COLLECTIVE MEMORY: AMERICAN PERCEPTION AS A RESULT OF WORLD WAR II MEMORABILIA COLLECTING

Quintin Monnin

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Committee:

Walter Grunden, Advisor

Rebecca Mancuso

ABSTRACT

Walter Grunden, Advisor

The material culture of World War II has left a profound impact on American memory of the war at both a societal and familial level. This work examines psychological causes which motivated soldiers to collect battlefield souvenirs, as well as how those underlying psychological causes have affected American memory of the war at a familial and societal level. Five families which inherited World War II artifacts from family veterans were interviewed to ascertain the motivations of their veteran's souvenir gathering as well as how the souvenirs impacted their memory of both the veteran as well as the war. To ascertain war artifacts' impact at a broader societal level, surveys were distributed amongst militaria collectors asking them what initiated their collecting hobby and how war artifacts affect their interpretations of the war.

The results of these interviews and surveys revealed two major unconscious motivations for World War II veterans' souvenir hunting motivations as well as how the souvenirs impact American memory of the war both at both familial and societal levels. Veterans took war souvenirs primarily as a manner to seek revenge upon the enemies and war implements that traumatized them in the course of the war, and as a way to perpetuate their memories by symbolically living on through their artifacts. This revenge motive collecting is examined through the lens of trauma theory and soldiers' attempts at recovery through it. The motive to collect to perpetuate memory after death is examined through the lens of terror management theory. The impact of these motivations, especially terror management, has led to the artifacts in family memory becoming catalysts for the "Good War" narrative of World War II in American

memory. The artifacts, as viewed by families and collectors, perpetuate this narrative of veterans fighting the “Good War” in American history.

I dedicate this work to my late grandparents and great-grandparents; Eugene Fischbach, George Raterman, and Joseph McGreevy Jr. It is your sacrifices and stories that inspire me to study history. May you all rest in well-earned peace. I also dedicate this work to any families who had members serve in World War II, may their memories never be forgotten.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to understand the motivations for soldiers to collect combat trophies and war souvenirs during World War II as well as the effect they have had on American memory and perception of the war. These collections and the traumatic memories attached to them are an integral part of American culture and general collective memory of World War II. Yet the topic of World War II artifact collecting remains one that is widely underexplored in both the psychological and historical realms, and the subject of collecting as it relates to traumatic experiences intergenerationally has been widely ignored in scholarship. Given the prevalence of militaria collecting in the United States, it is hard to fathom that the hobby does not have any substantial studies regarding how their war trophies affect public and private family memories of World War II in American culture. Perhaps this is because World War II (WWII) collecting has a negative public perception and the relevant topics border on antiquarian history.

Sixteen million Americans served in the United States Armed Forces in WWII. Several million of them went overseas and obtained war trophies and souvenirs for themselves in the process. Millions more would have had access to these artifacts through a booming souvenir trade that was occurring during the war due to the sheer scale of American souvenir taking. It would be hard to find an American family who was not touched by the war in some way, and many millions of families had a veteran who brought home a war souvenir that has been passed down through the generations. Surely, there had to have been some tangible reasoning for such massive artifact acquisition by American soldiers. These collections elicit fundamental questions. First, what motivated these soldiers to collect combat-related artifacts? What roles do these artifacts play within families who have inherited them, and how do these artifacts that have been

passed down or put into the collectors market affect American memory and perception of the war?

The examination of the roles of both war trophy hunting and war memorabilia collecting in relationship to memory of WWII remains understudied in the United States (US). With such a vast market of artifacts available in the US, there must be some tangible connections between these artifacts and memory of the war in American society. To avoid the questions of why American soldiers took so many war trophies and how they affect understanding of the war is to leave a major gap in the field that could positively impact both academic and public history fields. Understanding the trophy collecting phenomenon and their (its) powerful effect on popular memory is a new subject of study in the history of American involvement in WWII and may open possible paths in the Public History field connecting to wider audiences in a more personal manner. Karen Harvey, a prominent historian in the field of material culture, argues that "Objects are valuable to historians, but historians can enrich the study of material culture."[1] The present study is an attempt to put that notion into practice.

Because the collecting phenomenon remains understudied in the US, it may be useful to examine collecting culture in other nations for insight. The Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey off the Northern coast of France were some of the only continental British possessions occupied by the German forces during WWI. The islands were under occupation and fortified and were finally liberated in Spring of 1945. The citizens of these islands have access to extensive stores of German equipment from the occupation and are ardent collectors of the artifacts left behind. They reject the labels given to them by popular British opinion and media publications associating the collection of these artifacts with adherence/sympathies to the Nazi

[1] Karen Harvey, *History and Material Culture* (London: Routledge, 2010), 2.

political ideas with which they may be associated. Instead, these collectors assert that these objects and their collections are vital to preserving the history of the island. The islanders were traumatized being occupied by German forces for nearly five years and having to deal with occupation lifestyles as well as food shortages. Islanders see the German militaria items as the spoils of war for a victorious Britain, as they were on the side that ultimately won the war. Their collections serve as a way to memorialize the islands' occupation struggles for posterity.[2]

The artifacts function as post-memory objects for the occupation to many of the collectors today.[3] Many islanders were children during the occupation or born in the subsequent decade after the war. Gilly Carr, a senior archeologist at Cambridge who undertook this case study, discusses how the adults tried to dump the leftover equipment from the occupation into the sea or bury it deep into tunnels around the islands. The children's curiosity and fascination surrounding the artifacts was hard to suppress, and they recovered buried equipment by exploring the tunnels. This phenomenon continued for well over twenty years even after two boys were killed in the process during a 1962 souvenir hunting trip.[4] Carr theorizes that children collecting these material objects during and after the occupation in the Channel islands contributes to what she described as "inherited nostalgia", that is: "a culturally inculcated yearning for a period in the past which is key to group identity definition."[5] In this case, the occupation is *the* defining moment of the Channel Islands' history, and the material culture that is held and widely shared by the locals is a way to permanently memorialize it. They are afraid that the memory of their experiences will be forgotten without their collections as proof.

[2] Gilly Carr, "'Illicit Antiquities'? The Collection of Nazi Militaria in the Channel Islands," *World Archaeology* 48, no. 2 (2016): 255.
[3] Ibid., 256.
[4] Ibid., 260.
[5] Ibid., 262.

While the US was never in a position to have to deal with the trauma of occupation like the Channel Islands, it does have some very interesting parallels. The material culture of the war is preserved by collectors on the Channel Islands as a way to memorialize British victory. Collector demographics in the Channel Islands and the US is remarkably similar. Carr noticed that most collectors in the Channel Islands were children in the occupation or born shortly after the war. The collectors within the US show a similar age demographic. Carr writes, "It is also unknown whether the post-war generation of children in the Channel Islands is unique in Europe for being largely responsible for the rescue and resulting continued existence of items of German militaria in the islands today. If this is a common theme, then the role of children in the initial creation of this worldwide collecting practice has been entirely neglected."[6] This assertion lends credence to the idea explored here that collecting is a viable manner by which both trauma and memories are passed down generationally.

The motivations for soldiers to collect war souvenirs or trophies can be both conscious and unconscious in nature but should not be seen as a deviant behavior. While a small portion of the soldier population could be comprised of sociopaths or psychopaths who would remorselessly engage in these practices of looting and souvenir hunting, particularly of morbid artifacts, that still does not account for the sheer volume of items brought home by returning veterans. Profit motives are well understood by all but also do not account for everything brought home. This work seeks to examine how and why these artifacts were obtained, how they were kept and preserved, and how they came to take on significance by the families of the veterans who brought them home. Did these artifacts serve the desired conscious and unconscious effects that veterans intended of them when they took them home?

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[6] Ibid., 264.

Another central issue the thesis seeks to address is the question of how the commercialization and fetishization of WWII artifacts has affected American public perception of the war and of the militaria collecting community. There are well established narratives in the history field regarding American involvement in WWII, but few of them focus explicitly on how these artifacts affected these narratives from the grassroots level. The thesis also addresses the roles of collectors and antiquarians in preserving American memory of the war at this level, their perceptions, and misperceptions of them by the public at large.

WWII artifact collectors in the US are sometimes negatively perceived by the public at large. For example, those who collect German war memorabilia may be portrayed or understood to be Nazi sympathizers or seen as harboring and preserving racist ideologies of defeated regimes long vanquished. Or, some in the general public commonly believe that most collectors lean to the political right and are seen to collect historic artifacts associated with far-right ideologies. These sweeping perceptions of collectors are mostly untrue, however, because there are often more complex motivations behind their collecting interests that the general public does not see. In fact, the vast majority of collectors are as virulently against these ideologies and the community attempts to police itself because members are well aware of the stigma associated with Nazi memorabilia and those who would fetishize it.[7]

This negative stigma attached to collectors is also in part because WWII trophy hunting also has a macabre side to it. Eugene Sledge's memoir, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa*, contains graphic depictions of American soldiers prying out gold filled teeth from Japanese soldiers, even while many of whom were still alive.[8] Other soldiers did not collect just teeth, but other body parts as well, such as ears, bones, and skulls for trophies. Sledge states that

[7] Sean D. Hamill, "Why Do People Collect Anti-Semitic or Nazi Artifacts?," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* January 7, 2019.
[8] Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Presidio Press, 2010), 120.

for some men it was just an expression of what we know today as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that eventually desensitized soldiers to these acts, but the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) estimates that around one percent of the general population can be properly labeled as psychopaths who may be apt to exhibit this sort of behavior in "trophy hunting" habits. John Dower, a prominent historian of Japan and the Pacific War, posits in his highly influential works that these actions had much to do with contemporary racist attitudes towards the Japanese by Americans.[9] Such actions undertaken by soldiers are gruesome in nature to research, but demonstrate a level of trauma that helped drive soldiers to these actions. This thesis posits that such traumatic memory attachment needs to be explored further in order to fill in the gaps in the historical literature of American memory surrounding WWII and especially of collecting.

This thesis explores the links between the traumas experienced by American soldiers in WWII, their trophy collecting habits, and the phenomenon of collecting war memorabilia in the US. In some cases, American soldiers took war trophies on a massive scale as a means of exacting revenge on the defeated enemies who caused their traumatic experiences. According to the pioneering work in trauma theory by Judith Herman, this revenge aspect is part of the recovery stage for those who experienced such significant traumas.[10] While this is an important stage of the recovery process, people rarely find closure through vengeance alone, and the artifacts taken by veterans for this reason are no exception in that regard. This explains why many veterans' war trophies were hidden away in closets and trunks after the war instead of being displayed proudly. The other link between collecting and memory may be explained by terror management theory, which stipulates that we as humans are acutely aware of our own

[9] John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.)
[10] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1992), 197-213.

mortality and find ways to ward off our awareness of it.[11] For some, amassing a collection is such a way to both distract ourselves from this fact and a way for us to immortalize or memorialize ourselves through passing it down to posterity, ensuring that a part of us never truly dies. However, the trauma attached to artifacts may also be passed down through generations. This idea of intergenerational trauma frames the focus of this work's sub-arguments.

Many families exhibit strong senses of the "Good War" narrative in their own memories of family veterans, but largely co-opt that national narrative of the "Good War" within familial contexts. Additionally, family members carry some of the trauma associated with the artifacts that veterans brought home and often exhibit a feeling of personal connection to the war and its triumphs for themselves through possession of the artifacts as heirlooms. Second generation artifact possessors exhibit a strong urge to carry forward the terror management and trauma theories of memory through collecting. They do this by generally establishing themselves as collectors of memorabilia in their own lives, citing the inherited collection as among their most cherished items and a catalyst for their own further collecting interests. For others, a sense of uneasiness or lack of closure comes with familial possession of war artifacts passed down to them.

Together with Judith Herman, Harvard psychology professor Richard McNally has contributed to the development of the field of trauma studies, which has heretofore been applied mainly to victims of violent crime and sexual assault. Their theories behind the reasons why victims deny their victimhood and are reluctant to speak about their trauma have become influential throughout their respective fields and have since also taken root in literary and historical studies. For example, psychologist Joshua Pederson applied ideas from Herman's

[11] William D. McIntosh and Brandon Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Leisure Sciences* 26, no. 1 (2004): 85-97.

trauma theory to analysis of works of art and literature by combat veterans as an emotional outlet for traumatic memories that had been previously thought to be forgotten or repressed.[12] Even in Herman's own exploration of revenge in trauma recovery, none of the above explore the idea that collecting could be a legitimate coping mechanism for veterans traumatized in war. The present study will attempt to do just that.

Psychologists William McIntosh and Brandon Schmeichel give concise summaries of the general collecting rationales and processes observed in civilian settings.[13] These psychological processes are useful to understand and explored in chapter one. The rationales and processes they discuss are observed in the American occupations of defeated Axis nations due to an environment for soldiers stationed there that more closely resembled civilian settings. Renowned consumer psychologists Russell Belk and Susan Pearce also examine how collecting can be explained as a viable economic and personal venture in ways unrelated to traumatic personal experiences. For many occupation troops who did not see the war but were able to take home souvenirs from their duties, these principles may also apply. The items they took home also play a large role in the sphere of American memory related to the war. More importantly, they provide excellent insight into the commodification and fetishization of the artifacts taken and later entered into the commercial marketplace on the American home front.

As mentioned above, studies of wartime collecting are few, so the historiography concerning war trophies is limited in scope. Little has been written on the topic as a whole, so analyzing it requires a synthesis of other major historiographic fields. First among them may be the field of material culture studies. It is imperative to examine objects themselves, and these

[12] Joshua Pederson, "Speak Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory," *Narrative* 22:3 (October 2014): 340-44.
[13] William D. McIntosh and Brandon Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Leisure Sciences* 26, no. 1 (2004): 85-97.

objects vary widely as do the associations that come with them. Some war trophies brought home were simply photographs, watches, or other personal effects taken from a surrendered or dead enemy. Many others were another type of trophy all together, such as skulls, teeth, or other body parts of defeated enemies. In between was the taking of artwork, dining utensils, weapons, gear, and individualized mementos. Most of these trophies are personalized, such as trench art or other battlefield scraps.

Material culture studies in history have been around as long as history and archaeology. It has primarily existed in a niche amongst collectors and museum curators who collect war artifacts for their presentations to the public about the history, or to simply have them for themselves as a collecting hobby. Karen Harvey's *History and Material Culture* is a collection of essays outlining the various ways that material culture in general can be used as sources for historical research.[14] While principles in her book are broadly applicable, none deal directly with the material culture of war. Nicholas J. Saunders' work exists at the intersection of the fields of war memory and material culture, including *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*, which studies the archaeological intersections with popular culture and memory.[15] Much of his work focuses on art history of objects in war, although souvenirs and memorials are also explicitly mentioned as objects of study.[16] Much of these studies Saunders undertakes are in the context of museum exhibitions. While the sources and objects are connected to the ideas of war trophies in memory, his application of them is towards a public audience at a museum rather than private meanings of these objects within families of soldiers who may have taken them home or larger collectors markets.

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[14] Karen Harvey, *History and Material Culture* (London: Routledge, 2010).
[15] Nicholas J. Saunders, *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War* (London: Routledge, 2004).
[16] Nicholas J. Saunders, "Bodies of Metal, Shells of Memory: 'Trench Art', and the Great War Re-Cycled," *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2000): 43-67.

Gabriel Monsheska tackles material culture of war from another perspective, that of children. An archaeologist at the University of London, Monsheska analyzes the role of material culture on the home front. Items such as gas masks and anti-aircraft shrapnel and their roles in children's lives during the war years are his focus. He ties in the traumatic memories associated with being under air attack and possible gas attack with the objects associated with them and how children during the war processed these memories with the artifacts as mnemonic devices.[17] While useful, these studies are used to re-create the pictures of life at the front or home front home in World War I and WWII, but they do not address the memories of veterans within family life. There is some attachment of traumatic memory, but it is not deeply explored by these publications.

Perhaps the best example of traumatic memory and war material collecting comes from studies of occupied Europe. As seen in the example referenced above, Gilly Carr analyzes how the Channel Islanders vigorously collect German war materials as a manner of protecting their islands' history in "Illicit Antiquities."[18] She also comes to a conclusion that Moshenska hinted at in his studies of gas masks and AA shrapnel, that the collecting communities on the islands were largely promoted by children alive during the islands' occupation as well as the children and grandchildren of adults who experienced it. Other studies in European countries relating to World War I artifacts such as Finland and the World War I Isonzo Front have come to similar conclusions regarding the collection by children of war materials as catalysts to war memorabilia collecting.[19] However, none of these situations are perfect comparisons to American collecting

[17] Gabriel Moshenska, "Gas Masks: Material Culture, Memory, and the Senses: Gas Masks," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16, no. 3 (2010): 609-628.
Gabriel Moshenska, "A Hard Rain: Children's Shrapnel Collections in the Second World War," *Journal of Material Culture* 13, no. 1 (2008): 107-125.
[18] Gilly Carr, "'Illicit Antiquities'? The Collection of Nazi Militaria in the Channel Islands," *World Archaeology* 48, no. 2 (2016): 254-66.
[19] Vesa-Pekka Herva, Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Oula Seitsonen, and Suzie Thomas, "'I have Better Stuff at Home': Treasure Hunting and Private Collecting of World War II Artefacts in Finnish Lapland," *World Archaeology* 48, no. 2 (2016): 267-81.

of war artifacts as these studies take place in areas where the war was physically conducted. American artifact collections are primarily war trophies brought back from overseas. The European studies all concern preservation of history at a grassroots level, but only superficially touch on the ideas of traumatic memories attached to the artifacts in question.

Other major publications relating to material culture of the war trophies are often produced by antiquarians and collectors. These publications, however, contribute very little of scholarly significance regarding trophies and their memory. While many collectors' books and price guides are available for any given time period from the end of the war, most of the work in them is limited in scope to deep research on specific artifacts and their variations. These sources offer technical details, proof markings, signs of authenticity, detailed history of development, or capture stories associated with the objects in question, but they offer no substantive analyses of wider historical value or interpretations. Their work is rarely of academic history quality or possessing the sourcing needed for broader interpretations, and most guides are only available for certain items that are far more popular in a commercial market. For example, *Veteran Bringbacks* by Edward Tinker contains fascinating examples and displays of war trophies brought home by soldiers.[20] However, his works only present the artifacts and origin stories and do not examine the roles that these artifacts played in preserving memories of the veterans themselves or in shaping American war memory. These antiquarian works do not address the main facets of the research questions in this work, such as what drove soldiers to take these trophies and how the objects they took played a part at all in the construction of American social memory of the war. Most of the field regarding war trophies has little or nothing else published

Boštjan Kravanja and Slovenia University of Ljubljana, "Learning by Collecting: Amateur Collectors and their Shifting Positions in the Isonzo Front Heritagization and Tourism Adaptation," *Electronic Journal of Folklore* 73, (2018): 95-116.

[20] Edward Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. I. Galesburg, IL: Brad Simpson Pub., 2008).
Edward Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. III. Great Bend, KS: Goldenbelt Printing, 2012).

save for snippets gathered from primary sources, such as interviews with war veterans. Studying almost any oral history, biography, or autobiography of WWII reveals that there was a material culture of soldiers chasing after war trophies or finding one for themselves during their time in service. None of these accounts self-analyze the underlying reasons for taking the trophies and little has been written about what happened to these souvenirs after they were taken home.

Another primary field of study that must be utilized to synthesize war trophies' impact is war and memory. This must be analyzed through material culture and psychology subfields related to memory. Here the literature base is wider overall but is mostly centered on the children who were caught in war zones in terms of material culture of war, and on victims of violent crime in psychological memory studies. When it comes to memory studies in psychology attached to traumatic memory, studies of victims of traumatic sexual assault are overwhelmingly represented as the case studies. Very few apply these ideas towards collecting as a conduit of memory or an outlet of trauma in more than a superficial fashion. Synthesizing these two fields of war material culture studies with war and memory studies is essential to examine personal war trophies.

One of the major narratives observed in American memory of WWII is that of the "Good War" as popularized, ironically, by Studs Terkel. His book and most other American oral histories focus on the idea that WWII was a just and noble war that was fought for ideologically and morally correct reasons and had an overall net positive impact on the US and therefore, the *world*, as per the narrative.[21] This narrative tends to emphasize the oral histories of combat veterans and civilians on the US home front in WWII, putting as much as possible into the

[21] Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985.)

perspective of the soldiers fighting on the ground. While often titled ironically as a way to challenge this narrative, the American fascination with WWII veterans tends to warp the framework of oral histories from combat veterans back into a "Good War" framework. A primary feature of this narrative is the US' society united to defeat an enemy, typically focusing on the European Theater, who is undeniably evil and oppressive. Such narratives overlook US racism against its own citizens and against the Japanese in the Pacific but promotes the notion that the soldiers were all just doing their jobs as best they could for the US and the cause was just.

A few notable exceptions to the "Good War" narrative strand of literature are Marc Gallicchio's *The Unpredictability of the Past: Memories of the Asia-Pacific War in U.S. - East Asian Relations*, John Dower's *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, and Paul Fussell's *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War.* Gallicchio uses a collection of essays to examine how US and Asian memories of the Pacific War shapes their politics and relationships to this day. Primarily, the books' essays examine Japanese political reactions to Chinese and American literature assessing Japanese roles in the war. These essays also recount that while the United States' popular memory remains a "Good War" style narrative from Terkel and other works from the late 1980's and early 1990's, the Chinese and Japanese must cope with tremendous tragedies and losses of life in their memories.[22] Fussell's book is an outright challenge to this narrative from 1989, five years after Terkel's publication. Fussell essentially posits that Americans no longer understand what WWII was about, and he tries to re-create the wartime feelings and emotions. Fussell emphasizes the negative aspects of the war on

[22] Marc Gallicchio, *The Unpredictability of the Past: Memories of the Asia-Pacific War in U.S. - East Asian Relations* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007.)

the home front through propaganda and the wartime need to overstate any positive developments.[23]

John Dower's *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific*, written in 2006, is a monograph that breaks with the "Good War" narrative decisively and coldly.[24] Dower focuses on the sheer brutality of the racialized war in the Pacific between the US and Japan. The break from the "Good War" narrative is that Dower instead paints the US from a more neutral perspective as another major player in WWII, that is, one that did not conduct itself in the Pacific conflict according to its lofty moral ideals that it promoted in the European theater. Dower focuses on American memory of the Japanese foe during WWII, and vice versa. He is particularly adept at revealing the mutual racism held by Americans and Japanese towards one another. Of particular relevance to this work, he cites many pieces of propaganda depicting Japanese soldiers and people in a variety of dehumanizing ways. Primates, vermin, and other negative stereotypes that accentuated the "subhuman" nature of Japanese persons or society were common American propaganda tropes highlighted in the book. Dower's narratives also mirror much of what Eugene Sledge's memoir *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* recounts of his Pacific Theater experiences. [25] While Dower does have an explicit chapter dedicated to the gruesome practices of Pacific Theater trophy taking, the book is centered on a general theme of racial aspects of the Pacific War. Instead of repeating the "Good War" narrative, Dower focuses on racism and prejudice that boiled over in the war from Americans, some of which was manifested in gruesome war trophies.

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[23] Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.)
[24] Dower, *War without Mercy.*
[25] Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Presidio Press, 2010).

In the existing literature, the works of Simon Harrison of the University of Ulster has come closest to examining the link between of war trophies and memory. His two articles on the subject, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance" and "War Mementos and the Souls of Missing Soldiers: Returning Effects of the Battlefield Dead," examine the repatriation of battlefield mementos from fallen soldiers to their original families back in Japan as well as some of the reasons that they were taken in the first place. [26] In "Skull Trophies", he posits that the taking of skull trophies was simply adding to the idea of a typical "fieldstripping" of the enemy taken to the extreme. [27] That is to say, soldiers in all armies generally take personal effects from dead enemies as souvenirs. Usually limited to pictures, hats, watches, etc, sometimes these objects were body parts, including skulls. American soldiers in the Pacific did this body part hunting far more than anyone in Europe, and Simon ties this back to Dower's thesis about the racial aspects of the war in the Pacific. For many who took them, these skulls were supposed to be conversation pieces or tokens of affection. Sometimes this was true even after the war, though they were not often prominently displayed. His articles are closely related to understanding the ideas of attachment of war memory to trophy taking in WWII.

Regardless of these refutations and challenges, the "Good War" narrative has persisted in the United States. The generation of men who fought in the war are labeled "The Greatest Generation", a term popularized by Tom Brokaw's eponymous book, for the enormous sacrifices made in the war effort. When viewed through the lens of popular culture, most Americans see WWII in an overwhelmingly positive light, and WWII veterans have been subject to lavish praise and veneration in American society. Unlike Terkel who titled his book ironically, Brokaw

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[26] Simon Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 4. (2006): 817-36.
Simon Harrison, "War Mementos and the Souls of Missing Soldiers: Returning Effects of the Battlefield Dead," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 4. (2008): 774-90.
[27]Simon Harrison, "Skull Trophies."

titled his book deliberately to further promotes the sacrifice of the WWII generation of Americans. While the "Good War" narrative is not unique to the US, it does tie into the concept of American exceptionalism and patriotism more than it does in the other Allied nations of WWII. This Manichean narrative view of WWII is that it was an inherently good war to have fought against genuinely bad or evil forces, and that the US society had peaked at this time or shortly thereafter. This particular view of WWII would only be enhanced by other authors with similar books in the early 2000's. For example, Michael Adams' *Best War Ever* covers the same topics as Terkel with an attempt to be more critical of the "Good War" narrative that had emerged from Terkel's book.[28] The other influential books which advanced the "Good War" narratives were primarily based on combat experiences.

Stephen Ambrose's *Band of Brothers*, Richard Stannard's *Infantry,* and Peter Schrijvers' *Crash of Ruin* all are oral histories of American combat units fighting in Europe.[29] These books tended to re-create the battlefields and soldiers' experiences for readers in the context of fighting a necessary and just war against Nazism and evil. Even though Eugene Sledge's memoir *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* only confirm much of the aspects of the Pacific War as covered in Dower's works, his autobiography often gets lumped in with the idea of the "Good War" narrative as one of the few prominent firsthand accounts of the Pacific Theater. Much like Ambrose's *Band of Brothers* was turned into a popular HBO miniseries, so too was Sledge's account along with a few others in another HBO miniseries: *The Pacific*. Hollywood has a long tradition of glorifying American war involvement and has been integral to how most Americans

[28] Michael C. C. Adams, *Best War Ever* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Univ Press, 2015).
[29] Stephen Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.)
Richard M. Stannard, *Infantry: An Oral History of a World War II American Infantry Battalion* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992.)
Peter Schrijvers, *Crash of Ruin: American Combat Soldiers in Europe During World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.)

consume and construct narratives of their history.[30] The changing manner of historical materials being transmitted in non-academic settings such as movies, TV, video games, and other outlets is detailed more in Jerome de Groot's: *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture*.

The subject of war trophies and memory at the American familial level remains underdeveloped in scholarly literature. As a result, several fields of overlapping historiography must be examined to understand how to engage this otherwise unexplored subject field. War material culture is something that is explicitly attached to memory as seen by Saunders' work above. Carol Kidron, an anthropologist at The University of Haifa, approaches Holocaust remembrance from the ground up instead of from the top down. She examines how the families of Holocaust victims and survivors pass down intergenerationally the stories of the Holocaust, and then seek out larger institutions for help filling in story gaps.[31] Her article is a focus on familial oral history of the Holocaust and less about souvenirs. However, it is an important framework for the function of family memories being passed down through the generations and contributing to the surrounding national narratives of family experiences.

The field of archaeology is vested primarily in terms of institutional interests such as governments or museums. As a result, they are often merely objects to attach to the narrative in an exhibit. These exhibits do not give people personal connections to war trophies nor affect remembrances of the war in personal contexts. War and memory touches material culture at the museum but is otherwise rooted in national interests or narratives. While many national war memory narratives are co-opted at the family level, none look at the associations with the

[30] Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 147-218.
[31] Carol Kidron, "Survivor Family Memory Work at Sites of Holocaust Remembrance: Institutional Enlistment Or Family Agency?," *History & Memory* 27, no. 2 (2015): 45-73.

trophies' impact on familial recollections of the war in American history. The "Good War" narrative looks at the primarily American phenomenon of nostalgic memory of WWII and its effects on American society. While most Allied nations agree that WWII was necessarily a good fight against evil, in the US the war is viewed generally as a time when the US was at its peak morally, militarily, and economically, and most everyone prospered from it as a result.

The present thesis is presented organizationally to unfold - like the theory of trauma - being passed down generationally. The first chapter outlines the actions of American soldiers' collecting habits and psychological processes associated with them. The underlying factors for their collecting of combat souvenirs and trophies stems from two unconscious psychological theories. The first and most prevalent theory is that of terror management. Soldiers in theater and subsequent occupations collected artifacts as a means of preserving their immortality after their deaths through the artifacts that they brought home with them. The artifacts represent their memory to posterity as future generations cherish and build on their collections. The second unconscious factor to their collecting stems from trauma theory's stage of revenge as a manner of recovery. The collection of artifacts is a way for soldiers who have been traumatized by the war to exert control and manipulate the objects that tormented them or stand in for the enemy who traumatized them. These unconscious factors are examined through the lenses of other, commonly stated collecting theories as applied to both civilian and military contexts.

The second chapter of this work examines the second generation that receives these artifact collections. Because the revenge stage of recovery from trauma rarely leads to closure, many veterans hid their war prizes away in chests and closets or handed them down to children and grandchildren as a way to manage the traumatic experiences associated with them. As the second generation did not directly experience trauma associated with the artifacts, they exhibit

different effects on those who inherit them. All of the observed families associate their veterans' service with the national "Good War" narrative which is co-opted into a family memory structure. Some family members also vicariously experience the trauma associated with the artifacts and share the veterans' lack of closure, while others exhibit strong tendencies towards fulfilling terror management theory by cherishing the collected artifacts as the catalysts of their own collections spurred by their memories of the family veteran.

