

Warts and All:
The Representation and Interpretation of War in Museums

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Abstract

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Museology

The goal of this research was to address the issue of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war. The definition of sanitization was to make a topic less offensive by limiting, altering, or removing anything that could be considered inappropriate or controversial for visitors. There was little available literature concerning how military museums interpreted the horrors of war within an exhibit and on the existence of sanitization. Fourteen semi-structured interviews were completed with military museums to determine their opinions on sanitization and the methods that they employed to create a balanced war exhibit. The research determined that strategic sanitization was an appropriate practice to utilize in some circumstances, which allows for the broad story to be told accurately while remaining sensitive to the audience's sensibilities and the museum's mission. A best practice recommendation list was created to guide military museums and other museums displaying and interpreting difficult stories in obtaining the relevant balance in their exhibits between historical accuracy and audience acceptance. Military museum professionals understand the necessity of displaying and interpreting challenging subject matter to the public; however, the degree to which exhibits display the horrors of war depends on the specific institution.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The goal of this research was to address the issue of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war. The definition of sanitization was to make a topic less offensive by altering, limiting, or removing anything, including representations of extreme acts of violence, suffering, or death, which could be considered inappropriate or controversial for the public.¹ Four core research questions emerged that shaped this study.

- What are the processes or policies that help determine what information should go into a war exhibit and who is involved?
- In what ways, do military history museums avoid or actively sanitize war within their exhibits? What are the reasons for sanitizing warfare in exhibits?
- How do museum professionals think about striking a balance between commemoration and critical analysis when presenting the topic of war?
- To what extent, does the museum staff realize that the matter of the sanitization of war in exhibits exists, and what roles does it play within their institution?

There were no national military museums in Europe until 1900. When they began to emerge, they were staffed mainly by retired officers and were mostly geared towards the intellectual development of soldiers.² The museums were also instruments for supporting nationalism. With the advent of the two world wars, the central mission of most of those museums focused on commemoration of military sacrifice, as well as recording and documenting wars for posterity. At that moment, the institutions became both museums and memorials. By the

¹ *Definition:* Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” in *Does War Belong in Museums?: The Representation of Violence in Exhibition*, ed. Wolfgang Muchitsch, (Verlag, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 26, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “Definition on Sanitize,” accessed February 3, 2016, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sanitize>.

² Franklin van der Pols, “The Future of Military Museums,” in *International Committee for Museum of Arms and Military History Magazine* (February 2014): Issue 11, accessed October 28, 2015, <http://www.icomam.be/downloads/issue11.pdf>, p. 35.

1980s, military museums began to serve the public instead of focusing on military enthusiasts. Military museums began to exhibit social history, focusing on the role of the military in society and the lives of ordinary soldiers.³

War is an expansive, complicated topic that affects people's lives in a variety of ways and to different extents. To include such a subject within a finite exhibit space is a difficult task; however, museum professionals have utilized many different methods and approaches to accomplish this with varying degrees of success, as shown through current literature on the subject.⁴ The 1995 exhibit on the Enola Gay at the Smithsonian was meant to provide critical commentary on strategic and atomic bombing during World War II. Instead, the exhibit provoked World War II veterans to take action against the exhibit, as they were not looking for their actions to be analyzed critically, but to be honored for their courage and sacrifice.⁵

The controversy reached all sectors of society, as it was debated in the government and discussed in the media. The opposing sides of the debate could be understood through two different editorials. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial admitted that it was important to warn against the destructive force of atomic bombs and question their use. However, they concluded that the exhibit "rightfully should have been primarily dedicated to commemorating the end of World War II and honoring those who fought to defeat Nazism and Japanese militarism clearly was not that place" for this critical analysis. On the other hand, a *New York Times* editorial argued that "historians and museums of history need to be insulated from any attempt to make history conform to a narrow ideological or political interest."⁶ The main reason for the controversy could

³ Franklin van der Pols, "The Future of Military Museums," p. 35-36.

⁴ Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 200.

⁵ Edward J. Gallagher, "The Enola Gay Controversy Overview," *History on Trial* (Philadelphia: Lehigh University Digital Library, 2000), accessed October 30, 2015, <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/trial/enola/>.

