did so with regards to their relation
to both the National World War II Memorial and the National War Memorial. A broader, more
holistic approach would provide additional insights into the commemorative practices employed
in either city.

Beyond wars or tragedies, further research could also be conducted concerning how the
notable, the heroic, and the peaceful have been remembered and incorporated into the
environment. For example, how does the commemoration surrounding the formation of the
United States, the U.S. Constitution, and the Founding Fathers compare to Canada’s
commemoration of the British North American Act, Canada’s evolution from British colony to a
more independent Dominion, and the Fathers of Confederation? How are these nation’s histories
of Civil Rights, Women’s Rights, and other civil actions memorialized? Where do notions of progress, the positive or uplifting, fit into the memorial landscape of the capital cities of Canada and the United States?

Obviously, this project could also be expanded beyond Washington and Ottawa. For example, how do memorials in Toronto compare to those found in New York City, or Vancouver and Los Angeles? Similarly, comparing memorials on each side of the border that commemorate the same event, such as the War of 1812, would underline how each country interprets their shared history in differing ways. We have already seen shades of this: a statue of Laura Secord, the Canadian who warned British forces of an impending American attack, is included in the Valiants Memorial in Confederation Square; yet as planning for the commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the war commences, Canada is being careful not to portray themselves too strongly as the victors over the defeated American forces. Or, is there a regional comparison to be made? Is there a French influence to certain memorials in Quebec that is also found in New Orleans? Do memorials in New England, particularly those dealing with seafaring and fishing, have much in common with memorials found in Atlantic Canada? Within each nation, is there a regional difference between memorials found in the Prairie Provinces and Plains States than those found along the Pacific Coast? There may even be a way to construct a map of the memorial landscape across Canada and the United States that largely ignores political boundaries in favor of spatial and thematic similarities, exploring comparable themes and memorial topics as a way to unite the two countries, highlighting all that the nations have in common.

The process of adding a structure to the built environment, especially one that is imbued with such meaning as a memorial, is fascinating. What compels a society to go through the time, effort, and cost to build something that, by and large, has little-to-no functional value? For a time
after World War II, there was a push to build living memorials, the libraries, stadiums, and other civic buildings that serve a dual purpose: to memorialize those who had served and sacrificed, while also providing public facilities and usable spaces. However, as Jonathan Vance noted, “such social utilities would inevitably become outdated and need replacing. The town’s war memorial would then suffer the ignominious end of serving as a storage shed or, worse, being pulled down.” What happens when a memorial outlives its usefulness, or when the subject either falls out of favor, is surpassed by later events, or forgotten entirely? The District of Columbia War Memorial stands as a case in point: a memorial to a war (World War I) that, in America, was overshadowed by the Second World War, located in an out-of-the-way location along the National Mall, and commemorating only those individuals from Washington who had served in the war. These factors combined to create a situation where the memorial fell into disrepair, with overgrown walkways and cracks appearing in the crumbling marble structure. It took federal stimulus funding and the advocacy of America’s last surviving veteran of World War I, the late Frank Buckles, to ultimately bring about restoration work on the memorial.

Nevertheless, for all the cost and occasional difficulty or tensions in the planning, design, and construction stages, memorials continue to be built. It is hoped that these great hulking monuments, composed of marble, granite, and metal, will exist forever; moving them, neglecting them, or tearing them down is seen as disgraceful, an affront to the memorial’s subject matter. What this can create, then, is a landscape absolutely layered in multiple meanings. Walking through a city and encountering various monuments, the individual is thus also confronted with the different causes and implications behind those monuments. This is further complicated by the fact that, while the significance for certain memorials may remain in the public memory, many others have been lost to time. Various statues to long-forgotten soldiers and settlers dot the

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cityscape, intermingled with the more “popular” and well-known memorials; for every Lincoln Memorial or statue of John A. Macdonald there are countless other memorials to individuals recognizable only to history buffs.