The third chapter examines the third stage of the artifact's attached trauma: commodification and fetishization. As the artifacts are handed down to the third generation from the original collector without subsequent oral history attached to them, their familial memory connections begin to be severed and the artifacts' histories take on a more antiquarian association. In cases of items with a provenance to larger historical figures attached, they wind up in public history institutions or become commodified for large sums of money. The rest of the artifacts outside of historical institutions generally wind up in the hands of antiquarian collectors in a more commodified or even fetishized market. This market is spurred by, and mainly consists of, the second generation of artifact inheritors who continue to fulfill the terror management theory of collecting to preserve memory by adding to their family veteran's collections. The collecting field is aware of those who fetishize over the artifacts as a way that glorifies the defeated regimes, and rigorously self-polices its ranks to shun these characters from their community. For many of these collectors, the items in their collections are their way of displaying dominance over defeated cultures and a way to continue adding to the memories of their family veteran through collecting.

CHAPTER 1: COMPULSIONS TO COLLECT

American soldiers in World War II (WWII) collected prodigious amounts of war materiel from conquered Axis foes and returned home with them as war souvenirs. These items ranged from combat gear and weapons to Adolf Hitler's personal photograph albums. With records of collecting evident as far back as the fifth century B.C.E., this behavior has been a staple of mankind throughout history.[1] But why are people, particularly soldiers, compelled to do it? Is there a greater purpose and significance of collecting to culture and society beyond mere antiquarian interests? The objects of desire are often as unique as the collectors or organizations who collect them. These range from the magnificent paintings or works of art, such as the Mona Lisa and Van Gogh masterpieces in the Louvre, to mundane objects such as pennies and bottle caps. Whatever one can think of, it has probably been collected at some point or is the focus of someone's collection at this very moment. Museums tend to be where collected objects are stored, preserved, and displayed within some discernible context. However, the overwhelming majority of war related material collections and collecting is done outside the realm of museums and archaeological fields. These collections are personal, and most are not deemed culturally or historically significant.

Artifacts associated with WWII bring out lively discussions of the war nearly anywhere they are found and displayed, and such discussions have served as a primary manner in which memory has been passed down to subsequent generations. The passing of memory between generations has often been tied to a soldier's personal effects from the war. Soldiers in WWII were continually outfitted with more gear in order to adapt to the changing conditions of the war as well as challenges presented by technological advances in twentieth century industrialized

[1] William D. McIntosh and Brandon Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Leisure Sciences* 26, no. 1 (2004): 87.

warfare. Many pieces of such gear became highly sought after as souvenirs by soldiers. There are a variety of consciously stated reasons for this practice, and determining which items became the most sought after was heavily influenced by the circumstances in which soldiers found themselves.

Gathering equipment as souvenirs and war trophies closely follows the processes of civilian collecting, with war experiences truncating some steps and adding additional motivations. Items brought home typically engendered a conscious and unconscious factor that rendered them as desirable to the collector. The most commonly stated conscious desire for souvenirs from combat veteran testimonies is that they are a way to prove that they survived battle with the enemy. This chapter analyzes the various psychological aspects associated with collecting battlefield artifacts and how those processes played out in WWII. This chapter seeks to understand why American soldiers engaged in such widespread souvenir hunting/collecting during the war. Though conscious reasons and psychological processes for each soldier are unique, the underlying unconscious causes may be understood by applying terror management and trauma theories to the phenomenon of war memorabilia collecting.

Unconscious Reasons for Collecting

Terror management theory stems from the broader psychological theory that all humans are aware of their own mortality and do their best to ward off their knowledge of that fact in daily life, and to ensure that they are not forgotten in death.[2] One way to ensure one's legacy is not forgotten is through amassing a collection, such as war relics from battles experienced during one's military service. Given that a soldier could die at any minute in war and his personal effects would be sent home to his family, terror management theory offers a plausible

[2] Randy Frost and Gail Steketee, *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), 55.

explanation for why a soldier would engage in the practice of battlefield souvenir collecting. According to this theory, "an impressive collection may serve a symbolic immortality function."[3] It can be inferred that soldiers collected war souvenirs to immortalize themselves and their wartime deeds in their family legacies.

Trauma theory offers compelling insights as to how the human brain processes and remembers, or does not remember, intensely traumatic events. Judith Herman, a pioneer of trauma theory, claims "the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness."[4] However, it may not be entirely possible for humans to forget traumatic experiences. Herman elaborates that most victims are caught between an intense desire to deny such trauma ever happened, and an equally intense desire to proclaim that trauma to the world.[5] Initially believed that trauma actually could be forgotten, more recent works in psychology have since shown strong evidence to the contrary. Rather than being unable to remember events, many victims of trauma have very vivid memories of it. They are instead *unwilling* to discuss their traumatic experiences.[6] This desire to avoid discussion of traumatic events is demonstrated in many combat veterans' general reticence to speak about their experiences. It is rarely a question of whether they are able to recall their experiences, but rather it is whether they want to talk about them. Harvard psychologist Richard McNally theorizes that rather than forgetting or having hazy memories of trauma, victims have enhanced memories of it.[7] Psychologist Jacob Pederson expounded on this idea of heightened sense of memory from traumatic experiences through his analyses of veterans' autobiographical recollections of war experiences and works of

[3] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 87.
[4] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1992), 1.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Joshua Pederson, "Speak Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory," *Narrative* 22:3 (October 2014): 334.
[7] Richard McNally, *Remembering Trauma* (London; Cambridge, Mass;: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 184.

art/literature that they produced.[8] Such literature is one only way that trauma has manifested among combat veterans; collecting and trophy hunting is another.

Trauma can be passed down intergenerationally through families. Carol Kidron, a professor at Haifa University specializing in family memory and commemoration, examined post-trauma in the families of Holocaust survivors. One of her studies centered on Jewish families reading letters from relatives who survived the Holocaust, letters that had otherwise been kept secret. Kidron quotes an Israeli teacher who asserted, "The letter parents write to their children is a tool—it's just the first step in…preserving Holocaust memory." Furthermore, "the vocal witness in the service of Holocaust memory sustain survivors' commitment to testimony and valorize the intergenerational transmission of their profile of victim and witness to second- and third generation descendants."[9] In the same way that Holocaust survivor trauma is passed down generationally through letters to preserve memory, the artifacts veterans collect and bequeath also pass down their trauma within their families as well.

Given the omnipresent possibility of sudden death in combat, veterans who experienced such a level of stress and trauma often turned to collecting as a means of memory management in recovery. Herman explains that one aspect of recovery from trauma is revenge fantasy, wherein a victim can "get rid of the terror, shame, and pain of the trauma by retaliating against the perpetrator…the victim imagines that revenge is the only way to restore [their] sense of power."[10] Soldiers attempted to attain revenge and regain a sense of power by forcibly taking possessions from defeated enemies that stood in for the perpetrator(s) of the trauma inflicted on

[8] Pederson, "Speak Trauma," 340-44.
[9] Carol A. Kidron, "Survivor Family Memory Work at Sites of Holocaust Remembrance: Institutional Enlistment or Family Agency?," *History & Memory* 27, no. 2 (2015): 47.
[10] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 189.

them. The revenge fantasy also provides an explanation of the gruesome practice in the Pacific Theater of taking skull trophies and other body parts as souvenirs.[11]

The scholarly literature of trauma theory, to date, however, has not dealt with the subject of war memorabilia and souvenir collecting. Perhaps the nearest application of trauma theory in this regard may be seen in examples of trench art created during and after World War I. Trench art consisted of soldiers scavenging war materials from the battlefield and repurposing it in a decorative manner. Such objects included spent shell casings, bullets, barbed wire, and damaged kit materials, amongst others. Nicholas Saunders, an expert on the material culture of war, theorizes that trench art was primarily designed for domestic peacetime consumption, to tame the experiences of war in order to soften hard memories of it.[12] While not a manner of revenge as theorized by Herman, this phenomenon was clearly a demonstration of mastery and control over the implements that traumatized World War I veterans. That an industry of trench art continued after the war until the outbreak of WWII further signifies that the traumatic experiences of the war compelled a way for survivors and family members to manipulate and exert control over the objects that tormented them by taking away friends and loved ones.

The work of Gabriel Moshenska, a British archaeologist at the University of London who studies the material culture of WWII on the British Homefront offers one possible interpretation of trauma theory as it may be applied to the case of collecting war memorabilia and artifacts. At the outbreak of WWII, the British government issued gas masks en masse to its population in anticipation of chemical weapons attacks by the Germans. British schoolchildren were drilled

[11] Simon Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 4 (2006): 817-36 and Simon Harrison, "War Mementos and the Souls of Missing Soldiers: Returning Effects of the Battlefield Dead," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 4 (2008): 774-790.
[12] Nicholas Saunders, "Bodies of Metal, Shells of Memory: 'Trench Art', and the Great War Re-Cycled," *Journal of Material Culture* 5, no. 1 (2000): 54.

excessively on how to put on their masks, even though the feared attacks never materialized.[13] In the postwar period, the image of the gas mask was still quite vivid to British citizens who experienced the war as children. Moshenska stated that the gas masks were powerful mnemonic objects for recalling childhood memories when citizens were interviewed.[14] The subjects of the study were able to recall very precisely the sights, sounds, feelings, and memories they associated with the gas masks, even years after the war ended, which supports McNally and Pederson's contention that traumatic experiences produce enhanced memories – in this case manifested through the artifact of the gas mask. Moshenska also analyzed children's collections of anti-aircraft and bomb shrapnel from air raids over British cities. He states that:

> For children, war is often experienced in terms of a heightened sense of powerlessness and, perversely, a degree of freedom, amidst the chaos and change in their social and material worlds. In this context, 'the calming effects of the collection have to do with control: one retreats from a situation in which one has lost control to one in which the collector dominates – if possible, totally'.[15]

The phenomenon of children collecting battlefield souvenirs is not limited to WWII. Andy Clarno has observed that in the aftermath of battles in the Gaza Strip, where Israeli forces frequently clash with Palestinians, Palestinian children often pick up remaining war material as souvenirs. Once the Israeli vehicles leave a conflict zone the "children remain on the streets picking up spent ammunition that the soldiers leave behind."[16] As the children experience many of their friends and neighbors killed or wounded in the crossfire of these conflicts, the shells constitute "an assertion of victory: 'you took your best shot, but we are still here!'" Clarno

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[13] Gabriel Moshenska, "Gas Masks: Material Culture, Memory, and the Senses: Gas Masks," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 16, no. 3 (2010): 615-20.
[14] Ibid., 612-3.
[15] Gabriel Moshenska, "A Hard Rain: Children's Shrapnel Collections in the Second World War," *Journal of Material Culture* 13, no. 1 (2008): 113. With embedded quote from: Danet and Katriel, "Glorious Obsessions, Passionate Lovers, and Hidden Treasures: Collecting, Metaphor and the Romantic Ethic," in S.H. Riggins (ed.) *The Socialness of Things: Essays on the Socio-Semiotics of Objects*, (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), 41.
[16] Andy Clarno, "Or does it Explode? Collecting Shells in Gaza," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (2009): 96.

argues that "Collecting shells helps Palestinian children make sense of the incomprehensible power of military technology."[17]

By extension, the same explanation may apply to WWII soldiers. Many WWII soldiers were not much older than the schoolchildren described above, perhaps as little as four or five years their senior, and the feelings they experienced in combat were likely to have been similar. Soldiers were powerless to stop the incoming hail of enemy munitions, and the military lifestyle completely upended their former social and material worlds experienced in civilian life. In an environment where soldiers lack control, even over personal life choices due to military culture, it would be natural to engage traumatic experiences by collecting war trophies and battlefield artifacts. It would be one of the few ways for soldiers to exert a degree of control over their lives and surrounding environments. Beyond the unconscious theories associated with the drive to collect trophies, there were also conscious reasons for soldiers to collect war souvenirs as well.

Types of Collectors and Conscious Reasons for Civilian Collecting

Since the dawn of warfare, the prospects of financial gain and security have been primary motives to join the military. In recent decades there has been a concerted effort in Western culture to eradicate the practices of looting and plundering as "financial supplements" in the military. However, such practices used to be an accepted staple of warfare for the victorious armies until shortly after WWII. The war's excesses prompted clarifications and strengthening of the Geneva and Hague Conventions regarding looting as a war crime.[18] Today, looting is seen as unnecessarily barbaric, and unethical in wars where civilian non-combatants are increasingly caught up in active warzones. In Medieval times, the looting process was more or less codified and systematized. British war historian Richard Holmes states that "after the sack of

[17] Ibid.
[18] Barbara Hoffman, ed. *Art and Cultural Heritage: Law, Policy and Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 57.

Constantinople in 1204 the loot was divided up according to rank, 'one mounted serjent[sic] received as much as 2 serjents[sic] on foot, one knight as much as two mounted serjents[sic].'"[19] These processes continued into the nineteenth century, where after the Battle of Waterloo many British and coalition soldiers looted captive soldiers as well as the dead for plunder, coin, valuables, and even teeth. Often, superior officers would encourage soldiers to search potential hiding places for valuables in enemy uniforms or comment on how much they were able to take.[20] Despite changes in military law, looting was a widespread practice through both world wars and was prevalent among US troops in WWII.

Although the Hague Conventions in 1899 and 1907 permitted relieving enemy soldiers of equipment on the battlefield, it expressly forbade seizing civilian assets or private property.[21] The distinction of "souvenir" hunting from enemy soldiers as opposed to "looting" from civilians was thereby formalized in the conduct of war. Though professionalized armies and increased regulations have slowed systematic looting, soldiers still generally seek a memento of their service and proof of time in the line of duty.[22] The extent to which American soldiers went "souvenir" hunting or looted during WWII was enormous in scale. Just the known American WWII militaria collecting market was valued at $500 million in 2000.[23] Some soldiers even tried to steal the Hessian Crown Jewels from the former royal family.[24] Given the extent of souvenirs available to virtually every American soldier, especially during the post-war occupation, hierarchies of desired souvenirs formed quickly. As these hierarchies formed, the abundance of

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[19] Richard Holmes, *Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 353.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions of 1899 (II) and 1907 (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, Pamphlet No.5* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment, 1915), 9, 24.
[22] Jeff Schogol, "U.S. Troops' War Souvenirs Are Strictly Regulated," *Stars and Stripes* April 11, 2006, https://www.stripes.com/news/u-s-troops-war-souvenirs-are-strictly-regulated-1.47550.
[23] Anna Maria Virzi, "Hate or History?," *Forbes*, July 3, 2001.
[24] Susan Carruthers, *The Good Occupation: American Soldiers and the Hazards of Peace* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016), 230-33.

souvenirs resulted in a black market. Many soldiers became collectors and constantly traded items they acquired to flesh out their collections. They could then show off collected souvenirs to fellow soldiers and, eventually, take them all home as a way to immortalize themselves to their families for posterity.

For context, it is important to note first that collecting is not unique to soldiers in combat, however, as collecting is a practice widespread in human societies. A 1980's survey estimated that roughly one third of all Americans are engaged in some sort of collecting.[25] Based upon that number, it may be inferred that American collectors span almost 43 million households.[26] But what is collecting? Russell Belk, a leading psychologist in the field of collecting and consumer studies, states that collecting is "the process of actively, selectively, and passionately acquiring and possessing things removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences."[27] Some collectors are numismatists, those who collect money. Others are arctophiles who collect teddy bears. Still others are horologists who collect clocks and watches; there were many of these collector-soldiers in the European Theater of WWII. Others collect bottlecaps, playing cards, license plates, and even collecting guides themselves.[28] The drive to collect can be very strong can have a profound impact on the lives of collectors. But most collections will never end up in a museum or be considered culturally relevant, which brings us back to the original question: why do people decide to collect in the first place?

Numerous theories exist on the psychological drives to collect. Laura Saari, a prominent journalist on the West coast, theorized in 1997 that there are four types of collectors.[29] The first

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[25] Russell W. Belk, "Collecting as Luxury Consumption: Effects on Individuals and Households," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 16, no. 3 (1995): 478. http://tinyurl.com/y6fem52h
[26] Menelaos Apostolou, "Why Men Collect Things? A Case Study of Fossilised Dinosaur Eggs," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 32, no. 3 (2011): 410. http://tinyurl.com/y63ux5y4
[27] Belk, "Collecting as Luxury Consumption," 479.
[28] Mark B. McKinley, "The Psychology of Collecting," *The National Psychologist*, May 31, 2011.
[29] Laura Saari, "Those Crazy Collectors," *The Orange County Register*, Tuesday, April 15, 1997.

type is the passionate collector, who devotes inordinate amounts of time and energy towards the pursuit of their collections. If the object is one that they are bent on acquiring, they will pay almost any price necessary. In WWII, the passionate soldier-collectors of this type tended to chase Axis pistols and bladed weapons. The Germans and Japanese knew about this too, and so would set traps for inattentive souvenir-hunting American soldiers.[30] A warning in a souvenir guide handbook sent to soldiers on their way to the Pacific in June of 1945 stated:

> Somewhere along the line in this war, American forces have been tagged with the name and reputation of 'Great Souvenir Hunters'. In the ETO the Germans capitalized on this reputation with that menace to all troops – booby-traps. Innumerable lives were lost because individuals just had to pick up a shiny pistol, saber, camera, field glasses, or some other item which the enemy had neatly rigged with high explosive.[31]

Passionate collectors can seem obsessive in their pursuits, and many in this category cross the border of collecting into hoarding.[32]

The second type of collector is known as the inquisitive collector. These are persons who view collecting as an investment or a way to eventually earn a profit. American occupation soldiers were very often of this type during WWII, especially with excess souvenirs able to be sold to rear-line units. The standard base "currency" of the souvenir black market was a P.08 "Luger" pistol, valued around $100.[33] In modern collecting practices, those who collect for profit are generally limited to those who collect fine art and expensive vehicles, as most other collections are very risky or non-profitable investments. Even the investment in fine art is not

[30]Raymond Gantter, *Roll Me Over: An Infantryman's World War II* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), 329.
[31] CinCPac-CinCPOA Bulletin 157-45, *United States Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas Souvenirs*, U.S. Government Printing Office, June 25, 1945, 14.
[32] McKinley, "The Psychology of Collecting."
[33] Seth Givens, "Bringing Back Memories: GIs, Souvenir Hunting, and Looting in Germany, 1945" (Electronic Thesis, Ohio University, 2010), 25-28.

one that has any substantial benefit, as return rates are generally lesser than other, more established, market assets.[34]

The third type of collector is the hobbyist, who collects purely for enjoyment. Often these people, such as retirees, collect to fill their spare time. The fourth type of collector is the expressive collector, who collects as a statement of who they are. These are persons whose collections become a part of their outward identity, possibly even a claim to fame if they have amassed a big enough collection. The above categories are not mutually exclusive, and many US soldiers who collected artifacts in WWII fall into multiple categories.

Susan Pearce, an established authority on sociology and material culture, theorizes that there are around seventeen different conscious causes for collecting. These include: leisure, aesthetics, competition, risk, fantasy, a sense of community, prestige, domination, sensual gratification, sexual foreplay, desire to reframe objects, the pleasing rhythm of sameness and difference, ambition to achieve perfection, extending the self, reaffirming the body, producing gender identity, and achieving immortality.[35] One can re-organize these seventeen themes into clearer trends. Competition, fantasy, risk, achieving perfection, desire to reframe objects, and domination can be viewed as a way for collectors to display power of some sort over objects and people or ideologies associated with them. A feeling of control comes with managing extensive or expensive collections, especially if the collector is having issues controlling aspects of their own personal lives in other areas.[36] These themes fit trauma theory's application towards collecting as a way to manage trauma. Soldiers in WWII could seek solace in collecting as most

[34] Darryl Roxburgh "The Role of High Net Worth Investment Managers in Collectible Investing for Their Clients," in *Collectible Investments for the High Net Worth Investor*, ed. Stephen Satchell (Amsterdam: Elsevier/Academic Press. 2009), 11-25.
[35] Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects, and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press 1993.)
[36] McKinley, "The Psychology of Collecting."

of their lives were heavily dictated by military necessities and the randomness of death unique to war and combat.

Prestige, sense of community, and leisure can be grouped into collecting as an entrée to social interaction. Collectors often meet to enhance one another's collections, discuss new collecting pursuits, or simply use the pursuit of a collection as an excuse to travel or spend time with others.[37] Raymond Gantter, an infantry sergeant in the US Army during the war, stated in his war memoirs that about 80% of his unit were habitual looters/souvenir hunters.[38] Soldiers in wartime forming natural communities out of shared experiences used battlefield collecting/souvenir hunting as an informal bonding exercise in the field, as well as in veterans' organizations after the war. Sensual gratification, sexual foreplay, and pleasing rhythm of sameness and difference can be lumped into a broad category of artistic expression and consumption through the form of a collection. These, however, are extremely uncommon motivations to be found among combat veterans in the context of a military lifestyle.

Extending the self, reaffirming the body, producing gender identity, and achieving immortality constitute a broader category of collections becoming a part of the collector's identity as a way to ensure they are not forgotten. These themes are displayed in collecting generalizations across the gender spectrum. Collecting hobbies often reinforce stereotypical gender norms, both in what is typically collected by each gender and the manner in which each gender views their collection.[39] The unconscious desire for immortality is a near consensus conclusion in studies of collecting, particularly amongst men. This desire for immortality is

[37] Belk, "Collecting as Luxury Consumption," 486.
[38] Gantter, *Roll Me Over*, 189.
[39] Susan M. Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 154-171.

widely analyzed through the framework of terror management theory.[40] We may recall that terror management theory asserts that we try to ward off awareness of our inevitable death, which can be accomplished through amassing and exerting control over a collection. Attaining such collections in a civilian setting also is shown to increase self-esteem as a culturally approved activity.[41] It is through collections that people try to ensure that they will be remembered in death. This is often expressed by passing down a collection as part of an inheritance with the hope that whoever inherits the collection will continue to add to or treasure it, thus preserving the memory of the original collector.[42] Collectors maintain that their collections have historic, artistic, or scientific significance in some way(s) that produces a legacy of them for their children and future generations. Of particular relevance, war relics are generally thought of as a way to memorialize great victories.[43] In a wartime environment where death is common, the collections of soldiers in their rucksacks or base footlockers could very well be the only tangible way to preserve their own memories for posterity beyond a combat report. Their collections were acquired in a manner to promote their own legacies. When analyzed through the lens of terror management theory, WWII soldiers who took souvenir collections home did so out of an unconscious goal to be remembered by their families and friends as heroes in one of the world's darkest hours. In case of death before returning home, soldiers had tangible proof of their deeds and accomplishments against an enemy that was both formidable and evil.

The processes by which soldiers collected these objects to cement their personal legacies varied considerably. Accordingly, the processes they undertook in order to get their collections

[40] S. Solomon, Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T., "A Terror Management Theory of Social Behavior: The Psychological Functions of Self-Esteem and Cultural Worldviews," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology,* Vol. 24, ed. Mark P. Zanna (San Diego, CA: Academic, 1991), 91–159.
[41] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 87.
[42] Peter Subkowski, "On the Psychodynamics of Collecting," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 87, no. 2 (2006): 392.
[43] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 87.

were not uniform. The realities of combat and military life often precluded soldiers' abilities to hunt for battlefield souvenirs the same way that civilians are able to hunt for their desired collectibles/souvenirs. Occupation duty gave soldiers ample time to explore the shops, homes, and surrendered enemy soldiers for desired loot and souvenirs to obtain for their collections. There were rules to the practice, at least in theory. Soldiers heading to the Pacific in June 1945 were issued a souvenir handbook that outlined legal and illegal practices according to US military law. For example, attempting to profiteer from excess souvenirs and taking souvenirs without permission of a commanding officer were expressly forbidden.[44] These regulations, however, clearly did not stop American soldiers from engaging in the practice. The handbook also outlined the list of acceptable souvenirs for American servicemen to take provided they cleared them with an officer. The permitted souvenirs were:

> Samurai swords, sabres, knives, decorations, officer-of-the-day sashes, naval uniforms (but not Navy Special Landing Force uniforms), inner clothing, non-military personal items…Helmets, pistols, rifles, carbines, and bayonets of conventional design which are of no particular intelligence value may be retained as souvenirs unless required to fill quotas for training purposes. Japanese currency not to exceed the value of 20 yen for any one person may be retained. Occupation currency issued by the enemy may be retained in amounts not to exceed 10 notes for any one person.
>
> Japanese flags and insignia may be retained as souvenirs provided they are not the personal flags of officers of Flag or General rank.[45]

The handbook described the proper procedure for American soldiers to document souvenirs for US customs officials to legally bring them home. It also offered warnings of souvenirs that were not permissible by soldiers to keep as souvenirs. Such items included: heavy arms such as machine guns, artillery, explosives and ammunition, technology like radios, chemical warfare equipment, *any* written documents, medical equipment, and supplies for

[44] *Pacific Souvenirs*, 1-2.
[45] Ibid., 4.

quartermasters and engineers.[46] The booklet also warned soldiers not to participate in the purchase or sale of excess equipment or souvenirs, and reminded them of the practice's criminality. The guidebook states that whoever engages in this practice "commits a violation punishable by courts-martial in selling the item and you commit one in buying it. Also, you might pay $100 or more for a Jap[anese] rifle or machine gun only to have it confiscated."[47] It also offered the aforementioned warning about rigged souvenirs learned from experiences in the European Theater with German booby-trapping.

The Collecting Process

William McIntosh, Professor of Psychology at the College of William & Mary, and Brandon Schmeichel, Professor of Psychology at Texas A&M, summarized basic collecting processes for people in a civilian setting. Step one is remarkably simple: deciding what to collect. This decision is often as individualized as the desired items to be collected. Sometimes this is done in a heat of passion, in others it is a long thought-out and well-reasoned process of elimination. Still other times it happens spontaneously. Such spontaneous events often include receiving items as a gift, re-discovering old possessions, a byproduct of an accident, or finding unique objects at a flea/antique market. Others may find objects they believe are undervalued and collect as a potential investment to later sell for a profit. Regardless of motivation, once a collection interest is chosen, collectors set goals to build and streamline it.[48] This behavior is observed during WWII by soldiers who collected bags of loot, kept the best for themselves, and sold or traded the rest despite it being against military law.[49] While collecting goals are a way to achieve self-actualization, it is also how many fall down the path of a materialistic focus

[46] Ibid., 10.
[47] Ibid., 13.
[48] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 87.
[49] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 25-28.

instead.[50] This materialistic focus can turn collectors into hoarders of material wealth, which fundamentally shifts the meaning of their collection from a way to establish memory into an addiction to acquiring things for the sake of acquiring things.

The second step of collecting is gathering information. Collectors need a strong base of requisite knowledge about what they wish to collect. Some basic questions, by no means an exhaustive list, include: How does one find the artifact? Who are the premier experts on these artifacts? How much are they worth? What factors influence overall worth? How can one tell if the artifacts in question are faked or significantly altered? How does one preserve and maintain the artifacts? As collectors continue to learn about the objects they collect through these types of questions, they become more integrated into collecting communities. They also become more independent and self-determined about themselves and their collections. These factors in turn help to increase self-esteem and feelings of belonging.[51] This was seen with American soldiers who collected Nazi Party memorabilia, which was "a mania shared by occupation soldiers regardless of race, rank, class, or religion."[52] They sought information on souvenirs and were more than willing to trade/hunt for more desirable souvenirs with other soldiers to get the best, most complete collections. With highly sought after and unique items in their collections, soldiers immortalized their contributions to the defeat of the Third Reich both to comrades and to family at home.

The third step in collecting is the planning and courtship phase. When collectors have an idea of the subset of items to collect and the pertinent information, they go in search of the targeted items for their collections. Collectors in civilian settings often search auction houses,

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[50] Shirley Maloney Mueller, "The Neuropsychology of the Collector," in *Collectible Investments for the High Net Worth Investor*, ed. Stephen Satchell (Amsterdam: Elsevier/Academic Press. 2009), 38-9.
[51] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 89.
[52] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 73.

antique stores, and the internet in this phase to find desired items at affordable prices. Sometimes this phase is bypassed, and collectors will collect spontaneously and frivolously as they come across the objects.[53] The planning and courtship phase was often unavailable to, or was severely truncated for, WWII soldiers. They typically collected spontaneously and discarded old souvenirs as they went, shipped souvenirs home to make more room in their rucksacks, or traded/sold less desired parts of their collections to fellow soldiers.[54] Roscoe Blunt, an infantry soldier in Europe, stated that soldiers would stuff their barracks bags full of souvenirs, sometimes so full that they had no room for anything else except required army gear.[55] In the occupations of defeated nations, this planning and courtship phase for collector-soldiers looking to add to their haul was alive and well. The interesting part of this phase is that collectors tend to form a bond with the object and attach to it a special significance. They may daydream as though they own the object already and imagine its potential benefits to them before it is possessed. The desired objects almost become good luck charms before formal possession or purchase.[56] However, ruminating on it for too long and then not acquiring the object can be deflating. It causes many collectors to willingly overpay for an artifact they have been courting for a long period of time.

The fourth phase is the hunt for the object in question, which entails singling out the object for purchase/acquisition and locating it. The hunt may cause collectors to get a serious case of "tunnel vision" that lets them drown out the sensory overload of their surroundings to focus intently on a desired object they are about to acquire. This behavior was evident even during the war, as American soldiers risked exposing themselves in the middle of combat to

[53] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 89.
[54] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 74.
[55] Roscoe C. Blunt, Jr., *Foot Soldier: A Combat Infantryman's War in Europe* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 1994), 84.
[56] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 89-91.

search dead soldiers for pistols or valuables.[57] In other cases, the hunt precluded them from acting in a soldierly fashion. Jim McCarthy, an American soldier, recalls that in April 1945 "a German officer and a sergeant walked up to surrender. This kid fired from 50 feet away. Then he yelled 'Halt.' He comes runnin' down the stairs yellin', 'The Luger's mine, the Luger's mine.'"[58] While the external factors may continue to motivate collecting, many collectors argue that the experience of the hunt is rewarding and pleasing in and of itself.[59] External motivators can provide factors that cause otherwise irrational decisions to be made, such as risking oneself needlessly in combat. One such motivator is the competition, which causes collectibles at auction to go for very high prices as the competitive spirit takes place between collectors over a prized object.[60] Competition amongst soldiers to get the best collection stems from their desire to cement their immortality within memory through their collection.