⁶ Lisa Yoneyama, "Critical Warps: Facticity, Transformative Knowledge, and Post-Nationalist Criticism in the Smithsonian Controversy," *Positions: East Asia Culture Critique* vol. 4, number 3 (1997), p. 781.

be narrowed down to the debate between memory and history. The museum professionals at the Smithsonian emphasized historical facts, thereby underscoring their objectivity and neutrality. They denounced their opponents as blinded by personal judgements, political bias, and emotional investments.⁷ Memory and history proved difficult to balance together in this case study.⁸

The museum professionals who designed the exhibit defended their decisions. The National Air and Space Museum's Director at the time, Dr. Martin Harwit, believed that "a museum's prime job was to make people reflect, analyze, and evaluate," something that was lost within this controversy.⁹ In addition, National Air and Space Museum Curator Tom Crouch stated, "do you want to do an exhibit to make veterans feel good, or do you want our visitors to think about the consequences of the atomic bombing of Japan? Frankly, I do not think we can do both."¹⁰ In the end, the political solution for putting the Enola Gay on public display was to strip it bare of all analysis, consequence, and context. Instead, the curators decided to let the plane and crew speak for themselves, and allow the visitors to come to their own interpretation concerning the use of atomic bombs.¹¹ The original purpose of the exhibit of critically analyzing an event in American history was lost, replaced by the "simpler" fascination with a famous airplane in a much smaller space.¹² This kind of controversy occurred in many military museums across the world, as commemoration and objective academic contemplation clashed.¹³ The Smithsonian professionals faced the difficult dichotomy between ensuring that veterans' stories were

⁷ Lisa Yoneyama, "Critical Warps," p. 782.

⁸ John Whittier Treat, "The Enola Gay on Display: Hiroshima and American Memory," *Positions: East Asia Culture Critique* vol. 5, number 3 (1997): 863-877, p. 864-865.

⁹ Franklin van der Pols, "The Future of Military Museums," p. 33.

¹⁰ Edward J. Gallagher, "The Enola Gay Controversy Overview."

¹¹ John Treat, "The Enola Gay on Display," p. 875.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 870-871.

¹³ Gaynor Kavanagh, *Making Histories in Museums*, (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2006), p. 158.

represented in an honorable way, while presenting a historically factual depiction of war.¹⁴ In the end, the original Enola Gay exhibit was never placed on display. Instead, a new exhibit with a different narrative focused mainly on the historical context of the period and the plane.¹⁵ A “Tiger Team,” an independent, diverse team of museum professionals, was created to develop a new historical exhibition. Within a year, it became the most popular special exhibition in the history of the Museum.¹⁶ This controversy serves as an example of the importance of balancing commemoration and critical analysis, the battle between history and memory, and the necessity of understanding the needs of the audience.¹⁷

Additionally, military museums had to contend with many other issues including how to handle the emotional sensitivities of visitors who experienced or knew someone who experienced trauma or loss due to a war or conflict.¹⁸ In addition, past war exhibits in public military museums possessed propagandistic, nationalistic messages with an emphasis on unity, community, and the fight between good and evil.¹⁹ Emphasizing propagandistic, nationalist messages did not allow for factual depictions of war, although these messages are evident still in some exhibits, as they provide a safer, less confrontational analysis of war.²⁰ In addition, there was a great deal of discussion concerning the best method for interpretation: the old or new

¹⁴ Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” in *Does War Belong in Museums?: The Representation of Violence in Exhibition*, ed. Wolfgang Muchitsch, (Verlag, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 23.

¹⁵ Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, “Enola Gay,” accessed May 18, 2016, <https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/enolagay/>.

¹⁶ Air Force Association, “The Enola Gay and the Smithsonian Chronology of the Controversy 1993-1995,” *Air Force Magazine*, May 29, 2015, accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.airforcemag.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/Enola%20Gay%20Archive/EG_chronology93-95.pdf.

¹⁷ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them: Memory and Commemoration in War Museums,” *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies* (2001) 7:11-15, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/jcms.7013>.

¹⁸ Paul Williams, “Memorial Museums and the Objectification of Suffering,” in *Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum*, ed. Janet Marstine (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 221, 229.

¹⁹ Lucy Noakes, “Making Histories: Exploring the Blitz in London Museums in the 1990s,” in *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Martin Evans and Ken Lunn. (Oxford, Oxfordshire: Berg, 1997), p. 100.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 101.

military history system.²¹ The old system focused on the telling the story from the general's perspective and using battle statistics, and would display objects with little to no interpretation with them. Most military museums adhered to the new model where war was placed in its historical context and focused on the lives of the humans involved in it, moving away from simply displaying artifacts to telling the personal stories behind them.²²

Either the sanitization of war in exhibits was beneficial to visitors and their emotional sensitivities to violence and death, or it detracted from the factual history of a wartime event and the discourse on warfare that museums wanted to initiate.²³ There were only partial answers within the literature regarding the depiction of war and achieving a balance between commemoration and critical analysis.²⁴ In addition, the literature offered little information concerning aspects of sanitization that had positive effects, or how military museums were representing and portraying all aspects of war in exhibits, including violence, death, blood, and suffering. The only information offered was that some museums did "sanitize" war in their exhibits.²⁵

²¹ Barton C. Harker and Margaret Vining, "Military Museums and Social History," in *Does War Belong in Museums?: The Representation of Violence in Exhibition*, ed. Wolfgang Muchitsch (Verlag, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 41-42.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²³ Franklin van der Pols, "The Future of Military Museums," p. 33.