To some degree, I am reminded of my hometown of Acton, Massachusetts, located just outside of Boston. Acton was heavily involved in early colonial American events, sending local Minutemen to neighboring Concord on the morning of April 19, 1775, to take part in the Battle of Concord at the Old North Bridge; in fact, it was the Acton Company that led the colonial assault against British forces. The commander of the Acton Minutemen, Captain Isaac Davis, was shot and killed, thus becoming the first American officer to die in the Revolutionary War. As a result, my hometown is steeped in revolutionary history: street names honor the individuals and events of the era; plaques and markers note significant sites, such as historic homes or the location where the alarm of the British advance first reached Acton; and other signs and symbols, even the high school mascot – the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Colonials – constantly reaffirm and remind citizens of the town’s history and role in American independence. However, despite this constant commemorative presence, some people choose to silently, harmlessly, and humorously push back and counter the dominant narrative; for instance, a neighbor of mine had attached a small metal nameplate above his doorbell that read, “On this site, in 1776, nothing happened.”

This also raises the issue of memorials reflecting what each society truly values. In reality, the memorials will not last forever, even with dedicated preservation efforts – one only has to look at the ruins of Ancient Rome and Greece for proof. More immediate, though, is a possible growing demand for available space. As has been repeatedly noted, the National Mall is considered, by the powers that be, a completed work of civic art. Yet, will it someday be
reclassified as unfinished? Could an existing statue or memorial be deemed insufficient for present-day values so as to warrant replacement? At some point, even Confederation Boulevard might reach a point of saturation, with the pre-ordained Landmark and Gateway Node sites occupied. What happens when another significant event requires commemoration? In such a scenario, would the National Capital Commission create another node, or would an existing memorial lose out, seen as less important, less noteworthy, and less deserving than a later event or individual? The NCC’s Commemorative Strategic Plan makes an allusion to this, acknowledging that “Commemorations reflect the spirit of the age,” and that “The thematic and urban design priorities identified within this plan will evolve as Canada evolves and as [Canada’s Capital Region] continues to mature and develop.”

Although well-intentioned, and to some extent vital to create some semblance of cohesion and order, the problem with making commemorative plans is that memory and the need to memorialize is not a finite quantity. Time continues to pass, constantly creating new topics suitable for representation in stone. Any plan must not only be flexible enough to accommodate future changes, but also establish a commemorative landscape that is not so rigid and unalterable as to prevent or severely restrict any later needs.

What happens when there is so much preserved history, so many memorial sites and sacred spaces, that future development is likewise hampered? This might lead to a scenario where only the truly horrific or heroic are so honored – the World Wars, the 9/11 attacks, and so on, particularly on a national level. How might this effect a national narrative if the smaller units of commemoration – the individual, the local, the more everyday – are less likely to be included? Again, like the National Mall or the National War Memorial, the memorial landscape is in danger of being frozen in the twentieth century, unable to accommodate future subjects.

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Although minor topics have typically been more readily memorialized on the local level, are we facing a future where that will be the only venue left where those types of memorials can find a home? If that occurs, we might see a bifurcation of collective memory, one on the national level, another on the local level. This is not to say this does not already exist – a town’s war memorial will feature the names and details of local sons and daughters who went off to fight, recognizing them in ways a national memorial simply cannot. And, local memorials do focus on those local events that add to a layered national and regional history, such as some of the memorials found in my hometown. Nevertheless, if such a stark divide between the local and the national is increasingly written into official commemorative policies, particularly if it revolves around a lack of available space for additional monuments, citizens could begin to feel a disconnection with the national narrative being told in, and by, their capital city.