The fifth stage of the collecting process is the actual acquisition of the artifact(s). This is rather self-explanatory, but a number of psychological phenomena occur at this stage. For one, the tension of items not being in a person's collection is momentarily released as a positive rush of self-esteem and a feeling of being one step closer to an "ideal collecting self" is realized. This adrenaline-like rush experienced by collectors often is often described as addictive. This is further enhanced by a feeling known as "contagion" wherein collectors feel a "magical" connection to the artifact's previous owners or users, which in turn leads to yet another rise in self-esteem and self-perceived prestige.[61] These aspects are particularly insightful when looking at American soldiers' actions in Berchtesgaden, Bavaria in May 1945.

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[57] Stephen Ambrose, *Band of Brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: From Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 82. (This is a prominent scene in Episode 2 of the HBO miniseries, based on the book, at Brecourt Manor.)
[58] Richard M. Stannard, *Infantry: An Oral History of a World War II American Infantry Battalion* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 254.
[59] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 89-91.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.

Members of the American 101st Airborne Division entered the town where Hitler's "Eagle's Nest" overlooked the nearby city of Salzburg, Austria. The war ended during their occupation there, and members of the unit ransacked the mountaintop retreat and the luxury homes of the town's inhabitants, which were largely restricted to the Nazi Party elite. Many priceless items were taken, including almost all of Hermann Goering's collection of fine alcohol from across Europe and even one of Hitler's personal photo albums.[62] These men greatly cherished the possessions they looted from Berchtesgaden, knowing that this was their way of showing final dominance over the Nazis by capturing souvenirs from the Party's highest ranking members, which according to trauma-theory, fulfills the revenge fantasy. This was also a level of war loot prestige that was the virtual peak of their collections and assured a claim to immortality – as suggested by terror management theory – through possession of artifacts formerly belonging to the war's most notorious villains.

The sixth step is the "post-acquisition" phase. In this phase, collectors take their new item to intently study and observe as well as bask in the glow of its acquisition. They often use their new acquisition to position themselves into an "in-group" and assess where their collection stands relative to other collectors. This is reflective of collecting's inherently competitive group motivations. To increase the social benefit, collectors will seek advice and approval from other, more established collectors. They may also show off their collection to other collectors whose collection is not as extensive.[63] Depending on the level of competition felt from others and the stage of collecting reached, the collector then reacts accordingly to other collectors' perceptions of their collection. For some, this results in a feeling of immense pride towards their new

[62] Ambrose, *Band of Brothers*, 274-92. (This chapter of the book is depicted in Episode 10 of the HBO miniseries of the same title from the 10:00 to 17:30 mark.)
[63] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting", 93.

standing and causes others to be deflated or dejected at the state of their collection compared to their peers. In some cases, it causes collectors to focus on only a certain subset of items to gain an advantage over others who collect similar items. However, the shared group does not become harmed in this way and many collectors say that the groups' camaraderie is a tangible benefit of collecting.[64] Despite ostensibly being a part of a group that collects the same items, each collection seems to add to the perceived unique individuality of the collector who engages in the activity.[65] In the case of US soldiers and occupation troops, collecting Nazi memorabilia as souvenirs made them feel as if they had a personal part in the group effort of defeating Hitler's Nazi Germany.[66]

The final step in collecting is the manipulation, display, and/or cataloging of the items. Having finally come into full ownership of the object, collectors exert control over the item(s) as much as they can or desire as a display of mastery and control over other parts of their lives.[67] They may engage in an admiration ritual where they celebrate their ownership of the objects by keeping them around to admire for a period. Sigmund Freud, an avid collector himself, took his new acquisitions to his dining room table so he could admire them while he ate, and then took them to his office to hold while seeing patients.[68] After this admiration period, collectors typically engage in a cataloging of the collection to insert it into its proper space within a larger context. Consider, for example, a collection of medals in a larger WWII memorabilia display. This cataloging can take place mentally, with simple written notes, or even in a large computer database. This cataloging process is something collectors often find extremely satisfying and can

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 74.
[67] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 94.
[68] Ibid.

be linked to the satisfaction of progressing towards a goal and the self-fulfillment it brings.[69] Collectors then return to stage three and plan to find more objects to add, or they return to stage one with an eye toward setting new collecting goals to pursue if their collection is otherwise completed. For US service members in Europe, consummate battlefield souvenir collectors would likely have a German camera, a Luger pistol, a German fur-lined coat, a German flag with a swastika, and a beer stein with which to hold their "refreshments."[70]

Causes of Soldiers' Conscious Collecting

For soldiers in the field, the processes of souvenir hunting and collecting differed from civilian processes. Their reasonings are generally similar, however. Civilians tend to collect initially as a form of luxury consumption or to exert control over an aspect of their lives. Soldiers on the battlefield initially tended to consciously collect out of necessity for survival. As the war progressed into Germany in spring 1945, these conscious motivations switched most often to status and profit as soldiers' lifestyles in Germany became increasingly similar to civilian lifestyles. The four primary conscious motivations for soldiers to loot and souvenir hunt are for keepsakes, profit, revenge, and necessity/survival on the battlefield.[71] While these are corollaries of their civilian counterparts' reasons for collecting in general, the processes are often different due to battlefield situations and ever present danger of imminent death. In the civilian world, status generally takes the place of revenge as rivalries escalate over prestige and not traumatic experiences such as death as in war. The general collecting processes for civilians are often accelerated, truncated, or outright skipped due to situational constraints for soldiers on the battlefield. Soldiers' collecting behaviors became more similar to civilian behaviors as the war

[69] Ibid.
[70] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 47-84.
[71] Ibid., 23.

progressed further into Germany and as Pacific islands were mostly cleared of Japanese garrisons.[72] Civilian collecting habits became especially prevalent in the occupations of Axis nations after the war. This was only exacerbated as items to be collected went from almost strictly military equipment in Africa and Axis-occupied allied nations and territories to civilian items encountered in the enemy's home territory. Billeted homes provided more room to store acquired souvenirs and improved mailing services, especially after the conflict had ceased, which allowed soldiers to ship artifacts home with fewer restrictions.

The first motive of obtaining keepsakes has existed since the dawn of warfare. These souvenirs were taken primarily as evidence that soldiers had met the enemy in combat and survived. Sometimes these objects were macabre in nature, such as body parts, or even the objects that wounded soldiers in battle, such as bullets and shrapnel.[73] Common keepsakes included watches, family photos and letters from enemy soldiers, and captured enemy flags. Enemy flags in particular were a morale boost, as colors could only be captured from a defeated enemy after they had surrendered, been killed, or their former positions were overtaken.[74] The most prized military souvenirs, however, were enemy sidearms such as pistols and bladed weapons.[75] In the Pacific, Japanese battle flags and personal mementoes were the most common souvenirs. "Samurai" swords taken from officers were rare but sought after as they were most often depicted in propaganda of Japanese atrocities. It was also symbolic of American soldiers defeating and "owning" the traditionally powerful samurai warriors who had mythical battle prowess.[76] Although most Japanese blades were not authentic samurai swords, the average American soldier was unlikely to know this distinction.

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[72] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation*, 227-63.
[73] Peter Schrijvers, *Crash of Ruin: American Combat Soldiers in Europe During World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 69.
[74] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 23.
[75] Ibid.
[76] John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 15-33.

As most European militaries were very traditional, pistols were typically issued only to high value personnel for personal protection, such as officers and machine gunners.[77] The possession of a German pistol in particular immediately conferred a measure of prestige, as it meant they had killed or captured a high value enemy. Of special value were the German "Luger" pistols, as their toggle action and operation are iconic. These were seen as a "Holy Grail" of souvenir hunting, and soldiers literally risked their lives to acquire them, even during combat.[78] As the German soldiers observed American souvenir hunting habits, they began to booby-trap such trophies to lure in unsuspecting and reckless soldiers.[79] As the war expanded into German territory and more German armies surrendered, keepsakes of all kinds, including these much sought after sidearms, became increasingly available to US soldiers. The soldiers who picked up such valuable war trophies often embellished or faked the story of their acquisition in order to sound more heroic. This is manifested in the commonly relayed stories from veterans and their families that their WWII era German pistols were taken by from a *Schutzstaffel* (SS) officer one way or another.[80] Since SS units were notoriously brutal and effective in combat, it was a way to stake a claim to immortality by "taking" a war trophy from a feared enemy. In reality, a great many soldier acquired their prized weapon from enemy weapon piles at surrender or cleanup depots.[81]

The second conscious reason soldiers engaged in the practice of souvenir hunting was for profit. This had typically been *the* primary motive for soldiers until the professionalization of conscript armies in the Napoleonic era.[82] While soldiers were paid respectably in WWII, lust for

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[77] German infantry squad tactics revolved around their machine gun teams, and the soldiers manning them were typically the best soldiers in the squad. As such, they were often issued sidearms for defense in close quarters.
[78] Schrijvers, *Crash of Ruin*, 70.
[79] *Pacific Souvenirs*, 14. (See also: Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 41.)
[80] The SS consisted of the Nazi military elite, with soldiers and commanders often being diehard Nazi party members as well as cunning and brutally effective soldiers. They were among the German army's most effective and fanatical fighting units.
[81] George Rodger, "German Troops Leaving Denmark," *Life*, May 1945. http://forum.lugerforum.com/showthread.php?t=38572
[82] Holmes, *Acts of War*, 353.

extra profit was always a motive with such a vast availability of souvenirs. As soldiers filled out their own collections, they sold excess military equipment to rear echelon units and replacement soldiers. Luger Pistols were heavily traded and became the base on which to judge the value of other souvenirs or military favors in Europe.[83] As the war moved to its swifter than expected conclusion in Europe, some Americans passed columns of German POW's with bags and told captives to put pistols, watches, and other valuables into them. Ambitious soldiers amassed bags upon bags of items, took the best loot from them for their own collections, then took the rest to sell for handsome profits.[84] As the occupation progressed, the desperate nature of the bombed out European cities created a vast black market where soldiers sold US army equipment and rations for more loot from which to profit. In particular, cigarettes became de facto currency in German cities and towns under the occupation.[85] Soviet soldiers in Berlin received occupation currency as back-pay for their wartime service at handsome rates. Moscow ordered that this occupation currency could not be brought home. Americans gladly gouged Soviet soldiers' spare cash for cigarettes and souvenirs. While the money was worthless to the Soviets, US soldiers could convert the occupation Marks to real German Marks, and the real German Marks into US dollars.[86] In Japan, soldiers and Japanese civilians made fake souvenirs and cheap trinkets to sell to inexperienced occupation troops. Some American soldiers would hand Japanese merchants a token sum of yen then just take whatever they wanted.[87]

The third major conscious motivation for soldiers to collect souvenirs was pure necessity. In the case of pistols, most US soldiers were not issued American pistols, and they found it very comforting to have a handgun for personal protection instead of a rifle while sleeping in a

[83] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 26.
[84] James Megellas, *All the Way to Berlin: A Paratrooper at War in Europe* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 311.
[85] Carruthers, *The Good Occupation,* 227-263.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.

foxhole or other cramped quarters. Pistols were also ideal for guard duties or other assignments behind the front lines.[88] American military law stated that soldiers in the warzones must be armed at all times unless explicitly ordered otherwise. While this was meant to ensure soldiers were not careless with their rifles, carrying a handgun on long treks behind the immediate front lines both satisfied the requirement and was a much easier weight burden to bear for soldiers traveling on foot.

Similarly, American soldiers were not issued a way to keep time. Wristwatches became both a souvenir and a necessity soldiers on the battlefield for effective combat performance.[89] Other equipment, particularly German equipment, was scavenged for its superiority over American issued equipment. One of the more commonly sought-after German issued equipment items was binoculars. As David Webster noted in his account of the war, German binoculars and lens technologies were superior to their American counterparts and the Americans under-issued binoculars to its soldiers.[90] The difference binoculars made was in the scouting of enemy positions. They allowed reconnoitering at greater distances which resulted in a lower chance of becoming a casualty in the process. Better reconnaissance also provided more accurate identification of enemy strengths and weaknesses and could influence the manner of attack or defense of a position.

The other major necessities for US soldiers to loot were German vehicles for transportation. In a mechanized conflict, this dimension is invaluable for military planning. Webster noted that as they advanced further into Germany, however, many soldiers requisitioned civilian luxury cars for joyrides as most of the German military transport vehicles were out of

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[88] Schrijvers, *Crash of Ruin,* 70.
[89] Ibid.
[90] David Kenyon Webster*, Parachute Infantry: An American Paratrooper's Memoir of D-Day and the Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2008), 264.

fuel as gasoline was in desperately short supply.[91] Soldier theft of German automobiles was so rampant that at one point after the war General Eisenhower was concerned that it was slowing down the German surrender process by impeding disarmament.[92] Many of the German weapons such as artillery, rifles, and machine guns greatly impressed American soldiers. However, US troops were often more than adequately supplied with American small arms and ammunition after D-Day. After the initial landings and battles, US forces rarely had to resort to the use of captured German weapons in combat. It was a logistical strain that was not worth the marginal advantages that German equipment may have provided. By contrast, most American soldiers regarded Japanese equipment as inferior to their own. More importantly, as the war progressed, Americans became adept at listening to the sounds of gunfire and figuring out which sides' weapons made what sounds. The use of enemy weapons could cause American units to come under friendly fire due to confusion over who was shooting.[93]

The final, and often most brutal, conscious motivator for souvenir hunting was revenge. This motivator was manifested differently depending on the theater of war in which US forces participated. Americans had long-held racial prejudices against the Japanese, and Pearl Harbor fanned the flames of this sentiment into a fire that swept the nation. According to US polls of Army soldiers in 1943, about half of all service members believed that it would be necessary to kill *all* Japanese before peace could be achieved in the Pacific. Additional public opinion polls from the home front indicated throughout the war that anywhere between 10% and 13% of the population wished to exterminate the entire Japanese populace, with another 10-13% favoring "eye for an eye" retribution including torture and other harsh punishments.[94] Such sentiment was

[91] Webster, *Parachute Infantry*, 293.
[92] General Eisenhower to USSTAF, "Captured Enemy Vehicles," 30 May 1945, SHAEF, Box 91, Folder 1, RG 331, NACP. (In Givens, "Bringing Back Memories.")
[93] *Pacific Souvenirs*, 16-7.
[94] Dower, *War without Mercy*, 53.

further fueled in the Pacific during early battles, where Japanese units routinely fought on islands to the very last man without surrender or mercy.[95]

In some cases, Japanese soldiers would pretend to be wounded, surrendering, or dead, only to pull a pin on a grenade in a suicide attack to kill US troops or medics attending to them. Many American soldiers mutilated the Japanese dead in the hunt for souvenirs as revenge for their fallen comrades and out of disgust for the observed actions, as well as out of racial animus. Unlike the European theater, some soldiers' prizes in the Pacific were Japanese body parts. Some men literally beheaded Japanese war dead and boiled the flesh from their skulls, which they then took as war trophies. Others made utensils out of Japanese bones, cut out Japanese gold teeth to make necklaces, or cut off ears and pickled them to preserve as souvenirs.[96] American souvenir hunting of this sort out of "revenge" for Pearl Harbor and the nature of combat with Japanese soldiers was horrific, but common enough to be a known phenomenon on the US home front during the war.[97] Long after the war, and more frequently during the late 1980's, many American veterans felt remorse about this practice and tried to repatriate the Japanese soldiers' remains to their families. These gruesome trophy practices and some of their resolutions are discussed further in chapter three.

The motive of revenge in Europe took on a different character as the US did not perceive itself fighting a racial war against Germany the way it did against Japan. The Malmedy massacre was one of the more striking examples of German misconduct in the war, but this misconduct

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[95] Hiroo Onoda, *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War*, 1st ed. (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1974.)
Due to the nature of jungle and island warfare, many Japanese garrisons on islands that were bypassed were left stranded until the end of the war. Still other Japanese soldiers "held out" on US occupied islands, raiding military convoys and depots for supplies as needed. Many of these holdouts stayed this way well after the war, with the last known holdout continuing until 1974 when his former superior officer came to confirm the news to him that the war had ended in 1945.

[96] Dower, *War without Mercy,* 66-7. For more discussion of this point, see the articles by Dr. Simon Harrison: "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 4 (2006): 817-36 and "War Mementos and the Souls of Missing Soldiers: Returning Effects of the Battlefield Dead," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 4 (2008): 774-790.

[97] *Life*, May 22, 1944, 34-35.

was not categorized racially like it was against Japan. SS units were notoriously treacherous and commonly donned captured American uniforms and infiltrated American lines to cause havoc as best they could during the Battle of the Bulge.[98] However, the real shock for Americans and motive for revenge souvenir hunting against the Germans came upon the discovery of the Final Solution.[99] American soldiers came across Nazi death camps and saw the desolate conditions of the prisoners hastily left behind by the SS guards in the wake of advancing Allied armies. The generalized American response to seeing such gruesome and horrifying sights was that any and all "stealing" from Germany was vindicated in the light of the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime.[100] While this assuaged American feelings of guilt during the war for souvenir hunting, it also led US soldiers to single out SS units for retribution. They treated them with more brutality than regular Wehrmacht units, whom US soldiers perceived as "kids" not all that dissimilar from themselves. As a result, the SS skull and crossbones rings became popular souvenirs to be hunted.[101]

These revenge souvenirs from both theaters offer strong support to trauma theory of collecting by soldiers during WWII. The brutality of the Pacific War drove soldiers to mutilate war dead in an effort to attain their "revenge" for their suffering. This revenge could be for the perceived sneak attack at Pearl Harbor, or for watching a Japanese soldier blow up medics after pretending to surrender. The jungle island environment was also traumatizing. They were far from home, had inhospitable weather conditions, and were full of deadly natural creatures like snakes and crocodiles in addition to the Japanese soldiers. Diseases like Malaria from mosquitoes were also common. Under such savage conditions, the mistreatment of dead

[98] Samuel W. Mitcham Jr., *Panzers in Winter: Hitler's Army and the Battle of the Bulge* (Westport: Praeger, 2006), 30.
[99] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 37.
[100] Schrijvers, *Crash of Ruin*, 204-205.
[101] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 40.

Japanese soldiers for gruesome trophies was only exacerbated by dehumanizing racial propaganda about Japanese people being fed to Americans. In Europe, the raw shock of the Nazi death camps instilled a rage in American soldiers who liberated them. Before the war, Germany had been considered a very civilized and cultured nation. That the Germans were committing a racial war against other Europeans was appalling. The trauma of seeing the camps and what remained of their inhabitants inspired many soldiers to systematically loot the country with moral vindication. There was already a certain prestige to German war trophies due to battle prowess. The overwhelming feeling of American soldiers in Europe after discovery of the Final Solution was of achieving revenge upon the Germans for what they had inflicted on the rest of Europe. The traumas inflicted on American soldiers strongly motivated their wartime trophy hunting habits.

US soldiers after the war concluded that they were the victors and, to many of them, the victor's justice was all that mattered at the end of a total war. Many thought, correctly as it turned out, that the Axis soldiers had done the same looting early in the war. Now the tables had turned, and the Axis powers were getting their just desserts.[102] The US souvenir hunters gathered loot from their conquered foes in the field and in the subsequent occupations as mementoes of war. As the old adage goes, "to the victor belongs the spoils." US soldiers in WWII epitomized that saying.

Victorious G.I.'s collected their spoils of war and brought their loot home to America. Their trophies were proudly displayed for newspapers and photographers across the country to prove that they had risked their lives to defeat the Axis powers. The souvenirs were emblematic of dominance over defeated nations, races, and cultures. Possession of these artifacts from

[102] Ibid.

enemies renowned for their wartime prowess was a way for the “Greatest Generation” to cement their legacies. These artifacts would be returned and be proudly displayed to family and friends as a means of immortalizing their contributions to creating a better world from the ashes of the war. However, these trophies were so numerous and mythologized by the public at home that soldiers found yet another lucrative market among civilians eager to obtain authentic war souvenirs. This created a bona fide collector’s market within the United States where the objects are still used to immortalize American efforts in the war, but perhaps not in the way soldiers initially imagined would happen when they gathered them overseas and brought them home to their families.

CHAPTER 2: THE EFFECTS OF FAMILIAL INHERITANCE ON MEMORY FORMATION AND THE "GOOD WAR" NARRATIVE

This chapter seeks to understand how family memory of veterans and the familial perceptions of World War II are viewed and interpreted through inherited war trophy artifacts. Family memory commonly situates the "Good War" narrative into familial history and veterans' personal lives. Family members who were alive to form relationships with veterans largely remember them as family members, with veterans' war experiences as incidental to identity within the family. Those who did not form relationships with veterans tended to view them with heightened interest regarding their military service and the artifacts associated with it. In both cases, they emphasize their family veteran's contribution and respect them for having answered the call to duty while emphasizing the "Good War" narrative of American involvement in WWII. This is also manifested by interviewed family members' steadfast denial that their veteran was "souvenir hunting" even when they brought home substantial amounts of artifacts. The memories of veterans are carried down by their children and grandchildren through inheriting the artifacts taken by the veterans during the war.

The inheritance of these artifacts within the family to allow veterans' memories to live on fits the framework of terror management theory of collecting to preserve memories after death. Terror management theory stipulates that as a way to avoid awareness of death, which is known as "Mortality Salience" (MS), people attach importance to their life beyond their physical person. This sense of worth is shaped through a cultural worldview based on norms perceived to make them a good person.[1] Collecting in general is a culturally approved hobby and a manner

[1] Jacob Juhl and Clay Routledge, "Putting the Terror in Terror Management Theory: Evidence that the Awareness of Death does Cause Anxiety and Undermine Psychological Well-being," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 25, no. 2 (2016): 99-100.

by which to achieve symbolic transcendence of death.[2] This helps explain why so many families of veterans view their service and family histories through the narrative of the "Good War" in American history. For some who inherited the veterans' artifacts, these have served as a catalyst for their careers within the military, as historians, in working for veterans' affairs groups, and for beginning a hobby of collecting militaria with the inherited artifacts as the starting point of their collections.

Additionally, memories of family veterans in relation to their war experiences provide support to trauma theory of collecting through revenge without closure. Judith Herman states that it is common for persons who have been traumatized to fantasize about getting revenge on those who inflicted the trauma upon them in order to rid themselves of the shame, pain, and terror imposed upon them. Furthermore, due to the nature of trauma generally leaving victims feeling helpless, the revenge fantasy is a way for a victim to regain a sense of power. However, according to Herman, actually engaging in vengeance only exacerbates the trauma for victims instead of healing it.[3] Consequently, trauma survivors may wish to put their experiences out of sight and out of mind to avoid reliving the trauma as much as possible.[4] In relation to the present study, we see that upon returning home, veterans often hid their artifacts away and rarely got them out to discuss their war experiences, which left much of the memory of veterans' war experiences open to interpretation through artifacts and documents passed down to subsequent generations.

Understanding American families' views towards WWII through the lens of material culture required finding families that still had artifacts passed down to them by their family

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[2] Eva Jonas, Andy Martens, Daniela Niesta Kayser, Immo Fritsche, Daniel Sullivan, and Jeff Greenberg, "Focus Theory of Normative Conduct and Terror Management Theory: The Interactive Impact of Mortality Salience and Norm Salience on Social Judgment," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 95, no. 6 (2008): 1240.
[3] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, NY.: BasicBooks, 1992), 189.
[4] Ibid., 174.

members who had served in the war. In order to search for suitable candidates for this project, the author sent out surveys in order to ascertain the viability of respondents as interview subjects. Beyond surveys conducted on internet forums, the author also networked within the Bowling Green State University and Northwest Ohio communities and found suitable interview candidates through word of mouth and discussion of the nature of the project in professional settings. Time and resource constraints led to five families being interviewed as case studies.[5]

The primary obstacle to obtaining interview subjects was building trust. That is to say, there was a general reluctance to reveal sensitive family information and valuables for an in-depth study to a perceived stranger. This reluctance was manifested in the respondents to the online surveys. Many were happy to share stories and information anonymously in the survey online but declined to participate in an in-person interview. Some of this reluctance may be attributed to distrust of the academic world which, according to one respondent, tends to portray them and their collections/artifacts in a negative light. This sentiment of distrust is reflected in several of the responses to the dealer/collector surveys. One respondent summed up the distrust for the academic world by stating, "The number of individuals interested in casual collection of wartime artifacts is falling due to lack of education in history, apathy, and *politically correct prejudice being instilled by professional educators*."[6] [Italics added for emphasis.] Many respondents shared that they perceived a stigma concerning their collections among the general public.

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[5] This chapter is based upon five interviews presented as case studies. Four of these interviewed families are connected to Northwestern Ohio in some manner. These four families were interviewed at least partly in person by the author, with one family interview conducted on two separate sessions: a grandson in person and the son by email. Two candidates came from the online survey pool of suitable candidates who were willing to submit to a more in-depth interview. One of the respondents was also from the Northwest Ohio area and was willing to be interviewed in person. The other was from Illinois, and due to time and budget constraints was not able to be interviewed in person. Instead, he opted to perform the interview via email and provided more elaboration and photographs when requested. To re-iterate, due to the small sample size necessitated by these limiting factors, these interviews are being presented as anecdotal and suggestive case studies and are not at all to be construed as absolutely representative of the totality of the militaria heirloom community in either Northwest Ohio or the United States in general.

[6] Respondent K, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*, survey by Quintin Monnin, (November 13, 2019), Distributed by Bowling Green State University Qualtrics Data Archive.

In reviewing the results of the case studies of families' memories of their veterans through the artifacts brought home, several common themes and patterns emerged, including: 1) a dichotomy of memory to view veterans as soldiers in the war who were part of the family, versus viewing them as family members that were part of the war; 2) a general avoidance to speaking about their experiences during the war, with stories being primarily shared as veterans age and near death, which is suggestive evidence supporting trauma theory interpretations; 3) a reluctance of admission from families and veterans that they were "souvenir" hunting for any items during the war despite much circumstantial evidence from the stories suggesting otherwise. This is rooted in the idea of the "Good War" narrative; 4) a consensus view that artifacts and heirlooms are important to understanding WWII in American history, particularly that the artifacts provide a personal connection to the war for those who inherited said items. In this vein, there was a strong correlation between the familial artifacts and interests/hobbies/careers of the family members, which is suggestive evidence for terror management theory interpretation by the subjects using collected artifacts to preserve veterans' memories for future generations; 5) a consensus view of WWII as the "Good War" with immense pride in the family veteran's service and role in US history.

Dichotomy of Primary Memory

The interpersonal relationships cultivated by family members had a pronounced effect on how their memories around the inherited artifacts were shaped. This was split between viewing family members primarily as people who served in the war or viewing them primarily as veterans of the war who were also family members. To clarify the semantic differences, family members who had strong relationships with the veterans had views and memories shaped by their personal interactions. They were more likely to recall stories and family bonding moments,

with mostly passing remarks about how the war's experiences may have influenced those interactions. Those who did not know the family veterans in a deeply personal fashion, but inherited the artifacts, readily discussed passed down war stories or the veteran's military histories, then related back whatever wartime knowledge they may have learned from family memories of the veterans.

The first family interviewed was split on the aspects of memory by generation. The family veteran discussed in this case was identified as "Mr. Clark." After he returned from the war, Mr. Clark married a woman who already had small children from a previous marriage, one of whom is Jennifer Bowers. Though not her biological father, Mr. Clark was Jennifer's father figure growing up, and she considers him to be her father. Jennifer in turn has a son, Nick, who never met Mr. Clark but did know Mrs. Clark, Jennifer's biological mother and Nick's biological grandmother. Due to his intense interest in the artifacts, despite Mr. Clark having passed away before Nick was born, Nick inherited much of Mr. Clark's war artifacts from Mrs. Clark's estate after she passed away.

Jennifer's primary memories of her father revolved around him as her father instead of as a war veteran, and the war artifacts elicit memories of him when she was growing up. Because Nick was born after his grandfather passed away, much of Nick's familial knowledge of his grandfather comes from secondhand memories told by his mother, aunt, and grandmother. Nick has spent extensive time tracing his grandfather's service and the provenance of the war artifacts he brought home. Nick has also developed an interest in collecting militaria using his grandfather's artifacts as a base collection. Since the documented military items are all that he tangibly knows of his grandfather, it is how his memory of his grandfather has been shaped. The dichotomy of primary memory based on the extent of the personal relationship with the veteran

is most starkly present within this family. Jennifer's extensive personal relationships that she cultivated with her stepfather allow her to remember him primarily as a family member, and secondarily as a veteran. The artifacts he brought home remind her that he had a lot of formative experiences in the war. Nick did not get to cultivate such a personal relationship with his grandfather, and places much of the family memory of his grandfather in the context of the inherited artifacts and passed war experiences.

The interviewed members of the second family both knew the family veteran and had developed extensive personal relationships with him before his passing. The veteran's son interviewed in this case is identified as "Steven." Steven has a son named "Andrew" who was also interviewed and will be further discussed in this case study. Both Steven and Andrew presented themselves as almost indifferent to their veteran's service and the Japanese sword he brought home. They both focused heavily on their memory of the veteran as a person. While they understood and knew something of his time in the US Navy, they viewed his veteran status as an incidental part of his larger personality. When they remember him, they remember the family man first and occasionally are reminded that he also served in the war. The sword was usually buried in a closet or chest somewhere. Indeed, Steven and Andrew were unable to find it for the interview, which supports their contention that it has never played a prominent role in how they remember or view him. Instead, a pocket watch he passed down holds far more sentimental value to the family than the sword.[7] Due to the extensive relationships built with him, the family does not remember him as a veteran first, but as a family member who was called up for duty in the war and faithfully sacrificed for his country.

[7] Andrew, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 17 December 2019, in Bowling Green, Ohio, video recording.

In the third case study, the interview subject, "Jim," exhibited a unique blend of remembering his father almost equally as a soldier and as a family member simultaneously. Jim expressly asserted that the first thing he thinks of when he holds his father's war trophies is "Dad in uniform" and that much of his own career was heavily influenced by his father's military service.[8] Conversely, Jim stated that most of his family is uninterested in his father's wartime service and artifacts. They primarily remember him as a person instead. Jim, however, stated that the identity of his father as a person and his father as a veteran were inseparable in his memory. Jim stated that he embarked upon a naval career as a result of his father's service, and he made pilgrimages to places where his father was stationed during WWII. For Jim, the flag his father gave him is particularly inseparable from his father's service. Despite both Jim and his father being veterans, they rarely spoke about his father's experiences in the war as they related to the family artifacts. The curiosity surrounding his father's items are a driving force in Jim's memory of him and his own collecting hobby.