²⁴ Kristin Gallas, "History vs. Heritage- What stories are museums sharing?," *AASLH Blog*, July 17, 2015, <http://blogs.aaslh.org/history-vs-heritage-what-stories-are-museums-sharing/>.

²⁵ Jay Winter, "Museums and the Representation of War," p. 26.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review sought to explore the existing resources that were available concerning the practice of sanitization. The first section of this literature review described the role and importance of museum interpretation. The second section synthesized the main findings on the subject of general military museum audiences. The third section looked at past war exhibits and its influence on modern war exhibits. The fourth section analyzed the emotional nature connected to war and how it changes how the war story was represented and interpreted. The fifth, sixth, and seventh sections all investigated the concepts of commemoration and critical analysis within military museums, and the importance of balancing them together in a war exhibit. The final section examined the question of does war belong in museums.

Museum Interpretation

Museums serve many purposes, but two important ones were to educate and to entertain.²⁶ Discussing and analyzing wartime violence adhered to a museum's educational purpose to educate; however, it did not always work as well for entertainment.²⁷ Therefore, the focus in exhibits had been on displaying positive images of the conflicts in order to allow the museum to be inclusive to all.²⁸ Museum curators and exhibit developers had the difficult task of creating exhibits that could be understood and enjoyed by every member of the audience, even though there was a wide range of learning abilities, personal interests, and emotional sensitivities to take into account.²⁹ Appropriate interpretation of the subject matter was vital to a museum's survival as it determined what the public was exposed to and how history was conveyed. Many

²⁶ Andrea Witcomb, "Interactivity: Thinking Beyond," in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), p. 354.

²⁷ Andrew Whitmarsh, "We Will Remember Them: Memory and Commemoration in War Museums."

²⁸ Judith Vandervelde, "Challenging Histories- Challenging Memorialization: The Holocaust," in *Challenging History in the Museum*, ed. Jenny Kidd et al. (UK: Orleans House Gallery, 2014), p. 241.

²⁹ Rebecca Preiss, "If These Walls Could Talk: Museum Interpretation in Theory and Practice," (B.A. Thesis, Haverford College, 2002), p. 50.

theories and approaches affected museum interpretation, which were continually modified.³⁰ The newest institutional priorities for museum interpretation were to “facilitate dynamic, dialogic experiences that will ignite visitors’ imaginations, ideas, and emotions and encourage self-reflection and social engagement.”³¹ Through much of the 20th century, military museums “continued to mount arcane displays of war-related objects and static chronological exhibitions of military material with little or no interpretation... Even today, as any regular visitor of military museums will testify, such practices have scarcely vanished, though they are far less pervasive than they once were.”³² With the advent of the new military social history approach in the 1960s to 1980s significant changes were made, allowing for more interpretation within exhibits. the new military social history approach stressed “the common soldier, the experience of war, and the place of the armed forces in society.”³³

According to Barton Harker and Margaret Vining in “Military Museums and Social History,” “exhibitions in military museums have undergone a major shift, from simply displaying artifacts to using them to tell stories. Although the old concerns for national pride and memorialization remain salient, they no longer dominate the scene.”³⁴ A deeper understanding of a soldier’s way of life led the audience to possess a greater level of empathy and understanding of combat.³⁵ In *Making Histories in Museums*, Gaynor Kavanagh stated that depicting war through the experiences of ordinary soldiers had come to be regarded as “more meaningful than

³⁰ Rebecca Preiss, “If These Walls Could Talk,” p. 5, 63.

³¹ Celka Straughn and Howard Gardner, “Good work in Museums Today and Tomorrow,” in *Routledge Companion to Museum Ethics: Redefining Ethics for the Twenty-First Century Museum*, ed. Janet Marstine, (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 52.

³² Barton Harker and Margaret Vining, “Military Museums and Social History,” p. 58.

³³ Ibid, p. 42.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 41-42.