Humans are constantly modifying both the natural and built environments. We erect houses, pave roads, bridge rivers, exploit natural resources – coal, timber, oil, and so on. From the major to the minor, from suburbanites mowing a front yard to a massive public works project, humankind is continuously using and altering the environment to suit its needs. But memorials are something we add to our world for the sole purposes of remembering and honoring. We write books, create plays and films, and pen songs and poems that all recount moments from our collective and individual history. Yet memorials are meant to be constant, visual reminders of the past. They are meant to be noticed, to command our attention, rather than being pushed aside or relegated to a dusty library bookshelf. We also build cemeteries and tombs, crypts and mausoleums, as a way to remember the dead, but this is on a more intimate, personal level. Memorials and monuments are highly public structures, so that all of society may interact with them and bear witness to the commemorative act, and all that it represents.
Considering the varied ways Americans and Canadians continue to add to their environment and memorialize individuals and events, the future for researching this tendency remains bright. Humankind is constantly advancing in ways that are seen as deserving of memorialization; streets and highways are often renamed for significant figures, and buildings and ships are christened in honor of prominent people. And, sadly, wars and conflict are not going away anytime soon, and neither are the interpretive conflicts surrounding them. The result is a topic that will seemingly be forever expanding and growing, with numerous monuments and memorials constantly added to our built environment, and thereby serving as new material for review and closer inspection. Examining how a society chooses to remember its past, and what is and is not designated for commemoration, is an ongoing process. This project is thus just an initial endeavor at analyzing the memorial landscape from an international, comparative perspective.
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APPENDIX A – HSRB APPROVAL FORM

August 23, 2010

TO: Eric Weeks
ACS

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.
HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project No.: H10D352GE7

TITLE: Memory and Meaning: Constructed Commemoration in a Nation’s Capital

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. As of August 20, 2010, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on July 7, 2011. You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures (including increases in the number of participants), please send a request for modifications immediately to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me, in writing (fax: 372-6916 or email: hsrb@bgsu.edu) upon completion of your project.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

Comments/Modifications:
Stamped consent form is coming to you via campus mail.

c: Dr. Rebecca Mancuso

Research Category: EXPEDITED #7
CONSENT FORM

My name is Eric Weeks and I am a PhD student in the American Culture Studies program at Bowling Green State University, in Bowling Green, Ohio. I am currently working on my research for my dissertation, focusing on sites of commemoration in a capital city, and how a national identity is shaped by, and influences, a war memorial. Specifically, I am interested in Ottawa’s National War Memorial and Washington, DC’s National World War II Memorial, which is why I have contacted you today. Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and will involve answering some interview questions about the design, creation, construction, and use of the memorial with which you have the most experience. I will be using the information that I get from interviews, along with academic publications and other research sources, to help me further develop my research on memorialization in urban settings and the ways in which the public interacts with the site. The benefit of this project is that it will greatly help in adding to the field of memorialization and national identity.

During my interview with you I will ask you a series of questions about the specific memorial you have experience with, about the issues surrounding the memorial and its site, and other details regarding the development, use, and future plans for the memorial. During this time I will be taking notes and making an audio recording of our conversation. Should our interview happen over the phone, I will make you aware that I am making an audio recording before beginning the interview process. The interview may also take place via email, if that option is preferable. There is no personal benefit to you other than your interview being useful for research purposes. The interview process will consist of only 1-2 interview sessions. A second interview may be required to answer follow up questions not addressed in the first interview, or to clarify answers given in the first interview. I do not expect either interview to last longer than an hour each.

The risks involved in this interview are minimal: no greater than those found in normal, daily life. You have the right to request that the answers given during the interview remain confidential, and if you choose to do so every effort will be made to hide your identity in my research and in any quotes from the interview session that are used in the actual project. If you would like your responses to remain confidential, please check the box above the signature line.

You have the right to stop the interview at any time, and for any reason, should you no longer wish to continue. There are no consequences for withdrawing. I will make every effort to answer any questions you may have about my project and the research I am conducting. You may also request a copy or summary of the results of the study. You will be provided with a copy of this consent document for your records. Only my advisor and I will be reviewing this
interview material. All interview materials will be retained indefinitely in a locked filing cabinet in my office.

If you have any questions or comments about this study, you can contact me at 419.372.8709 or eweeks@bgsu.edu, or you can contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Rebecca Mancuso, at 419.372.7424 or rmancus@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board, Bowling Green State University, 419.372.7716, hsrb@bgsu.edu, if any problems or concerns arise during the course of the study.

By signing this document you are verifying that you have read this document, had any questions about the project answered, and are agreeing to participate in this study.

I would like my answers to remain confidential: ☐

___________________________________________________
Signature

___________________________________________________
Date