The fourth family had the most interesting split along the lines of memory of family veterans. The interview subject, identified here as "Tom," had two grandfathers serve but exhibited three distinct avenues of memory associated with the war trophy brought home by his maternal grandfather "Grandpa Hank." Tom stated that most of his memories of his grandfathers were tied to them as people, not as veterans. This was particularly the case with his paternal grandfather, Fred (i.e. "Grandpa Fred") who passed when Tom was still a youth. Tom remembers Grandpa Fred very fondly, and his war medals are a central part of those memories. His favorite recollections of Grandpa Fred are of the two of them going to the basement together to view his war medals in a "secret box" where he kept them, which made it special for Tom as a

[8] Jim Cravens, Interview by Quintin Monnin, email interview, 20-21 November 2019, email.

child.[9] As for his Grandpa Hank, Tom did not even know that he had any war artifacts until much later in his life. His memories are still primarily of his Grandpa Hank as a person, but his memories are not nearly as fond as those of his Grandpa Fred. Specifically, Tom remembers Grandpa Hank as a stern man who was "not the kindest man his whole life." Adding that "I do not think he went out of his way to hurt people".[10] That both grandfathers served in the war is not a primary memory when thinking about them, and the most Tom wonders about their service is what it must have been like to go to war at age eighteen. Tom also has a third line of memory regarding these veterans and the war. The flag Grandpa Hank brought back makes him dwell the most on the war, specifically dwelling on the unknown story of the Japanese soldier the flag belonged to at one point, but not Grandpa Hank himself. Tom stated that he feels a duty as a caretaker of this artifact, and that holding the flag reminds him not of his own family's experience, but of the mourning and loss likely felt by the Japanese family instead.[11]

The fifth family also fits primarily into the category of memory of their family member veteran as simply a person rather than a WWII combat veteran. The family members interviewed were one of the veteran's sons, identified here as "Doug," and Doug's son, "Mitchell." The first response they gave when asked about the view of their family veteran through the artifacts was "once a marine, always a marine."[12] They never elaborated upon that statement any further; however, it does provide some contextual clues. While the war was not central to the family discussion of him, there was an inherent understanding of the war's centrality to shaping his personality and life in many ways. Beyond that initial statement, the primary memory of the veteran expressed in the interview were his roles as a father and grandfather. The family was

[9] Tom, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 20 December 2019, in Sylvania, Ohio, video interview.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Doug and Mitchell, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 29 December 2019, in Sidney, Ohio, audio recording.

extremely mindful of his service due to the injuries he received in the line of battle. They state that the injuries he suffered from the war, and not the war itself, are the primary memories they have of him connected to his service. While they are thankful for his service and mindful of the effects it had on him during his formative years, they both saw it as just another job he had to do that interrupted his personal life and emphasized that his personality caused him to see it that way himself.[13] They did not bring up the war to him out of reverence for his service because they believed that he had earned the right to discuss the war as he pleased, and he had little desire to talk much about his war experiences. The memories they have of their veteran are primarily of his roles within the family with a constant reminder of his service in the war due to the difficulties he experienced as a result of his injuries.

The results of this sample of interviews indicate that the defining characteristics of memory related to family veterans varies from person to person within the family based upon the relationships cultivated with the veteran. Of the eight total family members interviewed, three had memories of a veteran primarily as a veteran, with two of those being instances where the veteran did not have a strong relationship with the family member and one where there was a strong relationship. Six had strong relationships with the veterans and primarily remembered them as people, not veterans. Tom is counted in both categories given that of the two veterans concerned , one being his grandfather who is associated primarily with his own personal memories, while the other, one that he did not know, namely, the Japanese soldier whose remains are embodied by the flag, which is primarily a curiosity concerning the soldier's military service and unknown personal background before being presumably killed in action. The correlation is that family members having no strong personal relationships with a veteran are

[13] Ibid.

likely to remember them by their military status, while those who have strong personal connections are likely to remember them as people who served in the war.

Avoidance of Discussing the War

All five families stated that their veterans were reluctant to talk about their war experiences, likely a result of traumatic experiences. Herman states that because reliving trauma creates extreme emotional distress, victims will go to great lengths to avoid it in their lives.[14] The trauma associated with the memories of the war were so strong and painful that the veterans were unwilling to speak of events even though they vividly remembered them. All families reported in the interviews that their veterans actively avoided or deflected war inquiries. In two cases the families did not even try to initiate the topic with their veteran and, when interviewed, seemed as disinterested in the war stories as the veterans. This reticence to talk about war experiences was a way for veterans to assert their authority in the historical record being passed down.[15] Analyzed through the lens of trauma theory, this control of the narrative gave them a sense of power over the trauma that was inflicted upon them during their wartime experiences. Three of the five families stated that their veterans actively avoided talking about their experiences, but towards the end of their lives they opened up and spoke more freely about them. When this phenomenon of later life disclosures is analyzed through the lens of terror management theory, the increased "mortality salience" of age allows veterans to seek post-traumatic growth through reconciling old traumatic wounds which they see as a cultural virtue likely to preserve their memory in a more positive fashion.[16] In addition, the increased mortality salience causes individuals to defend their

[14] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 42.
[15] Lenore Layman, "Reticence in Oral History Interviews," *The Oral History Review* 36, no. 2 (2009): 212-213.
[16] Emily Lykins, Suzanne C. Segerstrom, Alyssa J. Averill, Daniel R. Evans, and Margaret E. Kemeny, "Goal Shifts Following Reminders of Mortality: Reconciling Posttraumatic Growth and Terror Management Theory," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 33, no. 8 (2007): 1090.

worldviews and strive for an increased net worth, primarily achieved by passing along their stories.[17]

While the first family's veteran talked sparingly about his wartime experiences, he did open up in other ways. Nick was able to track some basic information about his grandfather's time in the service through discharge papers, other war records, photographs, and artifacts. Although he never met his grandfather, the artifacts gathered helped Nick to outline his grandfather's service history in the war regarding where he was and some of the horrors he likely witnessed. This fits the terror management theory approach of passing down and ensuring one's memory through a collection. Collections are inherently directed at a person's finite physical existence but allow for one's memory to be perpetuated through bequeathing them within the family.[18] This is especially true if the family members continue the inherited collection. The possession of a pistol, rifle, coat, and hat were evidence of contact with the enemy while the photographs of the concentration camps are evidence of the horrors of the Holocaust the veteran witnessed.[19] While the veteran was reluctant to share war stories with the children, he was unknowingly sharing many stories over the years with his wife in his sleep. Jennifer recalled that her mother said, "I know a lot about World War II because I lived it every night," which is a reference to probable PTSD induced dreams of his time in the war.[20] Herman states in her book that the way trauma gets encoded in memory can be abnormal and manifests itself in flashbacks as well as in nightmares.[21]The second story they told of his time in the war came secondhand from Jennifer's sister, who recalled her father talking about a patrol he was a part of where the

[17] Juhl and Routledge, "Putting Terror in Terror Management Theory," 99.
[18] Peter Subkowski, "On the Psychodynamics of Collecting," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 87, no. 2 (2006): 392.
[19] Mr. Clark was a part of the 103rd Infantry Division which is known to have liberated the Kaufering subcamp ring for Dachau, and he claimed to Jennifer to have been part of a liberating force during the war. The photographs referenced were received from other soldiers in his unit and not taken by Mr. Clark himself. None of the photos include Mr. Clark. Moreover, the unit memoir book once owned by Mr. Clark, which could have provided supporting evidence of his experience, is currently missing, so all of these claims are unable to be verified conclusively.
[20] Nicholas and Jennifer Bowers, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 20 September 2019, in Bowling Green, Ohio, video recording.
[21] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 37.

lead soldier gave the "thumbs up" all clear signal only for that thumb to be shot off at the start of the ensuing German ambush.[22] Due to the veteran's reticence to discuss the war, the artifacts he bequeathed to the family are the primary manner in which his military experiences have been reconstructed and memorialized. The artifacts are therefore the primary manner by which his memory has been passed down to his family. This reticence to speak more fully about the war was due to the intense trauma that he experienced and makes a full reconstruction difficult to establish.

The second family's veteran was also extremely reluctant to discuss his time in the war. Additionally, the family never actively pressed the veteran for such stories. The veteran seemed to want to push the war as far away from his memory as possible during his lifetime. Though the veteran took home a Japanese sword as a souvenir from a pile of discarded equipment, he had virtually no sentimental attachment to it. In fact, he gifted the sword to his son Steven at a relatively young age. Andrew stated that he thinks two of his grandfather's personality traits were intertwined upon relinquishing the sword.[23] The first was a joy derived from giving gifts, while the second was a desire to drive away unpleasant memories of the war. That desire to distance unpleasant memories is consistent with trauma theory and memory. As explained earlier by Herman, traumatized victims go to great lengths to avoid reliving distressing moments often by putting them out of sight and mind. The sword was a physical reminder of the war for the veteran, and likely a trigger for traumatic memories that he was attempting to avoid in his everyday life.

Andrew believes that his grandfather gifted the sword to Steven as a way to let go of the war and the traumatic memories attached to it. Steven never truly seemed to cherish the gift

[22] Nicholas and Jennifer Bowers, Interview.
[23] Andrew, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 17 December 2019, in Bowling Green, Ohio, video recording.

either, as they admitted the sword largely stays in storage both out of sight and out of mind much the same way it had for the veteran.[24] Steven stated that while everyone understood and appreciated his father's service in the war, it was a topic that no one had a desire to explore further, and so it remained that way until the veteran's passing. The sword played almost no part in any family remembrance of the war or the family veteran and, instead, is largely seen as a symbol of the war itself without any personal connection.[25]

The third family exhibited a similar situation regarding war memories and artifacts as the first family. The veteran brought home several war artifacts as trophies/mementoes, but rarely discussed his service in the war. The mystery of and fascination with his father's artifacts and service history inspired Jim's collecting interests and his own choice of military career. This phenomenon is a concrete example of both terror management theory of collecting motivation and trauma theory of collecting. Regarding terror management theory, as an infantry soldier in the war, Jim's father likely had a high mortality salience, which increased his anxiety about death. This acquired higher mortality salience likely drove Jim's father to focus on an extrinsic goal - collecting war artifacts - to help ward off this awareness.[26] After the war ended, he bequeathed these artifacts to Jim to perpetuate his memory, which aligns with behavior anticipated by terror management theory.[27] Furthermore, the collection of these artifacts was a way for his father to restore his pre-trauma view of the world, and the objects themselves were effective tools for helping to manage his fears and insecurities surrounding his own inevitable death.[28]

[24] Andrew, Interview. And Steven, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 22 December 2019, email interview.
[25] Steven, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 22 December 2019, email interview.
[26] Lykins, "Goal Shifts," 1089.
[27] Subkowski, "Psychodynamics of Collecting," 392.
[28] Ibid., 387-388.

Jim stated that his father only began to open up about his experiences late in his life.[29] In accordance with terror management theory, as Jim's father aged and experienced heightened mortality salience, he sought to transcend death not only through his collection but also through passing down his stories. Sharing such stories about one's life are culturally valued goals, and, in this case, are exemplified by his father's passing memories down to subsequent generations. For example, Jim's father eventually shared some stories about the items that were brought home, such as the flag's origin and how the Luger was confiscated, and when asked if he wished he could have heard more detailed stories, Jim lamented, "I wish I had said, 'Dad, where and when exactly did you get this, and what are the circumstances?' Again, that's impossible now."[30] For both Jim and his father, these experiences of opening up about the war were important parts of his recovery from the trauma of the war. Herman states that remembering and telling the truth are needed for trauma victims to recover. This mourning and sense of grief is a very important part of the recovery process too.[31] Jim explained that when his father opened up about his war experiences later in life, the timing was spontaneous in nature and completely unrelated to the artifacts brought home.

The artifacts' lack of explanation fueled Jim's curiosity. Jim was able to physically visit the areas his father had served in during the war based upon research into his father's military medals, documents, and unit history.[32] He referenced pilgrimages to the sites where he knew his father served based on this research, thus recreating his father's war experiences decades after the fact using the artifacts. Herman states that this type of empowerment and reconnection achieved through revisiting places where trauma occurred are core recovery experiences.[33] Due

[29] Cravens, Interviw.
[30] Cravens, Interview.
[31] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1, 188.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Herman, *Trauma and* Recovery, 197.

to the incomplete stories and the inherited artifacts, unresolved trauma was passed down to Jim. He was able to initiate the recovery process by visiting the places where the traumatic experiences originally occurred during his father's service in the war.

The fourth case continued the trend of veteran reluctance to discuss the war and the artifacts acquired. Both grandfathers exhibited signs of traumatic memory. In the case of Grandpa Fred, Tom was too young at the time of his passing to process any war stories that may have been told to him. The war medals symbolize and conjure memories of the relationship between Grandpa Fred and Tom rather than any fascination with his military service. The basement box where the medals were stored was Tom and Grandpa Fred's "secret" spot. Tom recalls the medals were "cool to look at and the excuse to go down there," but even when Grandpa Fred was alive the experience was more about Tom building the individual relationship with his grandfather and not about learning war stories.[34] Tom reported that Grandpa Fred had told his father some war stories later in his life, but that his father did not pass them down himself. Tom's reliving these memories of Grandpa Fred through war stories and the inherited uniform medals illustrate the perpetuation of memory in the face of mortality salience in accord with terror management theory.

The discovery of Grandpa Hank's "good luck" flag, on the other hand, was a spontaneous discovery decades after the war had ended, which caused a shift in Tom's perspective of the war. Tom stated that Grandpa Hank never made it to theater to experience combat before the war ended and that the flag was acquired by trade while on Guam.[35] While Grandpa Hank was still alive at the time of the interview, his health made him unable to participate. Tom recalled that he "really had to ask" Grandpa Hank to tell him anything about the war when he was younger, and

[34] Tom, Interview by Quintin Monnin, 20 December 2019, in Sylvania, Ohio, video interview.
[35] Ibid.

that he did not get many answers.[36] This is another demonstration of trauma theory regarding memory and avoiding the triggers of traumatic memory as outlined earlier by Herman. Grandpa Hank was actively attempting to avoid reliving the traumatic memories associated with the war. The memories he associates with the war are distressing to the point that he goes to great lengths to avoid recalling them.

However, Tom also presumed that Grandpa Hank likely did not have any stories to tell because he had not experienced combat himself. From what he remembered, both grandfathers downplayed their service in the war. He attributed this to the mentality of the war generation due to their mass participation in the war effort.[37] Both men likely had several peers who served in the war, and their particular roles in the navy were not as glamorous as men who saw combat overseas. The artifacts they brought home were irrelevant to any stories they told regarding their time in the war but, nonetheless, created several other personal attachments for Tom to the war itself.

The fifth family veteran fits the same mold as the veterans of the second and fourth families regarding family memory of their veteran's service in the war. The artifact the veteran brought home was much different than the others, but he still had an avoidance of the war stories that accompanied his service for most of his life. The artifact is the shrapnel that caused a traumatic wound, which is probably the clearest evidence of the trauma theory of memory at work regarding the veteran's reluctance to discuss his war experiences due to traumatic memory triggers. Doug was appreciative and proud of his father's wartime service, but stated that he never brought the topic up to him out of reverence.[38] He stated that his father did not talk about

[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Doug and Mitchell, Interview.

his war experiences until late in his life, mostly after he took the fiftieth anniversary trip to Iwo Jima. Doug described it as a "healing" trip for him.[39] This is another example of the empowerment and reconnection achieved through revisiting places where trauma occurred as a core recovery experience described by Herman. This is not to say the trauma ever goes away: Herman explains that the ultimate goal of trauma recovery is integration of the trauma as opposed to exorcism of it.[40]

Mitchell was too young at the time of his grandfather's death to remember any war stories but stated that based on his understanding of Doug's memories, his grandfather fit a social mold similar to that of Tom's grandfathers. Mitchell stated that the war generation was very stoic. He elaborated that it was a generation in which one was expected to suppress bad feelings and experiences in life, including difficulties of mobility caused by war wounds.[41] Doug stated that even when his father recalled war stories later in life, he never used his wounds as a catalyst or talking point for it and that his stories tended to be more spontaneous. Despite his father's reconnecting trip to recover from trauma, he still exhibited the classic avoidances to remembering his trauma even in telling his stories. Mitchell admitted that if his grandfather were still alive, he would want to ask him about his wound in relation to his service, but now it is too late.[42]

The evidence from the five case studies illustrates aspects of trauma theory of memory in veterans who brought home artifacts. This is demonstrated by their reluctance to talk about the war and the disconnect between artifacts and war memories. When veterans did talk about war experiences, it was later in their lives, spontaneous in nature, and often separate from the

[39] Ibid.
[40] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 181, 197.
[41] Doug and Mitchell, Interview.
[42] Ibid.

artifacts. The veterans likely had traumatic memories attached to the artifacts, making them re-live the experiences when viewed and exacerbating their unwillingness to share memories. This trauma was passed down to subsequent generations, some of whom continue to add to these collections as a sort of ritual of mastery over defeated foes that caused the original trauma to their veterans. Three of five families had a member mention that the artifacts passed down inspired them to collect militaria for themselves. Four of the five families mentioned the artifacts and a lack of accompanying stories as a compelling interest for them to learn more about their veteran's military service history. This indicates that while the trauma attached to artifacts suppresses the veterans' desire to delve into war stories, they are a catalyst for the families to try and learn more about their family veteran's service as well as the history of World War II more broadly.

This also validates terror management theory in relation to collecting in these cases. Veterans' legacies are passed down by the artifacts even though the traumatic memories attached to the artifacts make veterans unwilling to discuss the stories behind them. The objects symbolically allow them to transcend death and give their lives a worth beyond their physical selves. Their collection reflects their finite and transitory existence, and they pass it down to subsequent generations in order to perpetuate their memory and achieve a sort of immortality through the artifacts. Even more credence is lent to this theory when we consider the collectors who continue to expand their inherited collections, partly to perpetuate their ancestor's memory, and partly out of a desire to build better collections than those the veteran originally bequeathed to them.[43]

[43] Subkowski, "Psychodynamics of Collecting," 390-392.

Souvenir Hunting

A common claim of the families regarding veterans returning with artifacts was that they were *not* souvenir hunting. In one case this appears to be well supported, but circumstantial evidence from the other families contradicts these claims. This phenomenon could be tied to a sub-point of terror management theory. A core tenet of terror management theory is that the activities undertaken to avoid mortality salience are culturally approved in order to raise self-esteem.[44] Due to the idea that souvenir hunting and looting has a negative connotation in culture, families distancing their relatives from this connotation helps to preserve the "Good War" narrative of their family veterans. These four families had widely sought-after souvenir items from the war respective to their theaters. While it may be true that the veterans were not flinging themselves into no man's land in search of these artifacts under fire, if they were not interested in acquiring a souvenir, then why did they bring them home? These artifacts could have easily been sold prior to their return. One item was explicitly mentioned as having been obtained through a trade. Moreover, it is clear there was a known souvenir market amongst troops for the items brought home by the veterans.

Much of the souvenir hunting bears out the goals of terror management theory of collecting. Veterans sought out these collections of souvenirs because they realized in some way that they were participating in a major historical event, and that their collections would be a means to immortality as they would be of historic value in the future.[45] Furthermore, the prospects of collecting souvenirs throughout the war served as a way to ward off mortality salience through a culturally approved activity.[46] Just as much as these collections were a coping

[44] William McIntosh and Brandon Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Leisure Sciences* 26, no. 1 (2004): 92.
[45] Ibid., 87.
[46] Jonas et. al, "Focus Theory of Normative Conduct and Terror Management Theory," 1240.

mechanism for traumatic experiences, they were also a way for soldiers to distract themselves from their increased mortality salience. The collections they took had the added benefit of providing a means to perpetuate their legacies and memories through bequeathing them to subsequent generations after the war.

The first family had a plethora of sought-after artifacts which their veteran brought home, including two weapons, a Wehrmacht officer's uniform, and several medals. Nick noted early in the interview that the Luger pistol in particular was highly sought-after by American troops during the war and added that it was "neat to collect some of them" even in the time and context of the war.[47] Despite this, they did not believe the veteran was actively hunting for souvenirs. Nick later asserted that the objects were "symbolic of the conquering American solider" in reference to their penchant in the war to take as many souvenirs as they could carry.[48] Further evidence of conscious souvenir hunting is that while the rifle and other trophies were declared "bring backs" with documentation, the pistol was not so designated and was thus illegally smuggled back to the United States. This was likely done out of fear that an officer would deny him the ability to bring it home and would possibly confiscate it, or that it would be stolen by a fellow service member on the ship if its presence were known. This type of incident was seen in the case of Jim's father's souvenir Luger pistol. Jennifer opined the that the souvenirs may have been taken out of personal revenge for the atrocities of the concentration camps witnessed by her father during the war and documented with the photographs.[49] According to trauma theory, taking these trophies would be a way to exact revenge and manipulate objects used by the Germans to traumatize both him and presumably the camp inmates that he helped to liberate.

[47] Bowers, Interview.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

The second family also believed that their veteran was not interested in hunting for war souvenirs. While Japanese officers' swords were highly prized items during the war, there was an abundance of them to be had after a battle had ended and Japanese equipment was rounded up at depots on the various Pacific islands, which is how this particular veteran is reported to have received his sword. The family believes that he only took the sword because "officers told them to take one as a souvenir and all the other sailors were doing it too."[50] Peer pressure is a difficult force to resist, particularly in a closed institution like the military. The credence given here to the lack of desire to obtain a souvenir arguably reflects the emotional detachment the veteran and the family had toward the sword. Rather than viewing it as a prized war souvenir, the family seems to regard it as a gift that was not desired but is yet too valuable and prestigious to simply discard. The emotional distance could also be an example of traumatic memory being attached to the sword. The ease with which the sword could have been traded or sold in the military market or as a war souvenir in the United States makes it more difficult to accept the premise that the sword was not wanted in any way by the veteran or the family. There were many easy means of disposing of it both during and after the war.

Though there is evidence of the sword having traumatic memories attached to it, a few other ideas as to why the family holds onto it are plausible as well. It may remind Steven of his childhood and therefore he may hold a sentimental attachment to it in that fashion.[51] When considered through the lens of terror management theory, it may be surmised that Steven and Andrew are holding onto the sword as a way to perpetuate the memory of their father/grandfather. War relics are reminders of national victories, and the sword does have an intrinsic historical value to it as well. For their own mortality saliences in relation to terror

[50] Andrew, Interview.
[51] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 87.

management theory, nostalgia gives people a greater sense of purpose in life.[52] Nostalgia attached to the sword from childhood or otherwise related to the veteran may be a driving force for their decision to keep it despite their outward rhetoric regarding the sword in family memory.

Jim more or less admits that his father was a souvenir hunter. He recalls that his father explicitly told him that he looted the prized flag from a store or warehouse in Germany during the war.[53] In addition to the flag, his father's initial collection of items from the war also included a rifle, a bayonet, a Luger pistol, a gas mask, and several other miscellaneous items. The most obvious giveaway that his father souvenir hunted was the lamentation of the loss of the Luger pistol from his collection as he was being shipped back to the United States post-war.[54] Jim stated that his father always regretted losing that pistol. As Jim's interest in collecting war memorabilia increased, his father was eager to shoot the first Luger he collected.[55] Additionally, his father has a picture of the Luger in his hand when he was still overseas. That Jim's father gave the flag to him as a gift is also a strong indicator that he was souvenir hunting as a means to preserve his memory, as terror management theory suggests. This desire to have his memory preserved is fulfilled by Jim's cherishing the flag and his continued collecting to add to his father's souvenir artifacts. While his father sold the rifle he brought home, the rest of the collection is strong support of his souvenir hunting habits. This souvenir hunting behavior may be interpreted as a manifestation of terror management theory of collecting being exhibited by Jim's father. His collection was a means to achieve immortality and was obtained to perpetuate his memory to subsequent generations in his family.

[52] Juhl and Routledge, "Putting Terror in Terror Management Theory," 100.
[53] Cravens, Interview.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

The fourth family also denied that their veteran was involved in active souvenir hunting. With "Grandpa Fred," this claim may be credible given that most of his bequeathed artifacts were largely items from his own uniform. That said, Tom also remembered a German penny and knife of some sort, items that have since been lost.[56] For "Grandpa Hank," the idea that he had no interest in souvenir hunting for war artifacts is murkier. Though he kept the "good luck" flag hidden for many decades after the war, it was a highly prized souvenir by Americans in the Pacific theater. To own one typically meant that one had survived combat with the Japanese and retrieved it from a soldier's body. While Grandpa Hank was a navy man who never saw action in the war, Tom stated that the "good luck" flag was obtained in a trade while stationed in Guam after the war.[57] It is highly suspect to think that he had zero interest in souvenirs if he was trading for a such prized one after the war ended.

One might suspect his motivation for seeking this souvenir was of an almost malicious nature and collected out of revenge, which is suggested by trauma theory. Tom's recollection of Grandpa Hank's racial hostility towards the Japanese (and generally unpleasant demeanor in the family) support this trauma theory application of "revenge" collecting as he wanted the flag as a token of having conquered a defeated and/or inferior people in the war. While Grandpa Hank himself was not a direct participant in combat leading to that defeat, he wanted tangible proof of victory and a flag taken from a presumably dead Japanese soldier would serve that purpose. Further evidence that revenge may have been a motivation for taking the flag is suggested by Grandpa Hank's reaction when the flag was rediscovered by the family: he simply said "burn it."[58] It seems that this souvenir was not taken as a memento of service or for posterity by the

[56] Tom, Interview.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

veteran in the fashion of terror management theory of collecting as it was acquired after the conclusion of hostilities when the threat of sudden death in combat had subsided. Furthermore, there was no apparent desire for Grandpa Hank to bequeath the flag to subsequent generations in order to preserve his memory. Rather he took the flag as an act of revenge and in an antagonistic fashion that is better understood through the lens of trauma theory. Despite not seeing combat, American propaganda along with news of Japanese atrocities fed to him during the war in his formative teenage years may have caused psychological trauma. Herman states that the teenage and early adult years are the most psychologically vulnerable periods of a person's life.[59] It is likely that the psychological trauma of spending his formative years growing up surrounded by the war's events and propaganda was manifested in Grandpa Hank's behaviors in relation to the "good luck" flag and his expressed hostility towards those of Japanese lineage.

The fifth family perhaps had the best argument for why their veteran was not a souvenir hunter during the war. The artifact he brought home with him, a piece of shrapnel, was not obtained voluntarily. Due to the severity of the wound he received in battle, he had to be transported back to the United States for treatment without the piece of shrapnel first being removed from his body. Due to the limitations of the medical field and circumstances in 1945, doctors left the shrapnel inside his body, where it remained until his death. Doug recalled that his father would have preferred to come back "with nothing" but was happy to come home alive and in one piece, nonetheless. When asked why his father was uninterested in souvenir hunting, Doug recalled a story told to him regarding the taking of souvenirs which suggests the efficacy of the warnings provided in the aforementioned booklet distributed by the US Army. His father told him that by 1945 the Japanese were aware of the phenomenon of American souvenir hunting

[59] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 61.

and, consequently, began to booby-trap highly prized souvenirs such as "samurai swords and watches."[60] Doug stated that his father told him a story about several Marines who attempted to retrieve a souvenir from a dead Japanese soldier only to be killed by the booby-trap rigged to it.

The instances of souvenir hunting by American veterans seems to have been largely downplayed in family memories of them. Despite circumstantial evidence indicating that many were hunting for souvenirs of some sort, the veterans rarely relayed their reasoning to their families. This reluctance to speak about the nature of the souvenir acquisitions is likely tied to the traumatic memories associated with them. Veterans did not wish to recall traumatic events associated with the artifacts' acquisitions. From the standpoint of terror management theory, veterans may be afraid to discuss why they took these artifacts for fear of betraying the "Good War" narrative in relation to how they acquired them. This is manifested in the cases where even though the veterans did admit to souvenir hunting, they never gave a specific reasoning for it or much of a backstory on how they managed to acquire the items.

While the veterans had their reason for souvenir hunting during the war, the traumatic memories attached to them eventually diminished their appreciation of the artifacts over time. What were once prized possessions appeared to have turned into mementoes of a time in their lives that many of the veterans would have been very glad to forget. Traumatic experiences tended to warp the memory surrounding them.[61] This warping may not be limited to just the experiences of the trauma itself but may also be seen in the reactions to these traumatic experiences such as revenge collecting. Based upon familial descriptions of how the artifacts were treated back home, time and distance from the traumatic experiences of the war seem to

[60] Doug and Mitchell, Interview.
[61] Joshua Pederson, "Speak Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory," *Narrative* 22:3 (October 2014): 340.

have warped the veterans' understandings of why they took the souvenirs in the first place and what they once represented.

Importance of the Artifacts to Family Interests and Understandings of the War

Every case study suggested that heirlooms are important to understanding the war in the context of each family history, but also to understanding American history more broadly. There is a strong correlation between the presence of the artifacts in the families and the influence on family members' interests and careers. In four of the five families, the artifacts had a connection to some aspect of the careers and hobbies with at least three citing their inherited artifacts as a direct motivator. All five families explicitly mentioned how artifacts and mementoes gave them a personal connection to the war and their family veterans in some capacity. Terror management theory provides an interpretive framework for understanding the unconscious motivation for soldiers to collect war souvenirs as a means to assure their legacy and immortality in some way. Passing down a collection allows them to symbolically live on through it.[62] From the statements provided by the interview subjects, it may be inferred that the artifacts served this purpose to some extent.

The first family showed an immediate connection between the war artifacts and careers/interests. Nick did not hesitate to state, "When I was little, what got me into history was grandma's wall," which was a reference to the wall of decorative artifacts that included items brought home by his grandfather.[63] While many of the more significant items were kept in a closet, Nick asserted that by age twelve he was increasingly curious in his grandfather's war relics and stated that his grandfather's service had a considerable impact on his career choices and hobbies. He stated that he almost joined the army because of them, and that the war trophies

[62] Jonas et. al, "Focus Theory of Normative Conduct and Terror Management Theory," 1240.
[63] Bowers, Interview.

to him were "the coolest things ever" as a youth.[64] He stated that his grandfather's artifacts continue to be the core of his own expanding war memorabilia collection interests. He also cited his grandfather's service and artifacts as driving motivators for him to study history as his collegiate major.[65] Nick interned at the National Veteran's Museum near his hometown and has become passionate in the field of veterans' affairs in his spare time. Jennifer and Nick emphatically answered "yes" when asked if their veteran's war trophies were important to understanding the war in the context of American and family history, emphasizing the personal connection the artifacts give to people who are interested in the war.[66] A personal connection correlates as a driving factor for more intensive study of the war and family history, as illustrated by Nick referencing his own personal research into his grandfather's unit in the war and his study of history in general.