³⁵ David J. Blackmore, “Practical Military History,” in *International Committee for Museum of Arms and Military History Magazine* (Summer 2012): Issue 09, accessed October 25, 2015, <http://www.icomam.be/downloads/issue09.pdf>, p. 30.

histories which examined wars only from the perspective of commanders or the decisiveness of a battle.”³⁶

Museum Audiences

Museum professionals considered the dilemma of displaying anything that could be considered “risky” materials and interpretation in terms of visitor sensitivities and the determination of what events were deserving of representation.³⁷ Museums were careful what they displayed in order to ensure that their audience would continue to visit without feeling upset or offended by the exhibits. Jay Winter discussed in the “Museums and the Representation of War” that “the fact that war museums entail choices of appropriate symbols and representative objects, arrayed in such a manner as to avoid controversy especially among veterans, to hold public’s attention and to invite sufficient numbers of visitors to come so that bills can be paid.”³⁸ A priority for museums was to know their specific audiences in their community, and to attempt to get new audiences in the door. As shown with the old ‘Blitz Experience’ exhibit in Britain, “memories like this, of death, tragedy, and grief, have little space in the [exhibit].... The museum does not entirely forget memories such as these. If this was the case, they would not win such a wide audience; the absence of any suffering at all would mark them out as unrealistic representations of the period.”³⁹ Museums were public institutions that maintain a high level of accountability in order to appeal to the interest of the public; however, experimentation and risk taking was allowed in order to develop new means of expression and to reach larger audiences.⁴⁰

³⁶ Gaynor Kavanagh, *Making Histories in Museums*, p. 160.

³⁷ Paul Williams, “Memorial Museums and the Objectification of Suffering,” p. 221.

³⁸ Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” p. 23.

³⁹ Lucy Noakes, “Making Histories: Exploring the Blitz in London Museums in the 1990s,” p. 99.

⁴⁰ Duncan F. Cameron, “The Museum, a Temple or the Forum,” in *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift, Second Edition*, ed. Gail Anderson, (Maryland: AltaMira Press, 2012), p. 62.

A balance needed to be maintained within military museums of representing the past as accurately as possible, and remaining relevant for present visitors.⁴¹

It was important to listen to the visitors and their needs, but not to cater fully to them, going against what the museum desired in presenting the topic of war. According to Jay Winter, in the *Historial de la Grande Guerre* (the Museum of the Great War), some visitors want the thrill of battle and the sense of being there. “The fact that [they] did not find them in the [Museum] is not accidental. It was precisely to fight against this kind of thinking about war that it was designed differently.”⁴² In addition, Jay Winter discussed the need not to “underestimate the way such visitors gender war from the start, and look for confirmation of their prejudices in the sites and museums they visit. If they do not find the narrative of war configured as the story of boys and their toys, then they are perplexed, annoyed, or disappointed.”⁴³ “War museums face a stark choice: either they aim at an interrogation as to how war can be represented or they continue to deepen lies and illusions about it” by satisfying all of the visitor’s desires no matter how they conflicted with reality.⁴⁴

Past War Exhibits

Beginning with military museums that operated during the First World War, many emphasized national unity, shared effort, and community instead of the horrors of war. Those museums placed everything in the framework of victory with a focus on propaganda where the immoral enemies were belittled, and destruction, injury, and death was not displayed unless it

⁴¹ International Committee for Arms and Military History Museums, “Military History Museums: Contemporary History and Social Relevance: Moscow Conference Synopsis,” (Moscow: ICOMAM, 2015), accessed October 8, 2015, DOI: <http://icom.museum/resources/publications-database/publication/konferencija-ikomam-voenno-istoricheskie-muzei-v-konte/print/1/>.

⁴² Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” p. 34.

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 35-36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 36.

was shown in the heroic context.⁴⁵ Many elements of this approach for representing war continue today, as seen in the “Blitz Experience” exhibit at the Imperial War Museum in London. This exhibit focused on the Blitzkrieg attacks in Britain during WWII and did not accurately depict the period of disruption, uncertainty, and chaos with their nationalistic displays.⁴⁶ Some problematic, difficult images were present, but they tended to be sanitized and overshadowed by the more positive war images.⁴⁷ In “We Will Remember Them: Memory and Commemoration in War Museums,” Andrew Whitmarsh elaborated that the memory of war “often forms part of a nation’s self-image. Taking a critical attitude towards past wars may therefore provoke accusations of being unpatriotic.”⁴⁸ When war became political, then it was possible for a country to turn away from its inglorious past and cause it to hide the shameful parts of its history.⁴⁹ War museums were never politically neutral, and were influenced by the political environment around them.⁵⁰ John Bodnar iterated in “Bad Dreams about the Good War: Bataan” that the “public memory of a nation is susceptible to disagreement, varying layers of meaning, and conflicting emotions... It must focus on the various discussions, aesthetics, voices, and practices that attempt to bring order and -what they call- ‘legibility’ to a past that ultimately no one could know for sure.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ Susanne Brandt, “The Memory Makers: Museums and Exhibitions of the First World War,” *History and Memory* Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 95-122, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), accessed October 4, 2015, DOI: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25618663>, p. 102-103, 106.

⁴⁶ Lucy Noakes, “Making Histories: Exploring the Blitz in London Museums in the 1990s,” p. 100.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁴⁸ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them.”

⁴⁹ Jay Winter, “Representations of War and the Social Construction of Silence,” in *Fighting Words and Images: Representing War across the Disciplines*, ed. Elena Baraban et al., (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 41.

⁵⁰ Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” p. 26.

⁵¹ John Bodnar, “Bad Dreams about the Good War: Bataan,” in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed. Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian Ott, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), p. 140.

Representation of war continued to shape the identities of nations, communities, and individuals, which could cause competing and contradictory interpretations to emerge.⁵² One conclusion by Jay Winter was that “all war museums fail to represent ‘the war’ because there was then and is now no consensus as to what constituted the war as it actually was.”⁵³ He continued with, “to be sure, we are the bearers of a narrative about loss, but it is a narrative constructed in such a way as to be revised and renewed by the next generation of historians who will tell it here in their own way.”⁵⁴ For example, the history of the Vietnam War had been reduced and simplified into an incorrect dichotomy that the conflict was between the aggressive, communist “North Viet Nam” and the nationalist “South Viet Nam.”⁵⁵ In his paper entitled “National Liberation and the Cold War in Viet Nam: Some Thoughts on Spatial Representation of War after 1954,” Christoph Giebel asserted that “the complexities of competing nationalist visions, regional identities, political loyalties, and mutually exclusive state claims”⁵⁶ were ignored, hindering a better understanding of the conflict. There was no one homogenous South Vietnam, many people in the South was not on the American side. No matter its inaccuracy, the simplified account became very persuasive within the United States. While it was crucial to break away from this understanding, it had become the politically correct version in America.⁵⁷ As discussed by Jenny Edkins in her book *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, “remembering is

⁵² Elena Baraban, Stephen Jaeger, and Adam Muller, “Introduction: Representing War across the Disciplines,” in *Fighting Words and Images: Representing War across the Disciplines*, ed. Elena Baraban et al., (Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 6.

⁵³ Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” p. 23.

⁵⁴ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the 20th Century*, (Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2006), p. 237.

⁵⁵ Christoph Giebel, “National Liberation and the Cold War in Viet Nam: Some Thoughts on Spatial Representation of War after 1954,” Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Vietnamese Studies, in Ha Noi, Vietnam, on December 2008, p. 1-2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 1-2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 1-2, 16.

intensely political: part of the fight for political change is a struggle for memory... Narrative seems unable to get away from the rhetorics of state or nation.”⁵⁸

Furthermore, violent conflicts were usually cast in virtuous terms in order to make “war seems legitimate and sacrifices seem redemptive rather than regrettable.”⁵⁹ Museums depicted the dead as courageous individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice for their countries. It was simpler than discussing the violence that led to their deaths.⁶⁰ For depictions of enemies, they were dehumanized and portrayed as evil, inferior, and misled in order to legitimize the use of any violence.⁶¹ With this, a question emerged concerning who should be considered the victims of war in museum exhibits. Should soldiers who perpetuated the regime or contributed to sustaining it and lost their lives also be considered victims?⁶² In the United States, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum’s exhibit, *The Crossroads: The End of World War II, the Atomic Bomb and the Cold War*, included the fuselage of the original Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber, the Enola Gay. The exhibit demonstrated the effects of atomic bombs on Japanese citizens, and the painful consequences of them. The Japanese citizens were portrayed as innocent victims of the war. However, the curators were soon seen as un-American for this portrayal of Japanese victims instead of commemorating the American victory.⁶³ Many people did not want “enemies” to be shown in any other aspect except as perpetrators of violence and death. In this respect, many

⁵⁸ Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 108, 171.

⁵⁹ John Bodnar, “Bad Dreams about the Good War: Bataan,” p. 140.

⁶⁰ Susanne Brandt, “The Memory Makers,” p. 103.

⁶¹ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them.”