The second family outwardly downplayed the significance of the Japanese sword. Steven articulated his belief that the sword was not so much personalized in the memory of his father, but rather it was a symbol of WWII as a whole.[67] The sword mostly remains in storage and is seldom retrieved by the family. As for preservation of memory through the artifact, it lacks any obvious personal connection to the veteran based on their responses. The family does not remember him as a veteran, but simply as a person. Andrew explained that his grandfather's pocket watch is more important than the sword as a familial heirloom.[68] Steven went on to have a military career but does not see the sword or his father's service as any type of motivator for his own. He said that when he sees the sword, the first things that come to mind are simply "my

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Steven, Interview.
[68] Andrew, Interview.

dad" followed by the sword as a symbol of WWII in general. [69] Steven claimed that the sword does not further elicit any curiosity from him as the provenance of its acquisition is simply lacking, yet he believes that war artifacts and heirlooms are important to understanding the war in American history.[70] He commented on the horror and brutality that war entails, and expressed hope that WWII will be the last "all-out war" in which the US has to participate.

Andrew is outwardly skeptical of the importance of the average WWII artifact's importance in the home. He stated that the most important thing the sword did for him was tangential in nature: it got him interested in material culture relating to museum work.[71] He asserted that outside of museums, war artifacts usually lack a proper educational context. He believes learning history of the war is still best accomplished by reading books and consuming other media related to the war.[72] The sword made Andrew think heavily about war loot in general and the ethical implications of "owning" the sword amongst other things, referencing the question of to whom the sword really belongs. Despite the outward rhetoric of both family members of the sword being unimportant, further discussion and consideration of their attitudes revealed much about how the artifact influenced both of them in their career fields and interests.

In the case of the third family, Jim is more or less the caretaker of his father's war history. He asserted that the rest of his family is largely uninterested in his father's wartime service, whereas he is absolutely fascinated and motivated by it. He stated that the flag gifted to him by his father is still his prized possession after all these years and after his own naval career.[73] For him, the artifacts are a tangible link to his father who he sees equally as a man and a soldier. Regarding the flag, Jim stated, "In a small way it became the catalyst for a life-long

[69] Steven, Interview.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Andrew, Interview.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Cravens, Interview.

interest in military history" as well as the motivation for him to become a career navy officer.[74] He elaborated, "My interest in history, my personal collection, and ultimately my choices of a military career were all due in some part to Dad's service, and some of the relics he brought home, or ones he didn't make it home with."[75]

The profound impact on career, life, and hobby choices that the artifacts and his father's service had on him is clear. When asked if artifacts like the ones his father brought back were important to understanding the history of WWII, he responded "Absolutely. They make history tangible and alive, rather than distant and academic."[76] He stated that he frequently visits museums to see war relics as well as the context provided for them, to enhance both his collecting knowledge and his overall knowledge of WWII. He reiterated that having tangible items in one's possession excites a personal interest in the war. His testimony is among the most powerful examples of how war artifacts brought home by WWII veterans left lasting familial impacts and legacies even after their passing.

In the fourth family, Tom's case may be among the more interesting result concerning the artifacts from the war and the memory surrounding them. The medals once belonging to "Grandpa Fred" had an immediately warm and sentimental memory attached to them for Tom. This is due to his memory of Grandpa Fred as his grandfather and as a family man. For "Grandpa Hank," the flag represented a deep sadness and mourning towards the war as a whole and invited a reflective posture on the meaning of the war in American and familial history. The artifacts themselves, however, were largely separated from Tom's family histories. The war medals from Grandpa Fred are mostly a reminder that the war was a part of his early adult life before he

[74] Cravens, Interview.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.

married and started a family. While the flag is not connected to his memories of Grandpa Hank, it is the most powerful war artifact that he inherited. Tom stated, "It's my grandfather's 'property' but who does it really belong to anyways?"[77] There is a heavy reflective sadness and lack of closure that accompanies the flag given its mysterious origins and past. This is a stark contrast to Grandpa Fred's medals, which in the context of the war are seen as a way to bridge time and to offer a personal ownership of part of the war. While the medals belonged to his grandfather, there is a feeling that the "good luck" flag is not his to inherit. He sees the flag as a person's remains, not as material culture of the war, and he believes his role is that of a caretaker of the remains.[78]

When asked if the artifacts are important to understanding the war in American and family history, Tom strongly answered "yes."[79] He reiterated the point made by others that books regarding the war are distant and detached in nature, but heirlooms are personal and elicit curiosity which facilitates a deeper interest in understanding the war. He added that artifacts in museums are great as a starting point, but that they do not give the same feeling as possessing an artifact personally. He asserted that the items are "sanitized in a glass display" and lack a "cool" factor that is present when handled.[80] He included the caveat that the amount of interest elicited by the items is ultimately a matter of personality. Tom stated that inheriting his grandfathers' war relics was a catalyst for his own study of history as well as his own collecting of WWII memorabilia outside the family artifacts. Tom's possession of his grandfather' medals and flag have allowed him to more fully explore the history of WWII in a more nuanced way regarding American history.

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[77] Tom, Interview.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

The fifth family attached importance to their veteran's artifact as it related to his status as a family member, not as a soldier. Because the veteran carried the shrapnel and its wound silently in his life, it was not discussed within the family while he was alive. After his cremation, the piece of shrapnel was stored with the rest of his war documents and Purple Heart medal. Doug and Mitchell emphasized how much of a family figure the veteran was and how they were always mindful that he served and was wounded, but they did not want to make that the focal point of his memory.[81] The shrapnel and war materials are rarely retrieved or discussed by the family, but are still a reminder of the wounds the veteran literally carried his entire life in service to his family and country. The artifacts are an important reminder in the family of the veteran as a person who made lifelong sacrifices for the betterment of his family, but not exclusively in the context of his military service. Unlike the other four families, neither Doug nor Mitchell developed any further interest in the war because of this artifact.

Each of the five families emphasized the personal connection to the history of their family symbolized by the artifacts. While nearly all mentioned the connection to their veterans personally, four out of five can also point to the artifacts as having a connection to their hobbies/interests/careers in some fashion. Three of the families cite their inherited artifacts as a direct contribution to their interests and careers, a fourth regarded the artifacts in a tangential but still significant way. There is a strong correlation among the five cases as to the artifacts fulfilling the unconscious goals of terror management theory of collecting as preserving family memory and having an impact on future generations' understanding of the war in both American and familial history contexts. The veterans obtained these souvenirs to ward off their wartime mortality salience as well as to provide a means to symbolically transcend death. The souvenirs

[81] Doug and Mitchell, Interview.

they obtained and displayed for subsequent generations gave their lives a higher meaning than just their physical selves. This sense of meaning was also manifested through their worldviews, which allowed them to help construct their wartime service and souvenir taking through the lens of the "Good War" narrative.[82] This narrative of their deeds has continued to be the dominant narrative of WWII in American and familial history.

The "Good War" Narrative

The final major theme from the interviews involving constructed memory through the artifacts was a consensus view of WWII as the "Good War" in American history. The idea of the "Good War" narrative is a romanticizing of the war as well as a focus on all the positive outcomes and effects of the war for the United States, generally applied to the rest of the world as well. Popularized by Studs Terkel in his eponymously titled book from 1986, the idea of the "Good War" stems from a conviction in American memory that WWII was a genuine struggle of clearly defined good versus evil in near black and white terms. Such a sentiment was present in the surveys of dealers and collectors of war artifacts, and is a narrative still promoted in popular media representations of the war. The narrative also encompasses the treatment of all WWII veterans as heroes to be put on a pedestal regardless of their role, station, and actions during the conflict. The following discussion is not meant to refute or confirm this narrative, but only to frame what is suggested by this narrative's prevalence amongst all five families interviewed. The "Good War" narrative may have roots within terror management theory of memory. As referenced in the preceding paragraph, one of the psychological strategies to avoid mortality salience is prescribing a meaning and value to one's life beyond one's physical person. The criteria for meaning and value in life are determined by the worldview of their life. Constructing

[82] Juhl and Routledge, "Putting Terror in Terror Management Theory," 99.

a worldview of WWII as the "Good War" helps to heighten the significance of veterans' lives as a whole to help offset this looming mortality salience.

The first family referenced this theme immediately in the interview, and it remained an underlying factor throughout. Nick stated that his grandfather was "an American hero" who had "the perfect WWII story."[83] Highlighting that most US soldiers, including their veteran, were ordinary men tasked with extraordinary things, much of the "Good War" narrative stems from a fear of what an Axis victory in WWII might have entailed. Jennifer specifically mentioned a fear of "where the world was headed with a German victory" in the war.[84] Much of her fear and belief in the "Good War" narrative from the first family is also rooted in her father's liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. The pictures she found as a child only reinforced this notion of the Axis as inherently evil.

In addition to the focus of Axis war crimes, the "Good War" narrative is also present in the family's view of American importance as the militarily deciding factor in the war. That is to say, there is a widely held belief within the "Good War" narrative that the United States saved the Allies from certain defeat through its involvement in the war. There is an overriding belief that the American military was a force for good during the war and remains such a force for good in the modern day. They stated that the United States retains military bases in Europe and around the world as a result of victory in the war, and Jennifer asked how many times the presence of those bases helped to secure world peace.[85] While Nick and Jennifer had the strongest "Good War" narrative sentiment present in their recollections, elements of the theme were present throughout all of the families interviewed.

[83] Bowers, Interview.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

The second family, despite their relative indifference to the family heirloom, still saw much of WWII from the "Good War" perspective. Steven asserted that it was the last all-out war in American history with "universal support and a clarity of purpose."[86] Much like family one, family two emphasized that their veteran was just an ordinary man who "did his duty" and was able to achieve extraordinary things for his country. Steven referred to his father as "our hero" regarding the family's view of his service in the war.[87] Both Steven and Andrew emphasized the crucial role that the war played in shaping the modern world, with a sense of appreciation and pride in their veteran's efforts to help bring about victory in the war. While the elements of the "Good War" narrative were present in their memory and views of the war through the sword, it was not as dominant in their views of the war. Both had points that significantly stray from "Good War" narrative core tenets, such as with Andrew on the unethical nature of American soldiers looting practices during the war, and Steven's emphasis on the global effort instead of the American-centric causes of victory.

The third family echoed the fascination present in the other families regarding the men who answered the call of duty in the war. Jim emphasized that while the war generation continued to downplay their significance or not to realize it, they really were serving in an epic historical moment during the war and were direct contributors to shaping history as we know it.[88] He continued the Manichean "good versus evil" theme by mentioning again how WWII was the last American war with universal support and clarity of purpose behind it. While much of his view of the war entails his personal fascination with his father's exploits and service history, he continued to see his father's service within the context of the "Good War" narrative.

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[86] Steven, Interview.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

The fourth family is the one where the narrative of the "Good War" is seriously challenged. Remembering Grandpa Fred's service in the war, Tom takes immense pride in his service like the other families. His Grandpa Fred served for nearly the entirety of the war, and Tom believes that he even joined when underage.[89] This led Tom to remember him with great pride as yet another example of an ordinary man doing extraordinary things for his country. He stated that he still thinks of Grandpa Fred's war as a "Good War", due in part to the fact that Grandpa Fred was fighting the Nazis. When it comes to Grandpa Hank, however, Tom was far more hesitant to employ the "Good War" narrative. The personal nature of the flag Grandpa Hank brought home caused a visible sadness and lack of closure. He stated he often contemplated the forever lost story of the soldier to whom the flag belonged. He often wondered what type of person the Japanese soldier was, and how many Axis soldiers may have been like his Grandpa Fred.[90] He asserted that for all he knows the Japanese soldier could have committed terrible atrocities in China, or he could have been a simple peasant farmer like his Grandpa Fred, drafted and sent away but never to be heard from again.[91] The lack of closure gnaws at him and reminds him of the personal, human costs stemming from the war and its consequences for all nations. He stated that the flag has helped him escape the dominant "Good War" narrative and to try and view conflicts from a more nuanced perspective that accounts for the human costs of war.

The fifth family also adhered closely to the "Good War" narrative. This family was also the one family where the war artifacts and the veteran's service did not have a pronounced effect on careers/interests/hobbies. They took immense pride in their veteran's service, again emphasizing that he was just an ordinary man who did his duty and helped to accomplish

[89] Tom, Interview.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

extraordinary things during the war. Doug explicitly stated that "he was our hero" for answering the call of duty so stoically, and for his willingness to personally sacrifice to protect his family and country.[92] Mitchell elaborated on this feeling of pride by stating how he was willing be on the front lines for the American fight "to spread freedom" across the world in the face of totalitarian empires like Japan and Germany.[93] Both stressed the importance of the war in global history and shaping the world today, adding an element to the "Good War" narrative specific to the fight against Japan. Doug expressed a firm conviction that the nature of the war against Japan necessitated the use of atomic weapons as the way to end the war's devastation as fast as possible while saving lives.[94] He incorporated the atomic bombings into the "Good War" narrative as a necessary horror to end a struggle before it claimed millions more lives through invasion and war crimes in China, as well as causing nations to take a harder look before embarking on wars since the use of nuclear weapons looms in any future all-out war.

The "Good War" narrative was the most constant factor in the case studies involving memory of the war through artifacts. The only other factor as constant was the belief that familial heirloom artifacts bring a personal connection to history and the war. Regardless of veteran experiences or willingness to discuss the war, almost everyone interviewed in the families remained convinced that their veteran was a part of the winning side in a global struggle of "good versus evil." Of course, it would have been surprising if any of them saw their veterans as war criminals or "bad guys." In accordance with terror management theory's need for creating meaning in one's life to achieve transcendence over death, the worldview of the "Good War" that veterans helped to create has enabled them to perpetuate their memory and legacy to

[92] Doug and Mitchell, Interview.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

posterity and thereby transcend their own physical lives. The overwhelming consensus of families two generations removed still being convinced of the necessity of the war and its good intent speaks volumes for the way that the WWII generation continues to be immortalized in popular American memory. While the artifacts they brought home are perhaps not displayed proudly like they planned or envisioned when they first came home with them, the presence of the artifacts within the family continues to provide positive immortalization of the American soldiers' war effort even 75 years after the war's end.

CHAPTER 3: THE ARTIFACTS IN PUBLIC AND THE STIGMAS OF WORLD WAR II COLLECTING

A man sat at his table at one of the largest gun shows in the United States. For sale on his tables were rows of World War I and World War II era weapons, flags, uniforms, medals, and other materials. A particular weapon caught my gaze. The vendor noticed and asked me a question. “Do you know what that is?” I told him I did. It was a particularly rare and desirable variant of the Luger pistol with many accompanying accessories from the war. The man stated, “Not just that. It has the ‘bring back’ papers. Do you want to hear a sad story?” He explained that he had acquired that particular pistol with attachments and paperwork for his personal collection in the 1970’s from a veteran who needed the money. The vendor stated that he was looking to downsize his collection, and this was one that he wanted to sell now. He stated, “I figured that I still have the paperwork, so I tracked down the family from the paperwork and offered it back to them.” He explained that he could not offer it back for free because it was part of his business at this point, but he did offer it at nearly half price to two of the veteran’s sons in order to affordably keep it within the family if they wanted. He stated “The sons wanted it, but their wives wouldn’t let them spend the money on it. Here it is now, how about that?” He added, “If you thought this story is sad, you’ll weep at this next one.” He stated that one day he was at a garage sale and happened to notice a WWII leather flight jacket. He asked the people running the sale what they knew about it. They said that it was their father’s and that they had more items that went along with it. The man stated that these women brought out a box with their father’s military papers, other documents and photos, and various other miscellaneous items. He said they willingly tried to push it onto him, ending with, “They sold their dad’s entire WWII service

history and jacket to me for only $250 and they didn't even care."[1] Such an anecdote demonstrates how easily families dispose of their family history and how such artifacts enter the WWII collecting market.

As established in previous chapters, many American servicemen returned home after the war with artifacts they had gathered overseas. They brought these souvenirs and trophies home for a variety of reasons. Some gathered them as "trophies" to symbolize the defeat of the Axis powers, while others brought them home as "souvenirs" to share with family or friends and to preserve their legacy and memory for future generations. This preservation of legacy through the artifacts has contributed to the Manichean theme of the "Good War" in American memory. Many combat veterans, wittingly and unwittingly, collected artifacts to help them cope with their own traumatic experiences. Many such artifacts today, however, are controversial, and some were not deemed "appropriate" in a civil setting even in 1943 at the height of the war.

Combat in the Pacific Theater was known for its particular brutality, and many soldiers returned with actual human remains as trophies. Many of these "trophies" inevitably led to moral dilemmas within the families of these servicemen decades after the war, as family members contemplated how to best honor their family veteran's memory but were uneasy about possessing body parts. Such controversial artifacts raise serious questions within families concerning their inheritance, possession, and disposal. Many families have considered repatriating the remains of Japanese soldiers to families in Japan, and some have made efforts to do so. Taking actual human remains as a war trophy is explicitly illegal by the rules of warfare.[2] The practice is widely considered morally abhorrent, and the trade and sale of human remains is

[1] Anonymous, Conversation with Author, 22 February 2020.
[2] International Conferences (The Hague), *Hague Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and Its Annex: Regulations Concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 18 October 1907, articles 33-34.

not condoned by the collecting community. While some soldiers did collect human remains, this practice is not particularly common, and such "artifacts" are largely tangential to the modern collecting community.

A substantive amount of literature has already been published regarding the practice of taking body parts as souvenirs by German personnel on the Eastern Front and Japanese soldiers in China. This study, however, is an examination of war and memory concerning American war trophies, not the similar practices of Axis nations during the war. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this study, it is important to examine the taking and collecting of such "souvenirs" as an aspect of war collecting and its relationship to trauma and memory, loathsome though the practice may be. Moreover, such artifacts serve as a focal point for understanding changing attitudes toward the war and the evolution of war memory. Many items once deemed as legitimate and acceptable as "souvenirs" in 1945 are today considered socially taboo. Changes in social attitudes about the war and memory have also affected the collecting community associated with WWII memorabilia.

Collectors of these questionable artifacts tend to be the offspring of the veterans themselves, primarily "Baby Boomers" who grew up after the war, but also their children as well, with possession of the artifacts today now commonly spanning three generations. Most of them also tend to be males.[3] Mounting social pressure against owning such artifacts raises the question of what to do with them. Some families choose to donate these taboo artifacts to cultural institutions, while others try to repatriate the more controversial items, such as human remains, as a way to gain closure over the trauma associated with them. Some families turn to

[3] According Susan Pearce's survey of British collectors and their habits, 100% of militaria collectors were men. However, observations of the Ohio Valley Military Society gun show seem to indicate that number may not be accurate, as about 40% of those in attendance were women and many of the women were actively running tables with artifacts for sale. See, Susan M. Pearce, *Collecting in Contemporary Practice* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 134.

the collector's market to dispense with the more mainstream artifacts for profit, or they may pass them on to someone who will value them for their own collections in ways that they themselves will not. The collectors of such artifacts, particularly the more controversial items, struggle to legitimize their collections as significant historical relics, or as acceptable symbols of American dominance over the defeated cultures of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, especially in the face of popular perceptions that may characterize collectors as secretly admiring or glorifying those regimes. Many collectors have in-depth knowledge of these artifacts but are unaware of the social stigma attached to the collecting and ownership of them, or they do know and simply do not care. Although many collectors may be dismissed by professional historians as mere antiquarians, it can be argued that they do promote historical awareness at the grassroots level not only amongst the collecting communities, but also among the general public.

This chapter examines issues engendered by the collection, ownership, and disposal of WWII artifacts, especially those that have acquired a social stigma over the years. The chapter seeks to understand why and how these artifacts have migrated from the families of veterans to the collecting market in the US. Furthermore, this chapter examines how the presence of these artifacts has contributed to the general public's understanding of the war and the promotion of the "Good War" narrative. Finally, the chapter explores the divide in perception between collectors and the general public regarding the collecting of these artifacts.

The collectors' voices have been largely overshadowed in discussions and debates surrounding their hobby. This chapter attempts to record their attitudes, opinions, and experiences in order to contextualize and understand the role that collecting WWII artifacts plays in the construction and preservation of the American memory of the war amongst the general

public. This chapter demonstrates that items often enter the collecting market as a result of families attempting to distance themselves from the trauma associated with these artifacts.

Postwar Fates of World War II Souvenirs

Many wartime artifacts brought home by American soldiers wound up being buried in closets or trunks for years after the war, were given away to family members, or were eventually sold for cash. Originally envisioned by many service members was the idea that their souvenir would hang over the fireplace or sit prominently on top of the coffee table in the living room as a symbol of their role in the war. Many soldiers explained in letters and diaries that family members had asked for a souvenir to be brought home, or that they had promised someone that they would come home with a certain artifact from the war. As seen in the first chapter, one soldier from the 101st Airborne who participated in the D-Day invasion flung himself into no-man's land in the middle of a battle to search for German pistols. He stated that one of his goals during the war was to acquire a Luger pistol to satisfy the request of his younger brother.[4]

While the notion of taking war artifacts as souvenirs may be considered problematic or even appalling today, through WWII using war souvenirs as a type of home decoration was not at all uncommon. Nicholas Saunders has examined the "trench art" that arose in World War I and continued to be created through WWII and beyond. Trench art is defined by Saunders as "any item made by soldiers, prisoners of war, and civilians, from war matériel directly, or any other material, as long as it and they are associated temporally and/or spatially with armed conflict or its consequences."[5] Such artifacts are theorized by Saunders as being a means by which veterans tamed or came to terms with their experiences of the war and particularly to

[4] Stephen Ambrose, *Band of brothers: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne: from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 82.
[5] Nicholas J. Saunders, "Bodies of Metal, Shells of Memory: 'Trench Art', and the Great War Re-Cycled," *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 5, no. 1 (2000): 45.

soften the traumatic memories associated with them.[6] Art is a way in which trauma victims can depict their recovery and reconciliation from traumatic experiences.[7] Weaving Saunders' theory with that of trauma theory, it may also be argued that soldiers used trench art as a way to "avenge" the damage caused to their lives by manipulating the remnants of the weapons that harmed them.

Surveys of dealers and collectors revealed that many such war objects were commercialized in the US after WWII concluded. One collector, who was a four-year-old boy when his father was drafted, discussed how his father and many of his parents' friends gave him items that they had acquired during the war. These included a Japanese rifle, a Luftwaffe dagger, and a leather flight jacket.[8] Another collector stated that each of his uncles gave him a different "patch or collar brass" for a collecting board that he started.[9] Besides giving war memorabilia to family members, veterans passed on their trophies to young boys who grew up after the war. Perhaps they did this out of a desire to avoid reliving the trauma that had motivated them to take the trophies in the first place. One collector who grew up during the war stated that he bought artifacts as an investment as soon as he realized the amount of the war material available, which he said has paid off handsomely in terms of its increased financial value.[10] Profit was a primary motivator for those able to assemble large collections of artifacts to bring home. For some soldiers though, selling their trophies with unresolved trauma attached to them may have been an attempt to distance themselves from the war.

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[6] Ibid., 52-54.
[7] Joshua Pederson, "Speak Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory," *Narrative* 22:3 (October 2014): 349-50.
[8] Respondent A, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*, survey by Quintin Monnin, (November 13, 2019), Distributed by Bowling Green State University Qualtrics Data Archive.
[9] Respondent I, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[10] Respondent O, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

Most older collectors note that they started in the years immediately after the war by getting to know veterans and attending gun shows. The *Veteran Bring Backs* series compiled by Edward Tinker, a reputable WWII collector, contains stories from collectors who state souvenirs in the US post-WWII became a type of de-facto currency. Profit-motivated men, both veterans and non-veterans, collected large stores of militaria. They sold whatever did not fit their own, personal collecting desires to a commercialized market. One man claims that he had possessed and sold so many now-rare items as a young man that he still gets sick with remorse thinking about all the trades he made at gun shows to obtain items that he considered more "desirable" or "valuable" at the time.[11] Another collector claimed to come into WWII collecting when a distant relative who was a police officer in New England during the 1950's confiscated some firearms which were never subsequently claimed by the owner. Since at that time it was up to police officers to do as they saw fit with confiscated firearms, he "disposed" of them by giving them as gifts to family members.[12] While most veterans tried to preserve their trophy collections within their families after the war, some were more motivated by profit with their spoils.

Artifacts are often part of veterans' estates that must be parceled out among the family after they pass away. For some, it is a matter of deciding which family members should inherit such items to preserve their memory. Observations presented in the *Veteran Bring Backs* series support this desire to keep memories alive within the family through artifact collections. Many veterans pass artifacts down to sons and grandsons who have an emotional attachment to their parents and grandparents who are represented by their inherited trophies after they pass away. One such family member of a veteran wrote, "One rifle, the bayonet, the grenade, and the swords still remain and will remain as cherished markers of one serviceman's life…What is the greatest

[11] Edward Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. I. Galesburg, IL: Brad Simpson Pub., 2008), 62-63.
[12] Ibid., 68.

relic of this man's life is not the aging artifacts that he brought home from the war, but the fact he raised hardworking Christian sons, who themselves raised Christian sons and daughters too."[13]

For many veterans' children, the war artifacts had captured their imagination in their youth. Responses from the survey of dealers and collectors of WWII memorabilia revealed that fascination with war artifacts came from idolizing and fantasizing about their parents' and grandparents' souvenirs. One respondent asserted that his interest in the field came from "playing with original WWII souvenirs as a kid."[14] Another stated that his father taught him how to shoot and hunt, and "many times the firearms lent to us by our dads were historic WWII small arms" when he and his friends would go shooting.[15] Similar sentiments were recorded in the other survey responses and in the *Veteran Bring Backs* volumes. This drive to collect due to fascination with family veterans' war artifacts is indicative of the passing of the trauma associated with them to the next generation. Children may have grown up in a traumatizing atmosphere of their veteran's absence due to the war, or with the veteran suffering from PTSD. Their souvenirs represented a way for them as children to manipulate and exert control over the circumstances that traumatized both them and the veterans.

Some veterans sold or dissipated their collections because they fell on difficult financial times, had no family to share their collections with, or their family members expressed no desire to inherit the souvenirs. For some, profit alone was the primary motivation for collecting the souvenirs all along. Other families just do not want to inherit the artifacts brought home, or do not have a strong connection to the veteran attached to the artifacts. One unfortunate story is that

[13] Edward Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. III. Great Bend, KS: Goldenbelt Printing, 2012), 225.
[14] Respondent S, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[15] Respondent R, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

of a man whose father passed down his war trophies to him, but he did not have any children of his own to whom he could bequeath the artifacts and familial memories.[16] Another anecdote, which is not uncommon, tells of a veteran who had no family members interested in inheriting his trophy pistol, so he sold it to his dentist in order to pay for his fiftieth anniversary trip to the D-Day beaches where he had once landed as a soldier.[17] In yet another case, comparable to those where family members were uninterested in inheriting their parents' war artifacts, another man sold his mother's souvenir Nazi Party issued Walther PPK because his family's attachment to the pistol in generations after him had waned and no one wanted to inherit it from him. [18] She was a nurse in army field hospitals and was gifted the pistol by a soldier that she had cared for in France.[19] Such incidents became more frequent as the memories of the war generation faded further into the past.

The question of what to do with heirloom war artifacts loomed as a significant issue for families, especially for those having little interest in inheriting or possessing them. Part of the dealer/collector survey issued for this study asked respondents how often families of veterans approach them with souvenirs they no longer want, and what advice they give to such families. One responded: "you can see that many family members who live for 'right now' have no interest in old trinkets from the past, many times from relatives they didn't even know. Peoples' families are so extended and mixed with divorce that families have no attachment, and money is what they want...Sometimes they take weapons into pawn shops and sell away the history of their family for pennies on the dollar."[20] Others have no need of "old stuff" and so they sell old

[16] Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. III.), 67.
[17] Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. I.), 88.
[18] The Nazi Party required its party officials to carry an "honor" weapon, typically a small caliber pocket pistol of some sort. The party also had a contract for such weapons through Walther for its Polizei Pistole Kriminallmodel (PPK) to issue to party officials. These pistols are highly sought-after collector's items today and uniquely marked.
[19] Tinker, *Veteran Bring Backs* (Vol. III.), 81-2.
[20] Respondent S, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

war artifacts for cash. Unlike the storied collected and studied by Carol Kidron, an anthropologist at Haifa University who preserves Holocaust memory through retelling Holocaust stories, these war trophies are seldomly discussed by veterans and their families, which leaves the trauma associated with them unresolved and shrouded in mystery. As memories associated with the veteran fade away and with each passing generation that does not re-tell the veteran's story, the stigma attached to the artifacts brought home grows stronger and, combined with a tempting cash incentive, often entices families to get rid of them.

Many collectors approached by families about what to do with the war souvenirs still urge them to hold onto these heirlooms and family memories that go with them. Many respondents stated that they will give an honest appraisal of the value of the artifacts in question for the families but then recommend they either keep it themselves or find someone within the family who will. Regardless of this advice, many collectors stated that they end up purchasing/receiving the souvenirs anyway, or will see the family sell the weapons to pawn shops and gun shops, while the other artifacts are posted to auction websites or put on sale at antique malls. In one case, the artifact in question could not be legally kept or sold. A widow was in possession of a German automatic rifle brought home by her husband, and it was not registered as a machine gun as is required by the National Firearms Act of 1934, so she turned it in to the authorities.[21]

As often as veterans are remembered through their heirlooms, their artifacts are discarded by families who no longer want them. These trophies and souvenirs typically end up in the collector's market or possibly are destroyed. In the collectors' market they are often well cared for but lack the same meaning as familial heirlooms. There is also another fate for some artifacts

[21] Respondent G, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

that falls outside the collectors' market or public history realms but still contributes to war memory. Some families try to repatriate artifacts and soldiers' remains to the families of the Axis soldiers from whom they were taken.