⁶² Alf Ludtke, “Histories of Mourning: Flowers and Stones for the War Dead, Confusion for the Living- Vignettes from East and West Germany,” in *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations*, ed. Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997), p. 156, 174.

⁶³ Lisa Yoneyama, “Critical Warps: Facticity, Transformative Knowledge, and Post-Nationalist Criticism in the Smithsonian Controversy,” *Positions: East Asia Culture Critique* vol. 4, number 3 (1997), p. 796.

exhibits did not show all of the realities of war, as it did not fit in with the simple ‘evil enemy’ versus the ‘brave hero’ message that museums would rather address.⁶⁴

Emotions and Ethics

“At both a group and an individual level, war can produce a huge range of emotional responses: ‘sorrow, sacrifice, shame, pain, pride, suffering, victory, loss and genuine confusion about patriotism and the nation.’”⁶⁵ With this, Andrew Whitmarsh stated that many military museums did not explore these emotions, as they were afraid of the negative impact it might have had on their visitors. “Many military objects, connected as they are to human tragedy, possess ‘a potentially powerful emotional aura,’ which nevertheless museums rarely explore.”⁶⁶ Museums instead focused on the technical details of the objects since focusing on technology, rather than other aspects of warfare, was considered an uncontroversial and safe subject.⁶⁷ Many military museums had decided to take the path of displaying a positive, propagandistic stance towards war to avoid instilling depressing or disheartening emotions in their visitors.⁶⁸ Even though the victims suffered the actuality of the discussed horrific acts, museum professionals would continue to feel that removing items on the subject deemed “risky” was an easier, safer solution in deference to visitor sensitivities.⁶⁹

The use of atrocity imagery also raised questions concerning their appropriateness in museums and museum exhibitions and the effects they could have had on visitor sensitivities. At the Melbourne Holocaust Museum in Australia, “the use of atrocity images[s] reveals the extent to which survivor memory, 40 years after the war, sought to memorialize and recall the most

⁶⁴ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them.”

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Paul Williams, “Memorial Museums,” p. 221.

heinous of Nazi crimes while, at the same time, contextualizing these memories within relationship motifs that humanized the representations of the Nazi victim.”⁷⁰ As Janet Jacobs discussed in her book, *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory*, further, museums needed to be careful how they chose and utilized those images as they could humiliate and shame the subjects of oppression, instead of representing humanity in the aftermath of a tragedy.⁷¹ Museum professionals need to determine whether visitors should have had the right to observe the suffering of others through imagery or other means or if this raised too many ethical issues. Museums must respect the privacy and human dignity of individuals who may not have wanted their lives to be displayed publicly forever.⁷² It was important that every institution adhere to their code of ethics to ensure that the museum was able to navigate through contested moral territory without angering or upsetting any audiences.⁷³ As the International Council of Museums’ (ICOM) Code of Ethics, Section 4.3, stated, museums must exhibit all items “with great tact and respect for the feelings of human dignity held by all people.”⁷⁴

Memorial/Commemorative Aspect of Military Museums

According to Andrew Whitmarsh, “the 20th century saw the development of commemorative traditions: customs and narrative by which individuals, groups, and nations remember, commemorate, and attempt to resolve memories of the traumatic experience that was war. These conventions often also govern museum interpretation of war.”⁷⁵ The commemoration

⁷⁰ Janet Jacobs, *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), p. 146.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁷² Paul Williams, “Memorial Museums and the Objectification of Suffering,” p. 221, 229.

⁷³ Tristram Besterman, “Museum Ethics,” in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon Macdonald, (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), p. 431.

⁷⁴ General Assembly of ICOM, “ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums,” (Buenos Aires, Seoul: ICOM, 2013), accessed October 17, 2015, DOI: http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Codes/code_ethics2013_eng.pdf.

⁷⁵ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them.”

of war dead served two purposes: “affirmation and propagation of political ideas about wars and the nations which fight them [and] the need to express and resolve emotional traumas caused by war.”⁷⁶ Military museums tended not to question the morality of the struggles that they were commemorating as they were looking to remember the war, not analyze it.⁷⁷ However, if commemorations were going to be helpful, they needed to look forward to the future.⁷⁸ The memorial aspect of military history museums gave them power to manipulate both objects and memories to produce a historical narrative. This power was deployed by military museums seeking to channel visitor memories along the lines of their exhibit narratives.⁷⁹ These museums needed to understand that this power to manipulate the visitor’s memories of war could change or misrepresent the historical facts. therefore, required considerable thought about displaying and interpreting the subject. Museums needed to comprehend that “commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories, whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of process of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.”⁸⁰

Jay Winter stated that many scholars called the representations of war “lies, distortions, and sanitized versions of an intolerable reality;” however, he argued that this was incomplete as forgetting the ugliness of war was only one option in war commemoration.⁸¹ Silence was “a ubiquitous and powerful constitutive element”⁸² as well; it was essential to mourning practices,

⁷⁶ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them.”

⁷⁷ Gaynor Kavanagh, *Making Histories in Museums*, p. 158.

⁷⁸ Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War, and Trauma*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 200.

⁷⁹ Daniel Sherman, “Objects of Memory: History and Narrative in French War Museums,” in *French Historical Studies* Vol. 19, No. 1: pp. 49-74, (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995), accessed October 3, 2015, DOI: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/286899>, p. 70-71.

⁸⁰ John R. Gillis, “Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship,” in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 5.

⁸¹ Jay Winter, “Representations of War and the Social Construction of Silence,” p. 27.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 28.

suspending open conflicts over the meaning of violence, and allowing no one group the right to dominate the conversation. Both problems and benefits existed for the practice of silence. Museums professionals could select some elements while distorting and silencing others while representing war due to its protean character. Whatever a museum decided or produced, it inevitably created silences.⁸³ Silence did not provide a complete history of the war; however, it was necessary because if the museum told visitors everything that happened at every moment in time, they would become overwhelmed without understanding anything.⁸⁴

Memory was a form of self-representation and could be a form of critical self-reflection under the best circumstances. It could be extremely beneficial for analyzing war; however, memory could be difficult to display as it could be manipulated and affected by political change, and was not static.⁸⁵ The memory of past events was not fixed but changing; influenced by the individual's or the public's present situation and projections for the future.⁸⁶ Even with these problems of memory, museums were invoking the concept of warm, evocative, messy memory more so than cold, dispassionate, precise history.⁸⁷

Perhaps one reason that 'memory' is now invoked where 'history' once would have stood is because we feel there is something finally true in private recollections if not national narratives... We are no longer in the realm of the individual but back in the morass of stories we do not so much relive as inherit and inevitably recast. Collective memory is an appealing concept because of our cynicism about rationality and its claims to truth. Ironically, it is now memory that is beyond critique.⁸⁸

⁸³ Jay Winter, "Representations of War and the Social Construction of Silence," p. 41.

⁸⁴ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Silencing the Past: Layers of Meaning in the Haitian Revolution," in *Between History and Histories: The Making of Silences and Commemorations*, ed. Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1997), p. 113.

⁸⁵ Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War, and Trauma*, p. 197.

⁸⁶ Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Crises of Memory and the Second World War*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 4.

⁸⁷ Jay Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 237.

⁸⁸ John Treat, "The Enola Gay on Display: Hiroshima and American Memory," p. 864-865.

Military museums had to be careful on how they utilized memory without excluding history, as leaving out a key aspect such as wartime violence could greatly affect how the visitor remembered the conflict. As Jenny Edkins stated, “remembering what happened, in all its traumatic reality, is the only way to escape the cycle of violence that our present reliance on neat and heroic stories of the past traps us in.”⁸⁹

Critical Analysis in Military Museums

Museums had the power to act as social agents and initiate positive change in their communities.⁹⁰ Military museums had the ability to engage in critical analysis concerning the destructive nature of war, and the need to attempt peaceful resolutions for the future.⁹¹ The book *Does War Belong in Museums* edited by Wolfgang Muchitsch discussed how the “presentation of war and violence in museums generally oscillate between the fascination of terror and its instruments and the didactic urge to explain violence and, by analyzing it, make it easier to handle and prevent.”⁹² It was the job of professionals, stated Harker and Vining, “to show young and old alike that the colors and shapes we see in the contemporary world are shaded and shaped by the staggering consequences of war.”⁹³ It was complicated to display difficult stories in a museum, but it could be beneficial for the visitor to encounter these topics as they could find connections between the past and the modern world, seeing the need for improvement.⁹⁴ At the same time, professionals should be careful about having too much critical analysis as the means

⁸⁹ Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, p. 173.

⁹⁰ Judith Vandervelde, “Challenging Histories- Challenging Memorialization: The Holocaust,” in *Challenging History in the Museum*, ed. Jenny Kidd et al., (UK: Orleans House Gallery, 2014), p. 237.

⁹¹ David J. Blackmore, “Practical Military History,” p. 30-31.

⁹² Wolfgang Muchitsch, “The Representation of Violence in Exhibitions,” in *Does War Belong in Museums?: The Representation of Violence in Exhibition*, ed. Wolfgang Muchitsch, (Verlag, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2013), p. 1, 10.