How Families Deal with Personal Effects and the Disposal of Human Remains

While a weapon or piece of gear was considered a reasonable souvenir to seek out at the time, requests from family members for other types of artifacts seem rather bizarre or morbid by comparison. For example, a sailor on a US ship hit by a Japanese kamikaze in November 1944 wrote that, after the incident, he and his shipmates went scavenging the deck for "souvenirs." He stated that "One of the men on our [gun] mount got a Jap[anese] rib and cleaned it up; he said his sister wants part of a Jap body."[22] Such souvenirs were taken for a variety of intended purposes, among which were possibly to perform a dual role in taming and mastering the experience of the war by exerting a sort of vengeful dominance over the enemy that traumatized them in a manner consistent with trauma theory's desire for revenge. Such "trophies" would also serve to cement their legacies in their families as war survivors and victors.

[22] Simon Harrison, "Skull Trophies of the Pacific War: Transgressive Objects of Remembrance," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 12, no. 4 (2006): 824.

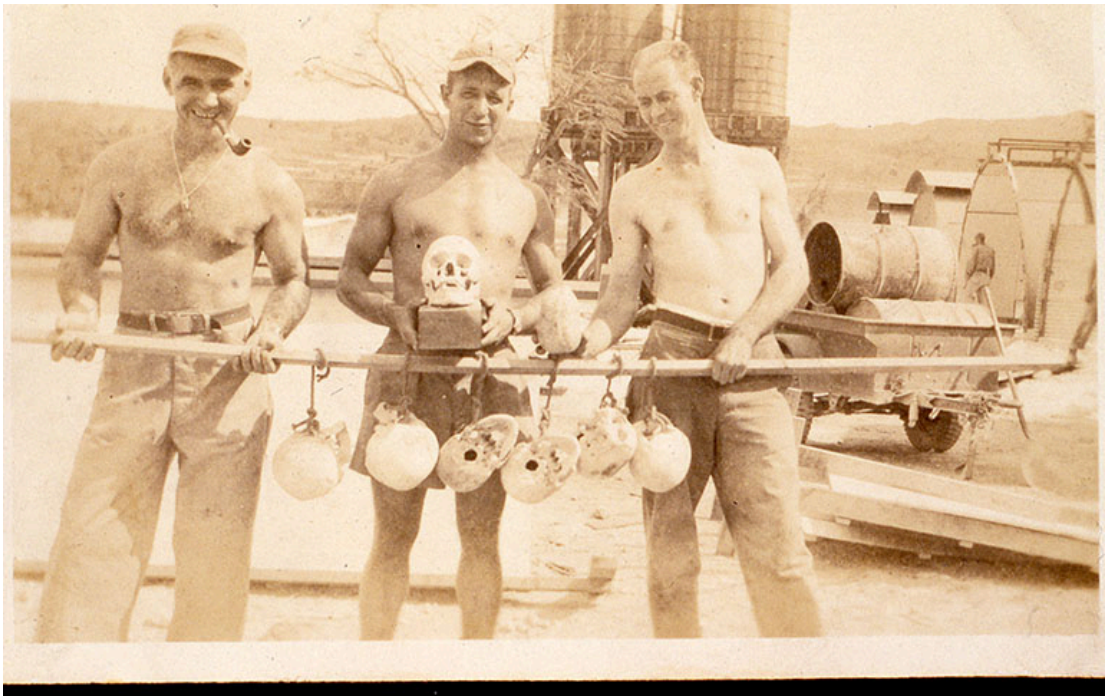

Figure 3-A, "Trophies" Saipan June '44," Black and White Photograph. Courtesy of Karl Heinmiller. From BGSU.

After many decades, some veterans and families have attempted to return human remains to the families of the Japanese soldiers, along with many other personal items acquired during the war. They are not perceived as "trophies" nor are they desired as familial heirlooms. The option to repatriate artifacts and human remains to the families of former enemy soldiers is a way for veterans and their descendants to gain closure over the trauma associated with the "trophies". The practice of taking body parts as war trophies is unique to the conflict against the Japanese in the Pacific due to its racialized nature, but it provides a fascinating insight into how war trophies can be used to heal even decades after the war ended. Japanese body parts were a morbid but somewhat popular choice of "souvenir" for US soldiers in the Pacific. Families who received these "souvenirs" as heirlooms were often not pleased to have them in their homes.[23] While the

[23] Harrison, "Skull Trophies," 830.

trade of human remains is not always illegal, it is stigmatized outside the medical and archaeological fields.[24]

The primary reason that American soldiers took home such intimate personal effects and body parts from Japanese soldiers and not from German soldiers is because the Pacific War was arguably a racial war. American propaganda portrayed Japanese as subhuman, similar to Nazi propaganda depictions of Jewish people. John Dower's book *War Without Mercy* articulates how pervasive anti-Japanese racism in the US played a significant role in influencing the conduct of US servicemen stationed in the Pacific. American propaganda consistently portrayed Japanese war crimes as a product of their inferior racial and cultural constitutions.[25] American propaganda was intended to make the American people and soldiers see the Japanese as non-human and in need of extermination. In the beginning of the war, as the Japanese swept to stunning victory over European and American military outposts, they were depicted as ape-like supermen.[26] The nature of jungle and island warfare combined with the tenacity displayed by Japanese troops willing to fight to the death or commit suicide in battle before surrendering led to depictions of Japanese soldiers as ferocious beasts. Eventually, however, these depictions changed to "lesser men" caricatures, which exploited differences in Japanese physical stature noted by Western soldiers combat experiences.[27] As the war progressed and Japanese resistance turned desperate, American propaganda depicted them as "sneaky monkeys" swinging through the jungle, and ultimately depicted them as vermin, like rats and cockroaches, that needed to be "exterminated" as pests.[28] This racialized "othering" of Japanese soldiers produced a moral space in which

[24] Damien Huffer and Shawn Graham, "The Insta-Dead: The Rhetoric of the Human Remains Trade on Instagram," *Internet Archaeology* 45: (2017).
[25] John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 34.
[26] Ibid., 94-118.
[27] Ibid., 94-118.
[28] Ibid., 77-94.

widespread tolerance emerged in both social and military circles towards taking body parts as "legitimate" war trophies.

These dehumanizing phenomena were not often talked about publicly but were well-known in American society during the war. Winfield Townley Scott, the famous American writer, wrote a poem about a sailor in 1944 who took a Japanese skull as a war trophy and proudly displayed it around his office.[29] The practice of taking skulls in theater was common enough that a serviceman even took graphic and detailed pictures demonstrating the proper way to boil off the flesh and clean a Japanese skull properly. Teeth were also taken and often made into necklaces by soldiers, with gold teeth being the studs.[30] Evidence of widespread societal knowledge of such practices is found in an issue of *Life* magazine, a major weekly publication. In May 1944, its picture of the week featured a young woman staring dreamily at a Japanese skull on her desk.

[29] Harrison, "Skull Trophies," 821-2.
[30] JJ Weingartner, "Trophies of War, United-States Troops and the Mutilation of Japanese War Dead, 1941-1945," *Pacific Historical Review* 61, no. 1 (1992): 57.

Figure 3-B, *Life*, May 22, 1944, 34-35.

The accompanying caption serves as evidence of the extent to which this practice was normalized during the war. It reads:

> When he said goodby [sic] two years ago to Natalie Nickerson, 20, a war worker of Phoenix, Arizona, a big, handsome Navy lieutenant promised her a Jap. Last week, Natalie received a human skull, autographed by her lieutenant and 13 friends and inscribed: 'This is a good Jap--a dead one picked up on the New Guinea beach.' Natalie, surprised at the gift, named it Tojo. The armed forces disapprove strongly of this sort of thing.[31]

Other soldiers are documented to have taken items such as kneecaps, fingers, ribs, ears, noses and other bones from Japanese war dead to preserve or use to make "trench art." The most notorious piece of "trench art" was a letter opener made from a Japanese arm bone given by Congressman Francis Walter to President Roosevelt mere weeks after the *Life* article was published. Walter reportedly apologized ironically that he could not offer more of a Japanese soldier to the President. Roosevelt, realizing the propaganda value that accepting the gift would give to the Japanese press, declined and suggested that it be given a proper burial.[32] The photograph and article prompted the military leadership to crack down on taking body parts as trophies, but it was to little avail on the battlefield or in swaying public opinion during the war. Local commanders routinely ignored or selectively enforced these directives as they believed that tempering such actions may cause soldiers' attitudes towards the enemy to lighten up, thereby losing combat effectiveness.[33] For soldiers, collecting remains was their manner of revenge for the traumas the Japanese enemy had inflicted upon them and their fellow soldiers.

The memoir of Eugene Sledge, a marine who served at the battles of Peleliu and Okinawa, show how combat and propaganda combined to justify revenge body part collecting among soldiers in the Pacific. He recalled in his time on Peleliu how American soldiers hunted

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[31] *Life*, May 22, 1944, 34-35.
[32] Harrison, "Skull Trophies," 825.
[33] Ibid.

for gold teeth and pried them out with their combat knives from Japanese bodies, some of them still living, and how the fury of war made it seem normal. One of his fellow soldiers revealed that he had taken a shrunken human head as a souvenir, only to have others in the unit shame him into discarding it.[34] Sledge described what he experienced as a result of the traumatic experience of combat: "The fierce struggle for survival…eroded the veneer of civilization and made savages of us all."[35]

Under "normal" conditions of everyday civilian life, one might agree that boiling the remains of someone who has been killed and retaining their bones as souvenirs is psychopathic behavior. While it is possible, even likely, that some of the men who engaged in such brutal practices were psychopaths by nature, the fatigue of war and desire for revenge affected otherwise normal men as well. The trauma of war could transform even the most stalwart and morally conscious of them. This is because intensely traumatic events overwhelm psychological systems that give people senses of control, connection, and meaning. The events violate a person at their most basic levels of their integrity.[36] Sledge recalls that the corpsman (medic), Doc Caswell, stopped him from extracting gold teeth from a dead Japanese soldier, thereby saving him from that dark path of revenge for his traumatic experiences as well. Meanwhile, Sledge observed another soldier with "a handful of coral pebbles in his left hand. With his right hand he idly tossed them into the open skull of the Japanese machine gunner…My buddy tossed the coral chunks as casually as a boy casting pebbles into a puddle."[37] Other examples that Sledge observed included an officer who urinated in a Japanese corpse's mouth, and an infantryman who executed an old woman on Okinawa.[38] Such sadistic actions towards Japanese soldiers,

[34] Eugene Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (Novato California: Presidio Press, 1981), 120-1, 152-153.
[35] Ibid., 120-1
[36] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, NY.: BasicBooks, 1992), 33, 57
[37] Sledge, *With the Old Breed*, 123.
[38] Ibid., 199, 287-8.

civilians, and corpses is emblematic of the racialized nature of combat in the Pacific, which, on the whole, was not seen in the European theater. The brutal actions of taking body parts as souvenirs was committed by American soldiers out of revenge for the trauma inflicted on them by a racialized "other."

The return of the remains and personal artifacts to soldiers' families is a way to gain closure from the trauma associated with them. In 2000, the Japanese embassy in Washington DC reported that about once a week, American veterans or their families would come to them with personal trinkets or a familial sword taken from a Japanese soldier during the war and ask to have them returned to the soldier's family in Japan. The embassy's reported success rate was about 50/50.[39] Internally within Japan, the government has tried to strongly discourage the commercialized sale of Japanese war artifacts from online auctions in order to keep the artifacts as family objects or properly stored in museums.[40] Some American families conduct personal research to return artifacts to the Japanese families. One such case is documented in *The Souvenir: A Daughter Discovers Her Father's War* by Louise Steinman. She found a Japanese battle flag signed by the family and friends of a Japanese soldier. Such flags were carried for good luck in battle, hence they were called "good luck" flags. Steinman's father took the flag as a battle souvenir during the war and after stored it in a box. It was only discovered after her father passed and the family began the process of going through his estate. Steinman took possession of the flag, researched the Japanese soldier to whom it originally belonged, and was able to repatriate the flag to a very grateful Japanese family.[41] Steinman was able to reconnect

[39] Simon Harrison, "War Mementos and the Souls of Missing Soldiers: Returning Effects of the Battlefield Dead," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 4 (2008): 776.
[40] Shimbun Chunichi, "Japanese War Memorabilia Pile Up at Museums, While Online Auctions of Artifacts Remain Unregulated," *The Japan Times*, August 21, 2017, https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/08/21/national/japanese-war-memorabilia-pile-museums-online-auctions-artifacts-remain-unregulated/#.XmKGrahKg2w
[41] Louise Steinman, *The Souvenir: A Daughter Discovers Her Father's War* (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2001).

and facilitate a core recovery experience from the trauma of the war that she had inherited. Veterans often express that what was once a trophy became a debt to repay to the families of the soldiers from which it was taken.[42]

These sentiments of caretaking of human remains and the associated lack of closure is often seen in the children and grandchildren who inherit the personal items and remains. Dr. Simon Harrison, an anthropologist at the University of Ulster, states that many Japanese soldiers' remains never made it to Japan for proper burial. For many Japanese families, the return of the remains finally allowed their loved one to be properly laid to rest in accordance with Japanese traditional rites.[43] Such acts of repatriation allow the veterans and their families to find closure for the trauma associated with these artifacts.

The Controversies and Stigmas of Collecting WWII and Nazi Memorabilia

Among of the most morally repulsive WWII collecting subfields to the public is that of Holocaust memorabilia. One of the most prominent collectors in the field of Holocaust memorabilia is Howard Cohen, a Jewish-American living in Pittsburgh, who has an extensive collection of artifacts associated with the Final Solution, all of which were brought back by American servicemen in the European theater or by Holocaust survivors themselves. Among such items are German passports with pink J's to denote Jewish ancestry, an ashtray with a caricature of a Jewish person in the center, and a full camp outfit worn by an Austrian victim.[44] Cohen and his friend and fellow collector, Michael Caplan, claim to be two of around twenty-five major Holocaust memorabilia collectors in the US. Cohen and Caplan claim that all the twenty-five are also of Jewish ancestry.[45] Cohen's wife, Judith, is the chief acquisitions curator

[42] Harrison, "Mementoes," 776.
[43] Ibid., 784.
[44] Sean D. Hamill, "Why Do People Collect Anti-Semitic or Nazi Artifacts?," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette,* January 7, 2019.
[45] Ibid.

for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. The field of collecting Holocaust artifacts publicly seems to be nearly exclusive to these major Jewish collectors and Holocaust museums, but it is not unheard of to see an occasional Holocaust artifact while browsing a militaria show or an antique shop displaying WWII artifacts. The Cohens agree that these artifacts should not be collected as curiosities, but rather for properly contextualized historical purposes. The Cohens collect these items in order to prevent the history of the Holocaust from being forgotten.[46] That the major collectors of this memorabilia are all Jewish per their claims leads to an interpretation through trauma theory. These collections are a means to promote general Jewish survivor legacy. By integrating these collections with the Jewish people's traumatic memories at the hands of the Nazis, they can pass on their survival from the experiences as a source of strength.[47]

The veterans of WWII had attempted to build a similar narrative of triumphant survival of the war through their artifact acquisitions. However, as the WWII generation passes away, memories attached to items veterans took are lost and supplanted by the more antiquarian knowledge and interests that collectors have in or about them. This distance from the personal attachments to, and intended meanings of, the artifacts has altered the ways in which Americans perceive the presence of war artifacts. The changing mindset in American culture towards militaria in general also has had negative ramifications regarding public perception of WWII memorabilia collectors. Items that used to be prized trophies wrested from defeated enemies are now seen as questionable or distasteful tchotchkes in the hands of collectors. The release of these items from veterans' estates created a booming collector's market for the war trophies. However, their presentation and re-introduction to the mainstream markets has not been as smoothly

[46] Ibid.
[47] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 207.

received as they were in the decades immediately following the end of the war in 1945. These war trophies often are not seen by the general public as a symbol of memorializing the deeds of the veterans who fought but are perceived – most often erroneously – as a way to preserve or sanctify the ideologies of the regimes they once represented in the war.

In the year 2000, a major controversy arose around the sale of one of Hitler's speeches to a person residing in France through the internet site *Yahoo!* France, Germany, and Austria are among the major European nations that have outlawed the possession or sale of memorabilia related to the Third Reich.[48] Through lawsuits and court orders in these respective countries, they managed to pressure both *Yahoo!* and competitor *eBay* into no longer allowing the sale of Nazi memorabilia on their websites to ensure compliance with their laws outlawing hate speech and the trading and possession of Nazi memorabilia. The US has no such ban on collecting Third Reich memorabilia or hate speech, which is protected under First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and expression.[49] The dispute between internet auction sites and European governments is not the only one surrounding the artifacts' legitimacy as private collections.

Much of the major controversy surrounding collectors concerns the popularity of WWII artifacts returned from Nazi Germany. Items associated with Nazi Germany, both counterfeit and real, account for the lion's share of commercialized WWII militaria collecting.[50] In the year 2000, the collective worth of all the known artifacts from the war resulted in a market with an estimated worth of at least $500 million.[51] While the vast majority of these items are war materials that are relatively uniform in price and appearance, there were plenty of items belonging to Axis leaders which were brought home by US and other Allied soldiers that defy

[48] Anna Maria Virzi, "Hate or History?," *Forbes*, July 3, 2001.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Hamill, "Why Collect Nazi Artifacts?"
[51] Anna Maria Virzi, "Hate or History?," *Forbes*, July 3, 2001.

categorization. Small auctionhouses and even museums struggle to display and contextualize these Nazi artifacts without backlash. The Canadian War Museum, for example, displays Hitler's personal Mercedes Limousine in its collection. They stated they did not want to deaccession Hitler's limo because they feared that it might act as a "powerful icon for a neo-Nazi or extreme group" if it went on the collectors' market.[52]

Items with the capacity to fulfill the Canadian War Museum's fears are found elsewhere. A Gettysburg "museum" at the historic American Civil War battlefield site had a section of a room dedicated to WWII items brought home by American servicemen. [53] One of the items on sale from the museum was Eva Braun's undergarments, which sold for $4,619 in a September 2019 auction.[54] Other personal items still for sale at the Gettysburg website in December 2019 include Hitler and Braun's personal formal silverware.[55] In 2017, Hitler's personal telephone sold at auction for $243,000.[56] These are not the only private possessions of Axis leaders collected and marketed. An auction in September 2000 sold stirrups used by Japanese Emperor Hirohito during the war, which were expected to fetch between $15,000 and $25,000.[57] The final sale price was not disclosed. These personal artifacts taken from Axis leaders are rationalized among collecting circles and historical institutions as war trophies demonstrating the vanquishing of evil enemies, displaying dominance over defeated cultures. However, most war trophies were not such grandiose personal items of the war's villains, but more mundane weapons, gear, and personal effects from individual Axis soldiers. These items are mostly in private collections and are bought and sold privately in the collectors' markets.

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[52] UK, "Selling a Dark past," *BBC News*, August 11, 2000.
[53] The "museum" upon touring is more of a massive private collection of various historic artifacts from different eras and, in that regard, appears more like a giant cabinet of curiosities than a public history institution.
[54] Adam Schrader, "Used Panties Belonging to Hitler's Gal Pal Sold at Auction," *New York Post*, September 19, 2019.
[55] "WWII German Artifacts for Sale Archives", Gettysburg Museum of History, accessed April 8, 2019. https://www.gettysburgmuseumofhistory.com/product-tag/wwii-german-artifacts-for-sale/.
[56] Judith Vonberg, "Hitler's Phone Sold for $243,000," *CNN*, February 20, 2017.
[57] Virzi, "Hate or History?"

A spokesperson for the antifascist magazine *Searchlight* claimed that "Private collections of [Nazi memorabilia] are often a symbol of the owner's questionable ideological stance" and that these objects should be donated to a historical institution if they had any real historical value.[58] Such sentiments against private sales and ownership of Nazi memorabilia, as well as the stigmatization of collectors, are commonly echoed in US media. For example, in 2019, John Christie, a journalist in Boston, unknowingly stumbled into a Nazi memorabilia auction when invited by a shop owner while searching for home decorations. Christie and his wife, Naomi, are both from families who have been traumatized by genocidal regimes in the twentieth century. Christie noticed the number of items with Swastikas and Nazi German eagles emblazoned on them and stated that they made his stomach turn. He also saw a disheveled display of American war artifacts hastily thrown together that were juxtaposed against neatly displayed Nazi artifacts. After getting into a dispute with another auction house guest over the meaning of the discrepancy of the display, he told the guest that he does not "need a Nazi armband to remember WWII."[59] While he left the auction after that incident, Naomi stayed behind. She stated that she recoiled in horror after picking up what looked a bell handle, but instead it turned out to be a stamp with a swastika on the bottom. "I realized that I was holding something that had once been held by a Nazi," she stated. "It might have been used to stamp papers to send Jews to their death."[60] Both then left and had strong negative opinions regarding the sale of Nazi artifacts and these collectors.

The stigmatizing of the militaria collecting community has led to increased policing of their own ranks. Howard Cohen and Michael Caplan, the aforementioned collectors of Holocaust

[58] Ibid.
[59] John Christie, "I Went To A Nazi Memorabilia Auction. Here's What I Saw," *Cognoscenti*. January 31, 2019.
[60] Ibid.

artifacts, attended an Ohio Valley Military Show (OVMS) in 2017 shortly after the alt-right demonstration that included Neo-Nazis and which resulted in a violent confrontation in Charlottesville, Virginia. One of the directors asked Cohen and Caplan to close down their table displaying Holocaust artifacts as it was deemed too offensive, despite that they are annual regulars at the show where Third Reich memorabilia such as weapons, armbands, uniforms, and flags emblazoned with swastikas are prevalent. The OVMS Business Manager and President, Bill Combs and Brian Coats, refunded Cohen's and Caplan's table fee and took them out to dinner as a consolation.[61] Regarding this incident, Combs stated: "There was a time when anti-Semitism wasn't taken all that serious and was not seen as a problem like it is now…We've taken steps to ensure that as an organization we aren't inadvertently promoting that philosophy."[62] Mr. Cohen's experience at a sanctioned militaria show is emblematic of the increased self-policing that WWII memorabilia collectors now feel is necessary to combat given the increase in negative stigmatization from the general public. In the case of Mr. Cohen and Mr. Caplan, the overtly offensive caricatures of Jewish people depicted on their artifacts risked giving the wrong impression of the rest of the show, which, in general, promotes theme of the "Good War" narrative with veterans' war trophies displayed as symbols of their victory over Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, and does not seek to proliferate Nazi propaganda depictions of the Holocaust. Cohen and Caplan's table risked furthering the stigma of collectors as harboring Nazi sympathies even though they themselves, ironically, are Jewish.

In the survey of dealers and collectors of WWII military artifacts conducted for this study, respondents were asked about the perceptions and stigmas they felt were applied to them by the general public. Overwhelmingly they answered that they felt unfairly stigmatized as Nazi

[61] Hamill, "Why Collect Nazi Artifacts?"
[62] Ibid.

sympathizers due to the nature of their collections. Particularly, they felt this stigmatization was most heavily directed at those who collect WWII period firearms and memorabilia associated with Germany in any form. Many lamented that such a stigma comes from misinformation or willful ignorance of the nature of their collection by the public and media. One respondent answered, "I think if someone has a problem with what someone collects, that individual is closed minded and not seeing the big picture. If someone collects WW2 German items, it doesn't make them a *NAZI* or Italian, a [Fascist.] For the Collectors it's a hobby."[63] According to collectors, there is a misguided mindset held by large segments of the general public and promoted in the media that owning objects associated with a regime is tacit support of said regime.

Another respondent summarized the perception collectors have of their role: "Collectors that are interested in documenting and assembling artifacts of history sometimes experience irrational prejudice related to misinterpretation of the symbols of regimes implying support for those regimes. Collectors of original artifacts that seek them for historical purposes should never be subject to this prejudice. Those that reproduce them in order to symbolize modern political movements are in a different class, but few of the general public bother to understand the difference."[64] A dealer from Pennsylvania was quoted in the *Forbes* article in 2000, saying "We are not all lunatics…It's historical and it promotes an interest and an awareness."[65] Another survey respondent elaborated on what collecting these artifacts means to collectors regarding the regimes they are associated with, stating, "What young people fail to understand is that these

[63] Respondent U, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[64] Respondent K, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[65] Virzi, "Hate or History?"

items represent the victory over the Nazi regime. Victorious soldiers have, throughout time, kept mementos of the vanquished foe."[66]

This reasoning is in line with Richard Holmes' theory of war trophies as displays of dominance over defeated foes and fits in with the mindset of immortalizing the soldiers' heroics during the "Good War" by having trophies as proof of victory. Bill Combs of the OVMS described how he views his collector's organization: "We are a military collector's organization. We preserve the memories of our veterans' victory with the items they brought home with them. We are not here to promote an ideology."[67] While the general public sees collectors as harboring or glorifying Nazi ideology, collectors see themselves as displaying dominance over defeated Nazi culture through possession of their artifacts as trophies.

The Culture War and the Future of WWII Memorabilia Collecting

The collecting community respondents shared a common disgust for Nazi ideology and the Nazi sympathizers among their ranks. They perceive themselves to be stigmatized by portrayals in popular culture as well as stories involving their hobby in news outlets. Quotes from news outlets include: "When we came home, we both washed our hands. But we couldn't wipe our minds clean of the memory of a room full of people eager to bring home souvenirs of one of the greatest horrors in human history."[68] And, "Private collections of such material are often a symbol of the owner's questionable ideological stance … Some people buy this stuff out of political sympathy for the Nazis. There are a lot of people with SS daggers hanging over the mantelpiece."[69] Due to these types of criticisms from the general public and media outlets, collectors increasingly self-police their ranks of those who would fetishize or idolize fascist and

[66] Respondent B, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[67] Hamill, "Why Collect Nazi Artifacts?".
[68] Christie, "I Went to a Nazi Memorabilia Auction."
[69] UK, "Selling a Dark past."

militarist regimes. One respondent wrote, “There are always those who collect for political reasons. Those guys actually are nuts and it paints a picture of everyone else.”[70] Another wrote, “I do understand sometimes there is an underground nefarious element that revels in militaria. So, I do believe there is a reason for the stigma, but it is mostly applied as a more universal thing. And that’s what’s unjustified.”[71] People who are known to have or revealed to have Nazi sympathies are rejected at the door of militaria shows or are asked immediately to leave and are barred future access. When asked about the possible presence of white supremacists at their shows, two high ranking members of the OVMS responded that typical white supremacists are poor and cannot afford the original collector’s items anyway, adding that, “‘We’d just as soon [white supremacists] not come’ to our shows.”[72] A survey respondent noted his own experiences with politically extreme memorabilia collectors at a gun show. He stated, “I once met two pro-Nazi collectors/dealers. I was shocked by their views. Other collectors shared my disgust of them.”[73] In a similar vein, it appears to be an unwritten rule at militaria shows that human remains are off limits and not to be displayed or traded. The portrayal of militaria and gun shows as gathering points for Nazi sympathizers and white supremacists has been pushed in news stories and articles.[74] However, the collecting community is by and large virulently anti-Nazi.

Political angst by militaria collectors aimed at those who stigmatize them was a prevalent theme in the survey responses and was reflected in their answers. These responses suggest that the American political climate is working heavily against the public perception of militaria collectors. Despite the adamant sentiments against Neo-Nazism shown in their responses, many

[70] Respondent S, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[71] Respondent T, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[72] Hamill, "Why Collect Nazi Artifacts?".
[73] Respondent P, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[74] Alex Yablon, “Nazi Controversies at New York Gun Shows Are a Reminder of the Events’ Extremist Elements,” *The Trace*. September 7, 2017.

militaria collectors identify with the political right. Some survey respondents went so far as to directly imply that the current American political divide, especially the divide over the Second Amendment, is largely responsible for their stigmatization. One respondent stated: "In my opinion, many [militaria collectors] are conservative mid-to-extreme right-wing types. Lots of conversation at gun shows supportive of Trump. Conversely others outside the collecting community do harbor reservations to varying degrees about collectors."[75] Others were much less diplomatic in their interpretation of how they felt politics impacted the stigma placed on militaria collections. One response to whether or not they feel stigmatized was "No, not really. Unless some liberal snowflake is 'offended' by history."[76] Another respondent wrote that "snow-flakes typically will object" to the collection of militaria.[77]

The more diplomatic respondent of the three shared an anecdote that he believes demonstrates the political mindset having an influence on the stigma surrounding militaria collectors. He stated, "You have to be careful of who you show [your collection] to. Case in point, we were moving from an upscale neighborhood in PA and a salesperson was showing the house. The couple heretofore were very interested but when they saw some rifles in a display, that ended their interest."[78] Other respondents stated that those who most vocally object to their militaria collecting interests tend to have a strong dislike for firearms in general. One stated, "It's been my perception that people who stigmatize collectors are ones who have a general aversion to firearms, and who do not make any distinction between collecting and general gun ownership."[79] Put more bluntly by another collector, "anti-gun crap in the press does make a

[75] Respondent A, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[76] Respondent C, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[77] Respondent H, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[78] Respondent A, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[79] Respondent N, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

negative impact."[80] Collectors sense that the media and public stigma attached to their collections is an attempt to socially ostracize them for their political viewpoints.

This social ostracism of militaria collectors has been increasingly manifested in the early twenty-first century. The likening of firearms and Nazi memorabilia to obscene materials was explicitly brought up in an article titled, "Selling a Dark Past," which referenced Susan Sontag.[81] Sontag, the famous American writer, posited that "Nazi memorabilia gives collectors a lurid, taboo-breaking thrill."[82] Writing for the *New York Review of Books* in 1975, she analyzed the flashiness and allure of Nazi regalia's propaganda aesthetics. She asserted, "SS uniforms are stylish, well-cut, with a touch (but not too much) of eccentricity. Compare the rather boring and not very well-cut American army uniform."[83] According to Sontag, this "stylishness" may elicit a fascination with Nazi militaria and SS regalia in particular. She writes, "Of course most people… are not signifying approval of what the Nazis did, if indeed they have more than the sketchiest idea of what that might be."[84] This fascination with Nazi memorabilia's aesthetics is conflated as tacit collector support of Nazi ideology by the media and general public, which allows them to stigmatize militaria collectors as supporters of Nazi ideology. Without close memory of the war to provide context, this conflation of appreciating aesthetics with support of Nazi ideology presents a danger to the future of militaria collecting's social viability.

In addition to this increased socio-political pressure, counterfeiters have flooded the markets with fake items to make easy money from uninformed buyers. This threatens the industry by making it difficult to determine authenticity. Dealers and collectors were asked to

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[80] Respondent H, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[81] UK, "Selling a Dark past."
[82] Susan Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism," review of *The Last of the Nuba* by Leni Riefenstahl and *SS Regalia* by Jack Pia, *The New York Review of Books*, February 6, 1975.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.

give their opinions on the current state and perceived future of WWII militaria collecting given these challenges. Regarding the current status of the field, there was a near consensus that "Replicas and fakes are a huge menace."[85] One respondent asserted that specifically in German militaria collecting it would be foolish to buy medals without years of prior experience.[86] Even the most experienced collectors are running into items counterfeited so well that they are having difficulty determining authenticity. This inability to start a collection with authentic artifacts discourages potential collectors from entering the field, which in turn leads to a decrease in future interest for collecting WWII militaria.

There appears to be an 80/20 split on exactly how the militaria markets are currently trending.[87] Eighty percent of the responses indicated that the field is entering a general decline distinct from the natural ebb and flow of the market. Many in this camp cite the socio-political climate as a large reason for younger people not wanting to engage in militaria collecting. A respondent writes, "If the leftist movement continues to dumb down our youth with wanting to change history and not highlight the sacrifices our forefathers endured so we could live in the greatest country in the world, I think [militaria collecting's future is] not bright."[88] The collecting community largely blame the American left for politicizing the educational system, and contributing to the political climate that is perceived to be harming the field. Another respondent writes, "The number of individuals interested in casual collection of wartime artifacts is falling due to lack of education in history, apathy, and politically correct prejudice being instilled by professional educators prior to students reaching University age."[89] Such pressures on militaria

[85] Respondent V, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[86] Respondent S, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[87] Of the 23 total responses, 16 were explicitly negative, 3 were explicitly positive, 4 were ambivalent or gave no answer to the question.
[88] Respondent U, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[89] Respondent K, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

both internally from counterfeiting and externally from socio-political pressures are perceived as existential threats to the future of the field.

On the other hand, a minority of respondents believed that there were some cultural influences, such as video games and war films, that are attracting new members to the militaria collecting field. One respondent wrote, "I think video games have played a small part in boosting the market. When you are able to switch weapons in the game, I believe some people want to have a sample of the firearms. A K98, G43, M1 Garand , M1 carbine, 1911A1 etc."[90] Some collectors lamented the inaccuracies of these media portrayals, while others are happy they are able to attract new collectors. The prevailing mindset amongst positive respondents seems to be a resignation that it is not the ideal way to get younger people interested in collecting, but they can be taught the facts of the objects and be given a more accurate representation once they become involved. The collecting surveys displayed a near consensus view that material culture positively impacts understanding of history and historical facts.

Most respondents believe that collecting gives people a stronger connection to the war than academic history can provide. Material culture is more than just names, dates, and abstract concepts applied to outdated maps in school textbooks. While they believe the educational system gives necessary names and dates, collectors note that "Artifacts and memorabilia add color and understanding to that summary and provide a connection that isn't there otherwise. They offer a tangible link to a hugely impactful time, and society should be more amenable to their lessons."[91] Material culture's powerful impacts on understanding history is explored by Karen Harvey in her work *History and Material Culture*, where she states, "Material culture is not simply objects that people make, use, and throw away; it is an integral part of – and indeed

[90] Respondent U, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[91] Respondent T, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

shapes – human experience."[92] Even students with family members who served in WWII often struggle to see the war's impact on their world. Students have grown up increasingly without grandparents who experienced the war sharing their memories with them, and fewer numbers of students' families have familial artifacts from the war at home. Regarding the war's impact on the world, one collector observed, "WWII shaped the world as we know it today."[93] Current high school students are now three or more generations removed from those who experienced WWII, and they do not have strong personal or material links to the war. Another collector expanded on the manner in which artifacts can help in education by noting that they have "a real connection to the community, families," elaborating that they are "a teaching tool and a material proof of the conflict."[94] The personal element inspired by artifacts can spark the historical imagination of students studying WWII and other historical eras.

How much history can be learned and passed through material culture depends upon the approach taken in researching it. Collectors often have extensive knowledge regarding the individual items in their possession, but the knowledge is more antiquarian in nature than academic history. Through their investment in a collection, they often dive deep into the specific history of their collected items, gaining an accurate understanding of the artifacts' roles and provenance within the conflicts they represent. Antiquarian history can be well-researched and contribute significantly to contextual interpretations within moments of history; however, it rarely enriches the field of broader historical study. To illustrate, unit marks from German rifles are an excellent way to track a rifle's service history, but an in-depth understanding of unit marks alone does not shed light on their particular purpose or use in the war, or more broadly explain

[92] Karen Harvey, *History and Material Culture* (London: Routledge, 2010), 3.
[93] Respondent R, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.
[94] Respondent V, *WW2 Militaria Dealer/Collector Survey*.

how the military tactics Germany used in the war influenced the practice of combined arms warfare. This is not to say that academic history has no use for its antiquarian counterpart. A way for the collecting and academic history fields to contribute to one another could be to use collectible items as a catalyst for broader historical inquiry.

The debate over roles that antiquarian and professional histories serve in memory and popular culture was discussed by museum curators and prominent academics in a discussion roundtable regarding firearms at the "Firearms and Common Law Tradition" conference at the Aspen Institute in Washington DC in September 2016.[95] Key conclusions were that private collectors conduct accurate research regarding the technical aspects of their collection, and that they often have highly accurate displays of that information at gun and militaria shows. However, they do not recognize their display of knowledge regarding their collection can be offensive when not situated in proper historical contexts. The panel agreed that firearms in particular elicit strong reactions from people. Compounding the strong reactions is the difficulty in determining if firearms are contextualizing other artifacts, or if other artifacts are contextualizing firearms in a given display.[96]

The panel discussion reinforced the observed trends from the survey regarding collectors' perceptions of the public towards them. The panel recognized that collectors themselves rarely espouse these fringe ideologies and shun those that do, but do not contextualize their collections well enough for outside observers to clearly come to that conclusion.[97] Meanwhile, those skeptical of militaria collectors on the grounds that they espouse those ideologies would benefit from trying to understand the rationale collectors put forth instead of heuristically associating

[95] Jennifer Tucker, et al, "Display of Arms: A Roundtable Discussion about the Public Exhibition of Firearms and their History," *Technology and Culture* 59, no. 3 (2018): 723.
[96] Ibid., 764, 766-7.
[97] Ibid.

their collections with the political entities from which they originated. Through collaboration between antiquarians and professional historians, there may be a way to continue the preservation of the material memory of WWII veterans in a politically sensitive way that accurately portrays the historical context of the items.

Collecting is a viable manner in which memory and trauma can be passed down generationally within families as well as in the public sphere. The responses to the author's dealer/collector surveys in the US regarding the reasons why they began collecting offered strong support for the role of collecting in preserving memory of WWII through the artifacts. The majority of those who responded indicated that they had a parent or grandparent who initially bequeathed the war artifacts to them, which became the start of their own collections. The children of veterans are the core of the militaria collecting community, and they collect to preserve the memories of their families and exert mastery over the artifacts associated with their trauma by continuing their collections. Though veterans of WWII intended to be immortalized by their families for generations, instead they may have made their most profound impact in the realm of general American memory of WWII by driving a large collectible industry based upon the abundance of trophies they brought back with them. Each controversy surrounding such artifacts only serves to make people more interested in their history.

The material culture they brought with them manifests trauma theory of collecting as well as terror management theory of collecting even in subsequent generations. When viewed through the lens of trauma theory, collections may serve as an art form to reconcile or recover from traumatic experiences. Though the collectors themselves likely did not experience the trauma directly, the inherited trauma of their veterans' artifacts leads them to continue to collect in an effort to gain control over the familial traumatic experiences. Through the lens of terror

management theory, the collections serve as a way for collectors to carry on the memory of their family veterans. The veterans bequeathed them their war artifacts as way to ensure that their memories could live on and they could therefore symbolically transcend death. Collectors who continue to add to their initially inherited collections do so to help perpetuate their family veterans' memory for subsequent generations. This desire to carry on their memory also manifests itself in their claims of WWII as the "Good War" in American history. In this way, collectors can assert the righteousness of their family veteran's cause and legitimize both their sacrifices and the value of collecting WWII militaria in American society.

CONCLUSION

The artifacts brought home by World War II veterans have largely fulfilled their unconscious goals for taking them. They had gone to war afraid but yearned to cement their legacy within American history. They fought many battles against feared foes with legendary prowess and defeated them soundly. Soldiers took home plenty of artifacts to represent their victories. These artifacts and war trophies were emblematic of their successes both physically and mentally. The memory of their actions lives on through their war trophies and souvenirs and continues to influence American memory and perception of WWII. As this study has demonstrated, veterans took war souvenirs and artifacts for two major unconscious reasons.

The first unconscious motivation was to attain revenge and control over their traumatic experiences as suggested by the trauma theory of memory. The artifacts that soldiers took were a means to recover from the trauma inflicted upon them by the war, allowing them to exert a sense of control over their wartime environment. Psychological trauma is something that corrupts a person at their very core. The sense of helplessness that traumatic experiences bring completely overwhelms ordinary psychological systems that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning in their world. Compounding the traumatic experiences of combat, WWII soldiers were generally of an age group that is psychologically vulnerable. In an effort to empower themselves and re assert a sense of control in their lives that the trauma of war took from them, soldiers sought battlefield souvenirs.[1] These souvenirs allowed them to symbolically attain "revenge" upon the enemies and the war implements which traumatized them. Through their possession, they could manipulate the artifacts and render them as helpless as they themselves felt in the process of being traumatized. Collecting represented a stage in their recovery from the traumatic

[1] Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York, N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1992), 33, 52.

experience of war, but one that ultimately did little to heal the wounds. This failure to recover from the trauma associated with revenge collecting was manifested by veterans hiding or selling their artifacts once they made it home from the war.

The second unconscious reason for soldiers' souvenir acquisition may be understood through the lens of terror management theory of collecting. The theory stipulates that people have an awareness of their own inevitable death, known as mortality salience. This knowledge of death fundamentally conflicts with biological drives to keep a person alive and can cause extreme anxiety. People therefore participate in culturally approved activities to distract themselves from this inevitability of death. The closer one's proximity to death, the higher their motivation to participate in activities which distract them from their awareness of it.[2] Collecting is in and of itself a culturally approved activity with processes that heavily occupy a soldier's mind, and so is an effective way to avoid the awareness of one's closer proximity to death in war. Furthermore, collections serve as a way for people to symbolically transcend death. Soldiers collected and searched for the best examples of war souvenirs in an unconscious effort to immortalize and memorialize themselves within subsequent generations by bequeathing their collections within their families. Should a soldier die on the battlefield his possessions would be sent to his family and he could, in effect, live on within their memory. Soldiers who survived the war intended for these artifacts to continue their legacies and memories in future generations through bequeathing these artifacts to subsequent generations within their families.

Soldiers had several other conscious reasons for their collecting habits, but all of these may be considered secondary to the two major subconscious theories discussed above. Some soldiers consciously collected as a means to take revenge as an act or, display of power or

[2] Jacob Juhl and Clay Routledge, "Putting the Terror in Terror Management Theory: Evidence that the Awareness of Death does Cause Anxiety and Undermine Psychological Well-being," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 25, no. 2 (2016): 99-100.

control over the artifacts that were associated with the origin of their initial trauma or misery. For those who consciously collected out of revenge, it was often directed at specific groups. The Japanese in particular were targeted for revenge collecting as they often employed ambush tactics during the war and caused deep psychological trauma from the outset through the surprise bombing of Pearl Harbor. In the European theaters, revenge collecting was mostly directed at *Schutzstaffel* (SS) units. At first this was due to their ruthlessness and ferocity in combat. However, upon the discovery of evidence of the Final Solution and SS camp guards, American soldiers began to seek vengeance against SS soldiers for their actions associated with the genocide. Further connections to trauma theory of collecting are evidenced in that it was not uncommon for many units to become avid souvenir hunters in a large group. These groups of souvenir hunters served an important role in the recovery process from traumatic experiences as it was a shared activity.[3]

Reasons for conscious souvenir collecting may be better understood through the application of the terror management theory of collecting. As shown previously, some soldiers collected out of necessity for survival, such as when they picked up an enemy weapon to use in combat. One cannot pass down their legacy if they are not alive to tell the story. A handgun provided close quarters protection for a soldier. It also made guard duty or operations involving long treks on foot more manageable. Similarly, watches were not issued by the US Army but were of great importance to functioning more efficiently as a soldier. As a result, they became heavily sought items. [4] Heavy winter coats and clothing ensured that a soldier did not freeze to death and remained comfortable while sitting at his post. Sometimes soldiers simply collected keepsakes from the battlefield even if they did not associate a trauma with it. These keepsakes

[3] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 214-17, 235.
[4] Givens, "Bringing Back Memories," 121.

could be macabre in their nature, including items such as shrapnel taken from an enemy mine or bullets found randomly strewn about.[5] However, many American war souvenirs were taken as keepsakes in the closing moths of the war and during the subsequent occupations of Axis nations, not in combat.

Obtaining these keepsakes in this manner often turned into a collecting habit, as soldiers used collected items as a means of initiating social interaction with other soldiers in the field. In the main, however, collecting was primarily performed as a way to ensure soldiers could pass down their legacies to subsequent generations. Social groups not only serve as a means to heal from traumatic experiences, but also serve as a means to make one's contribution in life more enduring. The memory of a group is more likely to survive than the memory of an individual.[6] This often led to intense drives between soldiers and even units to attain the best, most prestigious souvenirs such as flags, swords, pistols, and possibly personal mementoes of war leaders. Collecting the best examples, and especially attaining a collection of highly prized souvenirs, served as an immortality function for soldiers according to terror management theory.[7] American troops took these artifacts as a way to ensure that they could pass along their memory to future generations.

Tangentially related to the artifact hunting to preserve memory was the conscious motivation of collecting for profit. Soldiers could easily sell souvenirs to rear-echelon units for high prices. The money could then be used to set themselves up financially for the future when they returned home or could be used in order to attain even more prized souvenirs from other soldiers in trade. By surviving the war and returning with highly prized souvenirs, soldiers

[5] Peter Schrijvers, *Crash of Ruin: American Combat Soldiers in Europe During World War II* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 69.
[6] Juhl and Routledge, "Putting the Terror in Terror Management Theory," 100.
[7] McIntosh and Schmeichel, "Collectors and Collecting," 87.

collecting souvenirs for profit were able to secure a brighter financial future as well as cement their familial legacies.

The unconscious motives for collecting were manifested by veterans' behavior toward the artifacts once they returned home. The trauma attached to these war trophies resulted in many of them being left in trunks or closets for years, only to be rediscovered decades later. The traumatic memories attached to these items were not healed by the act of revenge collecting but lingered in veterans' minds. This phenomenon of trauma associated with the artifacts was observed in the case studies of Steven and Andrew, Tom, and Doug and Mitchell. The family veteran of Steven and Andrew came home with a Japanese sword as a trophy of the war, but it was subsequently stored deep in a closet and rarely, if ever, enjoyed by the family. The veteran bequeathed his trophy Japanese sword to Steven when Steven was still at a relatively young age, likely in an attempt to avoid the traumatic memories that the veteran associated with the sword. In Tom's case, his Grandpa Hank had hidden the Japanese "good luck" flag that he had acquired via trade on Guam after the war. It was only discovered by Tom's family decades after the war had ended. Grandpa Hank did not see combat but spent his entire youth in the shadow of anti-Japanese propaganda. This trauma was manifested not only in his hiding of the flag, but also through his lifelong animosity towards persons of Japanese descent and his response of "burn it" upon the rediscovery of the flag. In the case of the family veteran of Doug and Mitchell, the shrapnel embedded in their veteran's body was manifested not only as physical wounds, but a psychological one as well. They stated that the veteran rarely wished to talk about the war or his wounds from it, which is evidence of the associated traumatic memories.

Additionally, trauma was clearly passed down through these artifacts. This was demonstrated in in the interviews with four of the families exhibiting a similar reluctance as the

veteran to discuss the artifacts or the trauma associated with them. Due to this traumatic memory attachment, the artifacts were not discussed as often within these American families or in a manner in which European and Jewish families are known to have relayed their memories of the traumatic events of WWII to succeeding generations.[8] This inherited traumatic memory was most clearly evident in Tom's attitude regarding the "good luck" flag that his family found. He repeatedly mentioned the sadness and lack of closure that he associated with the flag due to the lack of information of its provenance before it was acquired by his grandfather. This traumatic memory is also manifested in Steven and Andrew through their familial sword. Even after Steven inherited the sword from his father, he too mostly kept it in his closet and rarely retrieved it to examine or dwell upon it. Both Steven and Andrew expressed an avoidance to discussing the sword in the interview which may be indicative of their continuing to avoid the trauma associated with it. The traumatic memories attached to the artifacts do not seem to diminish their roles, when considered through the lens of terror management theory, of perpetuating the memory of veterans by those who inherit them.

The artifacts themselves within the families who inherited them appear to play a role in preserving the memories of the veterans who took them. Families exhibited a dichotomy of memory through the artifacts regarding their veterans. Those who knew the veteran personally tended to remember them as people who incidentally had war service in their background. Those who did not know them personally tended to view them as a soldier who was a part of the family. Regardless, the families utilized the artifacts as means to reflect on their family veterans' memories and legacies. Members of four out of the five families in the case studied expressly stated or strongly implied that the artifacts they inherited were a catalyst for their careers and/or

[8] Carr, "'Illicit Antiquities'?"; Saunders, "Bodies of Metal, Shells of Memory."; Kidron, "Survivor Memory."

hobbies. Three of the five continued to use their inherited artifacts as center pieces of their own WWII militaria collections. Instances of family members continuing the collections started as a way to honor their family members include Nick, Jim, and Tom. Nick attributed his pursuit of history at the collegiate level and collection of militaria as a direct result of the artifacts he inherited from his grandfather. Jim cited a similar reason for his collection of militaria being a result of inheriting war artifacts from his father. Furthermore, Jim attributed his choice of career in the military to the war artifacts and corresponding interest in his father's wartime service. Tom's attachment to the war medals from Grandpa Fred led him to also become a militaria collector, as well as to pursue a college degree in History. Andrew stated that the sword was a catalyst for his desire to become involved with the field of Public History, specifically with material culture in a museum setting.

Families also used the artifacts to generally remember their family members in the best light, which incorporated the "Good War" narrative of WWII in American history. Four of the five families explicitly stated that their veteran was their hero, and there was an overwhelming sentiment of the war as being just and necessary. This phenomenon is rooted in terror management theory as the veteran and families perpetuate family importance and legacy by promoting the legitimacy of their worldview. Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, as well as Studs Terkel's *The Good War*, helped to popularize these perceptions of veterans as well as legitimize their worldviews and actions during the war. These popular sentiments have become the generally accepted lens through which the American general public now views WWII and its veterans. This "Good War" interpretation was also clearly demonstrated by all the case study participants denying that their family veteran was merely souvenir hunting during the war, even though four of the five families have a veteran who returned with highly prized

souvenirs, and two of the veterans brought home substantial collections. To acknowledge their souvenir hunting would imply looting or other actions incompatible with the "Good War" narrative, which would diminish the legacy of the veterans and their memories according to terror management theory.

The collector's realm further perpetuate the unconscious motivations for WWII soldiers' souvenir hunting. Regarding trauma theory, collectors often stated that families showed little desire to inherit family war artifacts after several generations. In many of these cases, the artifacts in question came from Nazi Germany and were believed to be taboo in social circles. However, evidence indicated that the trauma associated with the artifacts from the family veterans combined with lucrative cash incentives drove them to sell the artifacts rather than retain them or bequeath them to family members. In some cases, regarding potential trauma associated artifacts from the Pacific theater, the inheritors of these items attempted to return them to families in Japan as a means to gain closure from the trauma. The desire to avoid trauma within the household drives families to dispose of their artifacts, whereupon they often end up on the collector's market.

In accord with terror management theory, most collectors considered themselves to be guardians of the memory of WWII in the US. They often stated that they were trying to preserve the memories of the veterans who served as well as preserve the valuable war artifacts that they brought home as symbols of victory. These ideas of defending the memory of American veterans is typically expressed in manners consistent with the "Good War" narrative. However, collectors also shared concerns about the state of the collecting field and American memory of the war among the general public. Collectors generally see the "Good War" narrative, and by extension the legacy of the veterans as under attack and subject to undue scrutiny. They also perceive

themselves to be under attack by the public at large over false or questionable pretenses. The collecting community is largely made up of family veteran artifact inheritors fulfilling terror management theory by continuing the war trophy collections that had been passed down to them. Collectors perceive that the media and general public accuses them of harboring or sympathizing with Nazi or fascist ideologies, whereas they see themselves as preserving the emblems of utter defeat of those regimes embodied by the trophies taken home by soldiers.[9] Collectors in the surveys widely viewed educational institutions as a vehicle to demonize them unfairly. In their view regarding education about the war, the artifacts promote historical awareness at a grassroots level. They also perceive that the popular demonizing of them is an indirect way to try and discredit their political views, which trend right of center and support gun ownership under the Second Amendment. In response, they have been more proactive in self-policing their ranks of Neo-Nazis.

The trophies American soldiers came home with allowed them to cope with the psychological traumas of war and provided a means for them to cement their legacies among subsequent generations. These trophies preserve memory of the veterans within their families and fuel a booming collector's market that largely consists of veterans' descendants who inherit these artifacts. The war is now at the extreme edge of living memory, and these artifacts are a powerful way to preserve the memory of WWII veterans for posterity. They took souvenirs and trophies to assert dominance and get to revenge over the entities that traumatized them, as well as to cement their memories and legacies for generations to come. Their trophies have largely fulfilled these roles and are important to sustaining the "Good War" narrative in American memory and the perception of WWII.

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[9] Virzi, "Hate or History?"; Hamill, "Why Collect Nazi Artifacts?"; UK, "Selling a Dark past."; Christie, "Nazi Auction."

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where and in what capacity did your family member serve in World War II? (corollary: Do you have any papers or documentation of this?)
2. What is/are the object(s) that your family veteran brought back? What is your understanding of its function or original purpose?
3. How, if at all, do these objects affect your view of your family veteran and their service?
4. Did your family member explain why they decided to bring it/them home? Do you know if there were any other particular objects that they were looking to bring back?
5. Did your family member use the object(s) to reminisce on their war experiences with you? If so, how often? On what occasions?
6. (if applicable) What stories or themes usually arose in reminiscences about this object?
7. What does this object mean to you?
8. When you see or hold the object(s), what are the first things that come to mind? Why?
9. Do these objects elicit any further interest or curiosity for you, as far as the provenance of the item is concerned? Why or why not?
10. Do you think that family heirlooms/war trophies like these are important to understanding World War II in United States history?
11. What are your views of World War II in general? How were these shaped by your conversations with your family veteran, if at all?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW NOTES

Family 1 Interview Notes

The first family interviewed live in the Columbus, Ohio area. Present at the interview were the daughter (Jennifer) and grandson (Nick) of the veteran, who was born in the city of Urbana, Ohio. The veteran was drafted into the United States Army in August of 1944 and served in the European Theater of Operations (ETO), he saw service in the Rhineland campaign, moving into Austria, Southern Germany, and Northern Italy with the front in Spring 1945 as the war came to an end in Europe. The family provided discharge papers and numerous other documents supporting this claim.

The items that the veteran brought home were highly prized war trophies. Nick had done much research into the items captured by his grandfather and had unearthed information about the provenance of the items. The prominent items taken by the veteran included a German officer's overcoat and hat, a P.08 "Luger" pistol dated from 1916 with a holster crafted behind the lines in Europe when the veteran was on leave, a German Karabiner 98k Rifle with a full field cleaning kit, and several miscellaneous items such as occupation currency, photographs, and patches from his uniform.

When asked about the known provenance of any of these items, Nick was quick to point out their relevance in the war both practically and symbolically. He held a strong belief that the Luger pistols were carried by "very important people" during the war, as they were iconic German pistols that many American soldiers wanted for a souvenir. The officer's uniform he believes was from the German 1st Mountain Division. The rifle brought home was stolen by one of the veterans' sons back in the 1980's and has not been found, but the cleaning kit remained and was

dated from 1939. While the customs bring back papers the family possesses mention the rifle, coat, hat, etc on them, the pistol was not mentioned and is believed to have been stuffed into the bottom of a duffel bag and brought home secretly by the veteran.

When asked about how these artifacts affected the family's view of the veteran, the response from Nick was that he never got to meet his grandfather as he passed away before he was born. However, they made him think of his grandfather as "sort of an American hero" who went through a "perfect WWII story": he came from a small town, did his duty, and came back home in one piece to his family, with Jennifer nodding in agreement as Nick explained how he viewed his grandfather's service through the artifacts absent meeting him. This prompted him to add that his grandfather helped to liberate some of the concentration camp survivors in subsidiary camps to Dachau, and he had some photographs of what he saw there. At this point, Jennifer interjected and explained that she had seen some of the photographs of the camp when she was a child and going through the closet. She said that she had nightmares due to the horrific content she saw in the photos. They were then hidden by her parents until the passing of her mother in 2019 brought them back to light as they went through the estate. Jennifer said that in the vein of those pictures, her father had seen things that "he didn't want to speak of". She added that it reinforced her belief that the WWII generation was "one of the greatest generations we ever had" due to such heroics they performed and the horrors (referencing the concentration camps) they helped to end by defeating the 3rd Reich.

Jennifer stated that her father did not really talk much about the war, perhaps only in passing because of the nature of that generation to keep a stoic exterior and not talk about things that happened to them in the war. The family recalled that Jennifer's mother told them that she "knew a lot about World War II because [she] lived it every night" as her husband would have PTSD

episodes in his sleep about his war experiences. Sometimes throwing his arm over her and telling her to “get down” or into cover as if they were still on the battlefield. They viewed the veteran as a hero and respected him and his service mightily, but understood that what he saw in the war haunted him for much of his life and that he did not really want to talk about it. Instead he just wanted to go back to living a peaceful life as he had before the war. These experiences appear to be in line with trauma theory of memory.

When asked if there was any reason why these particular objects were brought home and if their veteran had ever mentioned that he was looking for anything else, they responded that they had not remembered any such sentiments from him. When reminded about the concentration camp photographs, Jennifer opined that the items brought home have may been implicitly or subconsciously motivated by a desire to have a personal token of victory over a regime that perpetrated such horrors. This is a sentiment prevalent amongst collectors today as well. She emphasized firmly that the concentration camps themselves were something he never spoke about to anyone, and that the photos were among the only evidence they had that he ever saw such horrors. This is reinforcement of trauma theory and veterans recalling vivid memories of their traumatic experiences but being unwilling to speak about them. She took a lot of pride in the fact that her father was part of a group that liberated such camps, adding that it is difficult to fathom how human beings were capable of doing such horrific things to one another.

Using the photographs and discussion of them as a segue, the family was asked if the objects were used as catalysts for other reminiscences about the war within the family. Nick recalled that as he grew interested in history, he asked his grandmother if he could see the pistol. His grandmother obliged and pulled it out of the closet, at which point he stated that she asked “Is this loaded?” followed by her waving the pistol around and pulling the trigger on it to check.

Thankfully, it was unloaded and no one was hurt. Jennifer stated after that, it was decided that the family needed to get the pistol in particular out of the house where only the widow lived. She then recalled that when she was younger, her father had taken the pistol out to try and shoot some varmints on his farm. He had forgotten how to handle the recoil so when he shot, the pistol flew up and hit him in the forehead and drew some blood. At which point he stated "I think I shot myself." Beyond these two instances, the family said that the uniform and other objects stayed in the closet most of the time and were seldomly taken out by the veteran at all. They were never used as direct catalyst objects to tell any major war stories. The pistol was taken out more often to pacify Nick's curiosities as he got older and more interested in WWII. They always knew where everything was, but artifacts seldom came out for most occasions.

Most of the memories attached to the war artifacts brought home by the veteran revolved around general family memories, not war experiences. Many of the war stories told to the family came second hand from the veteran's wife and another daughter who was not present for the interview. The other daughter recounted to Jennifer that their father told her of a patrol mission where one of the scouts put up his thumb as an "all clear" only to have his thumb shot off in the process as they were ambushed. Jennifer stated that stories similar to that were probably why her father didn't talk much about the war, or get the artifacts out very often. Instead he mostly confided in his wife who was able to pass much of the stories down to the family secondhand. A very clear instance of trauma theory attached to the artifacts and the unwillingness to speak of the events stemming from that trauma.

The next question asked of the family was what the objects meant to them. Nick stated that while all had their own special meaning, the pistol was extra special to him personally due to its provenance and desirability for collecting. He stated "it's just symbolic of the conquering

American soldier" followed by referencing the same *Band of Brothers* scene where a soldier literally risked his life to go out and get a Luger pistol as a souvenir. Jennifer stated that to her, the most prized possessions are the photographs because they "put everything into perspective" regarding the war experiences of her father who may or may not have comprehended the possibility of his own death. Adding that it still is "hard to fathom what they witnessed" going from a family farm to the European warzones. When asked to elaborate and describe what first comes to mind when holding and examining the objects, Jennifer responded that it is a reminder of "where the world was headed" had Germany won the war and how differently the world could look right now. Nick mentioned the sheer scale of American involvement in the war, referencing his grandfather's unit picture. This prompted both of them to discuss how many soldiers went overseas and did not come back home, and how quickly remaining veterans are passing away.

The next question was whether or not the artifacts elicited any further curiosity about the items themselves or influenced other interests and pursuits in their lives. Jennifer pointed to Nick and how the artifacts and his grandfather's service impacted Nick's interests and hobbies. Nick asserted that the first thing the artifacts elicited interest in was the service records of other family members in previous wars, such as the American Civil War. He added that the family service legacy "almost inspired [him] to join the army" and was a catalyst for his choice to study history. He said that "when I was little, what got me into history was the things hanging on Grandma's wall", including non-WWII artifacts, but that the pistol in particular was the "coolest thing ever" to him. He stated that there are a lot of stories to the artifacts, and that he worked at a national veterans museum over the summer of 2019 where he saw many WWII vets come in and receive "red-carpet treatment". Nick added that his experiences with veterans and the museum has made

him very passionate about veterans' affairs in the United States and veterans' affairs' history as well.

The family was then asked if heirlooms are important to understanding WWII in American history. Both of them emphatically answered "yes" , Nick adding that it adds a "personal connection" to the war, which is the ultimate catalyst to getting someone to study anything in their past for myriads of reasons. This is a sentiment shared by those who responded to the survey of militaria dealers and collectors. Jennifer further stated that the books always refer to "the troops" but that by giving a name, face, and lineage to the war, it humanizes the conflict and brings it home to students who are otherwise detached from the war and history in general. This strongly supports the veteran's collection of the war artifacts through terror-management theory, and an instance where it is coming to fruition through the continued interest from Nick in his grandfather's life and military service.

The final question asked was of their overall views of WWII and how they were shaped, if at all, by conversations with or stories of their family veteran. Jennifer answered that her views were shaped by such stories and conversations. She asserted that American involvement changed the entire course of the war for the better. Nick added that due to the war, the US became a superpower for good with bases all around the world. Jennifer followed that quickly, and asked "how many of those bases have contributed to world peace?". She drew parallels to the occupation of Germany and the number of bases still there long after WWII with continued American presence in the Middle East and how the scenarios are similar and different. They ended the interview by commenting on their gratefulness for historians taking up the cause of studying WWII and educating the public on it's still present consequences. Adding off-camera the sentiment, shared by many in the dealer/collector surveys, that the American education

system is trying to re-write the history of WWII so that the U.S. is not portrayed as the heroic nation fighting for a good cause.

Family 2 Interview

The second family interviewed is the split/hybrid interview with a son (Steven) and grandson (Andrew) of a veteran. Steven is a military man currently residing in Missouri and was interviewed by email, Andrew attends Bowling Green State University and was interviewed in person.

The family veteran served in the United States Navy in the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO). Steven stated that his father served as a navy gunner primarily stationed on battleships and trained other navy gunners in Alaska during the war. The war souvenir taken home is a Japanese officer's sword and scabbard picked up when the veteran had a period of shore leave around captured Japanese supplies. When asked about the provenance of the sword, Andrew stated that, despite what some people tried to tell him, the sword was not the famed samurai-sword (katana). However, he could not remember the exact name of the sword in question, only that it was one of the mass-produced swords made in Japan during the war. Steven did not have any information to add to this explanation either. Andrew explained that he first found out about the sword when he was around ten and that it had been given to his father. It has largely remained in the closet in their family, not taken out or much thought about either.

When asked if the presence of the sword affected their view of their WWII veteran family member, Steven said "not at all" and that it was simply a part of the war, adding that they had no idea where or who the sword was initially taken from in the first place. Andrew contemplated his response for awhile, but stated that his grandfather was very much a "people

person" and had worked as an insurance agent after the war. This is indicative that the thought of the sword is more connected to personal memories of his grandfather as opposed to views of his military service during the war. Andrew expressed that for his grandfather it seemed the war was strictly about business or duty, and that he derived almost zero enjoyment out of his experiences in the war. Steven added that to his knowledge, the sword was picked out amongst a pile of discarded equipment with an officer encouraging all the sailors to simply take something home with them as a souvenir. Asked if the sword was one of the things in the souvenir pile that his grandfather particularly wanted, Andrew stated that he never really talked about WWII. He opined that his grandfather only took the sword because everyone else was taking one too and he forgot about it as soon as he got home and put it away. Both agreed that their family veteran never talked about the war and had no desire to do so either. He never even got the sword out to reminisce on it. Andrew concluded that he believes that the sword was given to his father "as a way to distance himself from it" and avoid the war memories altogether by getting them out of sight and out of mind. This is a strong indicator that trauma theory is at play with the veterans' unwillingness to recall his war experiences. However, it is unclear whether or not the sword is connected to the trauma theory of collecting as revenge or if it was taken in the context of terror-management theory to preserve his memory for future generations.

They were then asked what the sword means to them personally in light of their family veteran nearly forgetting about it and trying to bury it as part of his war experiences. For Steven, the sword was symbolic of the last "all out war" faced by Americans and his father's effort along with the whole US military to protect the United States during it. Andrew stated that he really does not think much about the sword, and that it is not a very important or valued part of the family. Andrew contrasted the sword to a pocket watch his grandfather gave him, and he feels

the pocket watch is the more significant familial heirloom of the two. He asserted that his grandfather liked to give gifts in general, and Andrew guessed that his grandfather thought young Steven would enjoy the sword as a gift. It is not seen as an heirloom by them in the same way as the pocket watch. There was a re-iteration from Andrew that the first things that come to mind when examining the sword are more of his grandfather as a person as opposed to as a soldier. This sentiment was echoed by Steven, whose first thoughts when seeing the sword are "my dad". Though he admitted that he does reflect a little on the sacrifices his dad made in the war for his family and country. While this outcome would certainly fit into the concept of terror-management theory, it is unclear if the veteran took the souvenir for that subconscious goal.

When asked if the sword or its presence in the family elicited any interests or curiosities, the responses differed. Steven stated that it did not capture any real interest or curiosities, only that the sword symbolized of the struggles and suffering of war. Andrew stated that his father is not ashamed of the "war loot", but that he personally is hesitant to receive "war loot" such as the sword. Andrew stated that he is unsure of what to do with the sword if it is passed to him. He opined that returning it to the Japanese family would be more trouble than he has the ability to take on, and that it is not anything a museum or cultural institution would be interested in. Although Andrew is also interested in museums and material culture, the only interest the sword elicits for him are technical aspects such as how to label it, not practical uses or its' bearing on the war. An interesting way in which the sword did perhaps subconsciously initiate interests for Andrew, but not in an emotionally or personally connected manner way.

Using museums and material culture as a transition point, they were then asked if such war loot in homes is important to understanding WWII in American history. Steven stated: "Yes. It reminds them of the positive sides of history, service, sacrifice and heroism, as well as the

negatives and horrors of war." He explained using the metaphor of General Sherman's march on Atlanta that the sword is symbolic of all the romanticized and idealized parts of war, but that the fact it is not with an enemy soldier is a reminder of how horrific war can be and why it should always be a method of absolute last resort. Andrew is more skeptical of the impact and importance such artifacts hold. He asserted that while objects are useful for understanding the past, proper context is needed in order to properly understand the impact of the war in American history. He added that when people aren't interested in history or the context, it is generally "not useful in homes". While Andrew is a trained historian, Steven's responses do indicate some traces of terror-management theory in remembering his father. However, it does not seem as if his father took the sword out of the underlying trauma or terror-management theories, so it is difficult to apply those effects to the family.

When asked about their views of WWII in general and if those views were shaped by conversations with their family veteran or the artifact brought home by him. Andrew stated that the sword did not push him in any certain direction regarding the war. However, it did help push him to the tangent of material culture studies, which includes looting and collecting of the war memorabilia. He cited the ethics issues of who the loot truly belongs to, and its legality in the rules of warfare. Andrew stated that most of his historical knowledge of the war was "developed separately from the sword" and that other popular media had a far larger role in shaping his views of the war than material culture at home. Steven stated that WWII was one of the biggest moments in world history, but re-iterated that his father did not talk much about it nor did the sword have any major effect on his own understanding of the war in American history. He ended the interview session saying that his father was "our hero" and that the family respected and

appreciated his father's willingness to answer the call of duty when he was asked to do so by his country.

Family 3 Interview

The third family interview was conducted exclusively via email with a man in Illinois (Jim). His father served in the ETO in the 75th Infantry Division as a Technical Sergeant. He arrived with his unit in Spring 1945 and followed the German retreat back into Germany where the unit saw light combat. After the war, his father went to Rheims where his technical skills were put to use restoring civilian communications in the city. Jim does have supporting paperwork which confirms the nature and locations of his father's military service. His father's war trophies include: Personal uniform items such as rank and shoulder patches, ribbons, and other items, a pair of combat boots, a swastika flag, a German gas mask, a German rifle, and a German bayonet. Interestingly, Jim stated that the bayonet was not known to have been brought home from the war by his father until after his death. It was found with the keepsakes from his time during the Korean War and was separate from the rest of his WWII bring backs, the family is unsure of the reason for this. A large collection items such as these would be in-line with the idea of terror-management theory of amassing artifacts to be remembered by in death.

When asked how the war trophies affected the family's view of his father, Jim stated that "The rest of my family is basically indifferent to these items." He stated that his mother kept a few of the US army uniform patches, but that the rifle was sold before his birth and the boots and gas mask were lost long ago by the family. Jim acquired what was left of his father's US uniform and the swastika flag was given to him when he was just a teenager. He stated that "I consider [the flag] one of my prized possessions" explaining that it is a tangible link to his father in one of the most important parts of America's history. An indication that when he sees the flag it does

remind him of his father as a soldier just as much as it reminded him of his father as a person, and also more evidence to support the terror-management theory of collecting from his father.

When asked if the items his father brought home were planned or if he was searching for other objects, candid insight was given. Jim stated that his father rarely discussed his military service with him for most of his life despite the fact that Jim was a career naval officer. He added that his father did not really see the items he brought home as war trophies in that regard, but rather as "keepsakes/mementoes for an important part of his life." This has been a commonly stated conscious reason for soldiers to bring home war trophies for all of military history. He added that his father was very much a man who just answered the call to duty in his country's time of need, echoing the sentiments of families one and two. When stories of the war did come up, Jim stated that most of them were related to particular events and not to any of the objects he brought home with him. The exceptions to this were the flag he brought home and a Luger pistol that he had acquired while overseas. However, the Luger never made it back home with him. Jim explained: "The Luger got taken away from him by an officer on board ship who said he would return it when they landed. He never did…He always lamented losing the Luger, and was keen to fire mine when I acquired my first one." This is a strong indication that his father may have participated in some trophy hunting during his time overseas and had indeed been searching for a specific item(s) to take home with him. Additionally, this supports terror-management theory whereby Jim's father may have taken these trophies in an effort to preserve his memory within the family for future generations.

When asked about what kinds of stories, reminiscences, and themes came up in relation to the artifacts, Jim explained that there was only one major story centered on an artifact. It was the acquisition of the prized flag, which came from a store/warehouse and still had a price tag

attached to it when he was given the flag by his father. Otherwise, he insisted that his father's war memories were typically independent of any of his artifacts brought home and primarily occurred later in his life. This general theme of avoidance to discussing the war accords with the trauma theory regarding his time within the war. Jim added that his father is no longer around, he regrets not asking him more questions about the artifacts that were brought home. He stated: "I wish I had said, 'Dad, where and when exactly did you get this, and what are the circumstances.'" This is an indication that the artifacts are heavily connected to his father's memory in general, and specifically connected to the memory of his father's wartime service even though he rarely discussed his service or the artifacts with his family at length.

When asked what the war artifacts mean to him as well as what his first thoughts were when handling the objects, Jim re-iterated how special the flag was to him as a tangible connection to his father. He elaborated that his immediate thoughts when examining the artifacts are of his father in uniform and, curiosity of his unanswered question regarding the exact circumstances by which the flag was captured by his father. This continued memory of his father through his artifacts and collection, particularly the flag handed down to him, fits terror-management theory's application to souvenir hunting by his father.

Asked if the objects elicited further interests or curiosities to him regarding the provenance of the items or his father's service, Jim gave a very in-depth response. While the interest and curiosity for his father's artifacts will remain, he pointed out that upon his father's death many of those curiosities about the artifacts are forever unanswerable to him. The artifacts that his father brought home sparked an intense curiosity about his wartime service and had immense impacts on Jim's career and life choices. He stated that his father's relics gave him the interest in, and knowledge of, WWII artifacts in general. Jim claimed that it was a catalyst of his

own collection of WWII memorabilia beyond his father's passed down artifacts. His study of history inspired by his father's service and relics caused him to become a collector of WWII German weaponry. Particularly verified "bring backs" where the soldiers declared their captured weapons as war prizes which were then signed off by commanding officers as legitimate, legal property of the soldiers. Jim explicitly stated that: "my interest in history, my personal collection, and ultimately my choices of a military career were all due in some part to Dad's service, and some of the relics he brought home, or ones he didn't make it home with." He added that he has made pilgrimages to places where his father was during the war, including the exact building he was stationed in after the war ended. This is a clear demonstration of the terror-management theory by the veteran being fulfilled by his son, who inherited his father's collection and continued to expand on it as a way to continue his father's memory and legacy.

Asked if the presence of heirloom artifacts such as those his father gave him were important to his understanding of the war he responded that they "absolutely" were. Jim asserted that they make the history tangible and more personalized. Jim said that while museum visits help to contextualize the artifacts, there is much to be learned and gained from personal ownership of them. He added that this is particularly true of relics with specific provenance such as documentation or familial ties. When asked about his views of WWII in general and how his views were shaped by the artifacts and conversations with his father, he concluded by saying that the artifacts gave him a passionate interest in history, specifically of the war. He stated that it was the last time the United States had near universal support for a war with unambiguous clarity of purpose in fighting it, supporting the narrative that WWII was the "Good War" for the United States. While Jim says his father saw it more as doing his duty because he had to, he takes pride in the reason America fought and particularly for his father's service.

Family 4 Interview

The fourth interview was conducted with a man (Tom) from Northwest Ohio. Both his maternal and paternal grandfathers served in WWII, but in different theaters as well as for different nations. His maternal grandfather, who is referred to as "Grandpa Hank", served in the Pacific Theater towards the end of the conflict. His paternal grandfather, who is referred to as "Grandpa Fred", was in the Canadian Navy in the Atlantic Theater for most or all of the war (Tom is unsure if he joined in 1939 or 1941). Grandpa Hank brought home a Japanese "good luck" flag and map of Guam. Tom understood very well the provenance of Japanese "good luck" flags. His Grandpa Fred kept items and some medals from his Canadian uniform and was allowed to carry a camera to document the war, a privilege in any military during WWII when cameras were still expensive technologies.

When asked how the artifacts brought home by his grandparents affected his views of them, Tom had a two-layered response that detailed his memories of each grandfather individually. He states that neither of his grandparents really talked much about their wartime experiences with him. Starting with memories of Grandpa Fred first, Tom recalled that Grandpa Fred passed away in 1996 when he was still a boy. When he visited his grandfather's house in his youth, he remembered that Grandpa Fred had a box in the basement which caught his curiosity. He recalled that in the box were some medals, a German penny, and a small knife, among other things. He stated that his grandfather had a very stern reputation from other family members stemming from his time in the service, but was very kind to him. Tom stated: "I always have very fond memories of him." He stated that while his grandfather had done some "cool things" in the war, he was not boastful of his time there and downplayed his experiences in the

war. He likened Grandpa Fred's attitude about his time in the service to the old Theodore Roosevelt quote to "speak softly and carry a big stick".

When asked about the memories of Grandpa Hank through the flag, Tom recalled that the family did not find out about the flag until much later in his life and that they did not have much initial knowledge about it. Tom stated that he knows that his grandfather did not see combat because by the time he made it to his duty station the Pacific in fall 1945, the war had ended. While Grandpa Hank was proud of his time in the Navy, he also never really talked about his experiences to his family in any way. T added that it is very common for the WWII generation to keep their service played down and avoid talking about it since a lot of people their age also served, and it was not a big deal. He guessed that his Grandpa Hank's late entry into the war likely meant he had few if any wartime stories to tell in the first place. Later in life when the family had found the flag and asked him what he wanted to do with it, Grandpa Hanks' response was "burn it" as he had always had a severe dislike of the Japanese from his time in the war and the propaganda surrounding it. Tom admitted that his grandfather was also not the nicest man to be around in general. Tom recounted a story of when he was in college and had a girlfriend of Japanese descent. He stated that he had a project for a class where he had to interview a veteran, so he had his girlfriend try to read the flag before they interviewed Grandpa Hank. When he mentioned to his Grandfather that his girlfriend had translated the flag, the response from his grandfather was "I never thought my own grandson would date a Jap." He stated it was at that point he realized just how deeply the war and anti-Japanese propaganda had affected the psyche of his grandfather. This would be an interesting application to trauma theory, given that Grandpa Hank is unlikely to have seen combat but was both reluctant to speak about his military service and held such deep anti-Japanese prejudices.

Given how deeply Grandpa Hank seemed to resent all things Japanese, the next question was exactly why he brought the flag home in the first place or if he wanted anything else. Tom stated that he really did not know why he brought that home in particular, only that he learned that Grandpa Hank traded for the souvenir when he was on Guam after war's end. He stated that Grandpa Hank never really cared for the flag, as it was hidden away with letters written to his wife during the course of his service. His Grandpa Fred just took home his uniform, medals and the assorted items Tom vaguely remembers from the box downstairs. However, all that is left of Grandpa Fred's war artifacts are the medals from his uniform. Tom noted that as Navy personnel, his grandparents had many less opportunities to collect battle souvenirs compared to soldiers on the ground in enemy territory.

When asked about specific reminiscences that his grandparents shared in relation to the war artifacts taken home, Tom re-iterated that they did not like to talk about the war. He stated that he "had to really ask if [he] wanted to hear anything" but that they still did not tell him much. Sometimes he heard stories, but they were unrelated to the artifacts and were often generalized stories of being on the ship without the items as a prop. Tom added that "I've never even seen them hold the items. My grandma brought them out to show them to me." His Grandpa Fred sometimes showed him the medals, but he was too young to get an in-depth explanation of what they were or meant, and so was never told much about them. Tom stated that his father was told the stories, but he was not available for the interview nor did he tell any of Grandpa Fred's stories to him. The artifacts themselves were separated from the war stories and were mostly used as reminders that his family served in the war. To this effect, trauma theory of not wanting to talk about experiences within the war remains a possibility, and perhaps Grandpa Fred's uniform medals and small collection served small terror-management theory function to a

small extent. However, it is not known what happened to everything else except his uniform items. How he got ahold of the souvenir items that were lost is also a story that Tom did not have knowledge of.

Tom went into the thoughts and feelings that the artifacts gave him when he held and saw them before he was asked. He stated specifically that Grandpa Hank's flag "represents sadness" as a Japanese soldier was killed to get it, and the flag was his personal property. Tom lamented that it was unlikely the Japanese family ever received much more than a notice that their soldier was killed or missing in action with the body likely buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in the Pacific. He stated that he had explored some organizations who try to return personal property back over to the Japanese families, but that none of them could promise a high percentage of success and so he decided to not go through with it. The deep remorse and disappointment in his tone was evident as he discussed the flag and inability to reliably return it to the Japanese family to whom it belonged. In his own unique way, Tom exhibited the concept of terror-management theory with regard to the Japanese soldier's remains.

Tom switched topics to his Grandpa Fred's medals and stated that the medals he received after his death are some of the only things of his grandfather's that are truly his to remember him by. This is a clear indication of terror-management theory from his Grandpa Fred passing down his memory through his artifacts to his grandson. However, Tom said they represented bravery to him as the waters of the North Atlantic where Grandpa Fred's vessels served were not kind waters to get sunk in, and sailors would often freeze to death in the water before rescue. Tom also stated that the medals have an element of the unknown to them as Grandpa Fred passed away before he could dive deeply into his war experiences and understand Grandpa Fred's mindset as an 18-year-old in the military. However, the medals do not carry the same sadness

and weight as the flag does to him. He asserted that the medals are attached to happier, sentimental memories of Grandpa Fred and pride in his service.

When asked more specifically about the immediate thoughts that come to mind from Grandpa Hank's flag, he says that simply picking up the flag gives him chills. Tom referenced that it has such an "unknown" to it because it was acquired by trade. He stated that "It was probably in a combat zone. It was carried by a foreign soldier in an unknown place. You don't know what happened to the guy that carried it." He stated that he feels almost like a caretaker of the Japanese soldier's remains, and so he tries to show the flag a lot of reverence as a result. "It might be all that is left of [the Japanese soldier]…It's my grandfather's 'property' but does it really belong to him anyways?" He stated that it also presents front and center the convoluted nature of war and what is right from wrong. The flag leaves him with far more questions than answers about the past of the Japanese soldier who carried it in the war. He expressed a sincere yearning to try and find the Japanese family the flag would belong to. This is more evidence of the manifestation of terror-management theory in Tom over his desire to preserve and pass down the memory of the Japanese soldier, in the hopes that he can one day return the flag to the Japanese family.

When it comes to Grandpa Fred's medals, Tom stated that he immediately remembers the old house that Grandpa Fred lived in but is no longer in family. Specifically, it reminded him of when he went down into the basement room where Grandpa Fred kept the box of war medals as almost a "secret place", where Grandpa Fred shared secrets with him. He elaborated that he remembers the enduring personal connection and a constant wonder of what Grandpa Fred was like at the time of his service in the Canadian Navy. Overall, Tom stated he has a warm feeling from Grandpa Fred's war medals that he does not get with Grandpa Hank's good luck flag,

which gives him a shaky feeling instead. He summarized that the medals represent happy memories and a sense of closure to him. Whereas the flag represents a sad loneliness and lack of closure due to its mysterious past and likely circumstances of the Japanese solider who carried it. A fascinating look at the duality of the terror-management theory in both remembering his own family member and attempting to preserve someone else's memory from being erased as well.

When asked if the artifacts from his grandfathers had a direct impact on his interests and hobbies, Tom responded: "Certainly. This is handheld history." He noted the large impact that WWII had globally. T is proud of his personal connections to the conflict. He also asserted that these medals sparked an interest in him to study history and collect other war memorabilia as a hobby, continuing the trend of terror-management theory where he inherited a collection and helped to keep his grandfathers' memory alive by continuing to add to their small collections. Tom specifically enjoys finding objects with other personal connections as a way to bridge the gap of time between the modern day and the war.

Tom was then asked if he believes that artifacts are important to a general understanding of WWII. He answered that he believes them to be important, as books are distant, but the artifacts are real and help "bring the war to life." He elaborated that while it is great for museums to have things like these, it is a shame that people at museums are often denied the ability to have a hands on approach with the artifacts. He stated that artifacts are "sanitized when behind the glass" and that it does not give people the ability to truly appreciate or comprehend the artifacts' provenance. He surmised that while items are more likely to elicit an interest in people, it depends on the personality of the person holding it as to how much they care about owning a piece of the war.

Tom was then asked about his personal views of the war and if they were shaped by the artifacts or his conversations with his grandfathers about the war. He responded that his views of the war have changed over time and as he has gotten older and more educated about the subject. He said that growing up it was all about "the Good War" narrative in American culture related to the conflict. Tom said that the "Good War narrative" is still present when he holds Grandpa Fred's war medals, but that the flag he got from Grandpa Hank caused him to step back and reassess that point of view. He recalled the flag makes him contemplate the morality in war and its' ethical gray areas. He stated the flag brings home that Japanese soldiers in the Pacific were not just statistics, but people too. Tom asserted that there were plenty of Japanese soldiers who were similar to his grandparents, doing their duty for their country when asked to do so but happened to be on the losing side of the conflict. He ended by stating that any study of war needs to be examined from a nuanced perspective as wars are "incredibly complex events" and we learn new things about them every day.

Family 5 Interview

The fifth family interviewed included a son (Doug) and grandson (Mitchell) of a veteran who served as a Marine in the Pacific Theater of war and saw combat on Iwo Jima. The family is from West Central Ohio and retains discharge papers, maps, and newspaper clippings that document and confirm the story of their family veteran's time in the war. The artifact brought home by this family veteran is unique in nature, distinctly so from the other artifacts discussed by the other families' case studies. This veteran was wounded by a landmine on Iwo Jima and received a purple heart for his injuries, which required him to be transported back to the United States. The veteran had shrapnel from the mine embedded in his body for the rest of his life, and

the shrapnel was recovered by the family from the remains after the veterans' cremation upon his death.

The family stated that the shrapnel and the wounds to the veteran caused by it had an immense impact on how they viewed him. Doug immediately recited the old adage of "once a Marine, always a Marine" in regard to his father's branch of service and time on Iwo Jima. He took much pride in the sacrifices his father made during the war and that he had the courage to be killed or take shrapnel like this in the line of duty. Doug stated that his father really would have preferred to not come back with anything at all during the war, and it is unfortunate that he suffered such a serious wound. Asked about what specifically the veteran might have been looking for to take home, Doug stated that his father told him stories of the Japanese booby-trapping bodies with prized souvenirs such as "samurai swords and watches." Doug's father elaborated that after watching several of his comrades get killed trying to attain war trophies, he was very wary of getting any for himself for fear of being killed in the process. A counter-intuitive expression of terror-management theory where the veteran would rather come home to create memories as a family man rather than try to attain a collection to preserve his memory by. After he was hit by the mine shrapnel, the veteran was evacuated to the United States for surgery and was in New York recovering when the war ended.

The family was asked if their veteran ever used the shrapnel or his wounds as a catalyst for war stories. The immediate response was an emphatic "no", adding that he did not really talk much about the war at all until the very end of his life. This would again be a strong demonstration of trauma theory and being largely unwilling to speak about his experiences. Towards the end of his life, the veteran did a return trip to Iwo Jima for the 50th anniversary of the battle and began to talk a little more about his experiences in the war. Perhaps exhibiting an

important stage of trauma theory, reconnection. Further supported by Doug theorized that much of the reflection later in life was “a healing thing” to help close up any old wounds still present from his experiences in the war. For most of the veteran’s life, he remained very much someone who viewed himself as having answered his call to duty and counted his blessings to come back alive from his experiences in the war. While Mitchell was very young when his grandfather died, he got the impression through memories and listening to Doug talk about his grandfather that he was a very stoic man in line with the peer pressure of his era. Of course, this could also have much to do with trauma theory and unwillingness to speak about the traumatic events. Elaborating, Mitchell stated that people in that era did not talk about their experiences of pain, both physical and emotional, and avoided showering themselves with praise for their efforts in the war or talking about the war in general. Mitchell guessed (correctly) that many veterans in other interviews probably had a similar approach to talking about the war with their families, whereby they were stoic in life but opened up on their experiences in their twilight years.

With the intimate understanding of how the shrapnel accompanying wounds affected the family veteran during his life, the family was asked what the artifacts meant to them as well as their thoughts when examining or holding them after their veteran’s passing. After a long pause, Doug admitted that he really did not know what to say in terms of what it meant to him. He stated that it was a reminder of what his father had to literally carry with him in life due to the war and that it was undeniable proof of that chapter in his life story. The shrapnel had not been able to be removed in 1945/6 when the veteran was undergoing treatment for his wounds due to risk of damaging his spine. By the time he could have had it removed when he was in his 60’s, he told them “no, it’s a part of me” and that he did not want it removed surgically if at all avoidable.

Asked more specifically what the first things that come to mind are when they see and hold the shrapnel, Doug stated that “it looks like an Indian head to me” in reference to the shape of the metal being similar to an arrowhead used by Native Americans. Mitchell added “like a broadhead?” and both chuckled a little before returning their attention. Mitchell stated that when it comes to his grandfather, the family remembered him a lot more as a person who happened to be involved in a war as opposed to a war veteran who happened to be their family member. He added that the war materials were rarely retrieved and were not used to reflect on the war experiences. They stated that they often tell stories of their time and experiences in life with the family veteran, but very seldomly bring up anything to do with his service in the war. Doug elaborated that even when his father was still alive, he was nervous to even bring up the war or his father’s injuries sustained during it out of reverence and respect to his father’s experiences. He added that “he was a hero” to the family, so he earned the right to talk or not talk about it as he pleased. Doug recalled that his father told him that after the war ended, he could pretty much go wherever he wanted for free in New York on account of his status as a wounded veteran. The wound also made it more difficult for him to walk around for the rest of his life.

With the veteran’s passing and general lack of stories from his time in the war, the family was next asked if the shrapnel piece elicited any curiosities or interests in them. They continued to re-iterate that to them, the war was just a part of his life story and not a focal point of his personality or how they viewed him in general. Evidently, the veteran’s idea to cement his memory as a family man instead of by a war souvenir was a success. Doug emphasized that it was his father answering the call to duty for his country and returning home afterwards. Mitchell admitted that he did not get to build that deep of a relationship with his grandfather before he passed away when he was still eight years old. He stated that the artifacts do make him interested

in the war and that he would be very curious to talk to his grandfather about it now if he could, but that he does not have that chance anymore.

They were asked if they believed that artifacts such as this were important to understanding WWII in the context of American history. Doug stated “yes” immediately and proclaimed how important the war is in world history as well as how many people were directly involved globally, much less impacted by it. Mitchell stated that it helps him better understand his grandfather more as opposed to the context of the whole United States. He elaborated that he cannot speak for the millions of other families in the United States who were affected by the war, but that he knew his grandfather was more than willing to do what he had to do. He continued with a “Good War” perspective, asserting that he helped to “establish and keep freedom for our country”, and was literally willing to take shrapnel to the back in order to do his part to advance those causes around the world.

The final question asked them about their views of WWII and how they are shaped by the artifacts and conversations with their family veteran. Mitchell responded that the shrapnel is a potent reminder of the realities of warfare and how gruesome it is. He contemplated just how sudden and random the individual experiences of war are, while at the same time it has massive ramifications on the globally that define the world we live in today. Doug stated it was a reminder to him, and one that his father would have backed up, that the Japanese were not willing to surrender even as they absorbed defeat after defeat in the war. “They fought to the death, so the only way was to kill them.” He asserted that he believes Japanese determination on Iwo Jima was a driving factor for dropping the atomic bombs on Japan. He figured that a full-scale invasion of Japan would have cost millions of lives on both sides, possibly including his

father or uncles who were also serving, so the horrors of the bomb are still a net gain in the end by more saving more lives than they ultimately cost.

APPENDIX C: DEALER/COLLETOR SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What got you started into collecting/dealing in WWII mementoes/war trophies/artifacts*?
   *(from here on these will be included under the general term “militaria”)
2. Do you think militaria collectors/dealers have a social stigma attached to them? If so, what kind and do you think that it is largely justified or unjustified?
3. Do WWII veterans or their families often approach you with war relics that they or the family no longer want? If so, what advice do you typically give them?
4. How would you describe the current state of the WWII militaria collecting field and market?
5. Do you think there is substantially more original WWII militaria out there yet to be discovered, or is the market/field essentially at its peak?
6. What do you think is the direction of WWII militaria collecting’s future?
7. Do you think that militaria collecting contributes to general American understanding of World War II? Why or why not?