⁹³ Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” p. 37.

⁹⁴ Julia Rose, “Developing Ethical Representations of Difficult Histories,” *AASLH Blog*, January 13, 2014, <http://blogs.aaslh.org/developing-ethical-representations-of-difficult-histories-part-1/>.

of interpretation, as visitors risk losing the emotional impact of becoming immersed in the history. It was necessary to find a good balance between telling the story and deconstructing it.⁹⁵

Accurately depicting war in its entirety was very difficult as the collective memory of a nation was susceptible to disagreement with varying layers of meaning and conflicting emotions.⁹⁶ Even though it was a complicated task choosing what aspects of war should be displayed, it was imperative that exhibits revealed the horrors of war in some sense. A sure mark of an exhibit presenting an unrealistic war representation was the absence of suffering.⁹⁷ Families often visited military museums as a fun day out, which seemed at odds with the reality of the violent subject matter. However, there was room for more adult-oriented exhibits that display new insights of what war actually means for those involved, as shown at the National Army Museum in London with their exhibit on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) entitled *Unseen Enemy*.⁹⁸ In analyzing wartime violence, museums could hope to turn visitors away from violence as a “means of solving international disputes and may justify the depiction of war’s cruelty and futility as a means of persuading the public to reject it.”⁹⁹ Museums could become centers for civic action and engagement by analyzing past wartime violence and using these lessons for the future.¹⁰⁰

Balancing Commemoration and Critical Analysis

It was a complicated task to discover a balance between honoring those who served and analyzing the conflict; however, finding the balance was important within a war exhibit.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Amy Ryall, “Challenging Collaborations: Introduction,” in *Challenging History in the Museum*, ed. Jenny Kidd et al., (UK: Orleans House Gallery, 2014), p. 78.

⁹⁶ John Bodnar, “Bad Dreams about the Good War: Bataan,” p. 140.

⁹⁷ Lucy Noakes, “Making Histories,” p. 99.

⁹⁸ Simon Stephens, “War Stories,” *Museums Journal* (February 13, 2013), accessed October 2, 2015, DOI: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/museums-journal-blog/13022013-war-stories>.

⁹⁹ Gaynor Kavanagh, *Making Histories in Museums*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Williams, “Memorial Museums and the Objectification of Suffering,” p. 220.

¹⁰¹ Judith Vandervelde, “Challenging Histories- Challenging Memorialization: The Holocaust,” p. 78.

According to Jay Winter, commemoration was performative as it selected elements of a narrative and necessarily suppressed other sides of the story.¹⁰² In addition, the survivors of a war wanted to create “a space of one’s own” in which to remember and commemorate the catastrophe, and they wanted to have a role in how the war story was represented within a museum.¹⁰³ This was difficult, as professionals must balance their own desires with the opinions of the survivors when constructing a new exhibit. Veterans felt that their wishes and feelings were being neglected as the appreciation that they thought they deserved was being affected by the critical analysis that the museum was trying to initiate.¹⁰⁴ As shown with the Enola Gay controversy,

according to Secretary Heyman, this was a contest between commemoration and historical analysis. It pitted veterans’ desire to commemorate their sacrifices... against scholars’ desire to uncover truth and curators’ desire to present what curator Tom Crouch called an “honest and balanced” narrative. ...commemoration versus scholarship, authenticity versus accuracy... this formulation has made it hard to explore the more difficult and interesting terrain that lies between and away from the poles.¹⁰⁵

An example illustrating the complications and importance in invoking this balance was the construction of a new Visitor Center at the USS Arizona Memorial and Visitor Center in 2010. The new Visitor Center placed the ship squarely within the national WWII narrative and made the site connect with contemporary visitors’ lives.¹⁰⁶ According to Teresa Bergman in her book, *Exhibiting Patriotism: Creating and Contesting Interpretations of American Historic Site*, “national commemorative and historic sites provide their audiences with an opportunity to reflect on events, and they provide a touchstone or basis for present and future actions for individuals and for countries.”¹⁰⁷ Prior to 2010, the Visitor Center was continuously scrutinized, including

¹⁰² Jay Winter, “Representations of War and the Social Construction of Silence,” p. 34.

¹⁰³ Janet Jacobs, *Memorializing the Holocaust*, p. 141.

¹⁰⁴ Andrew Whitmarsh, “We Will Remember Them,” p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ David Thelen, “History After the Enola Gay Controversy: An Introduction,” *The Journal of American History* 82 (3), (Oxford University Press, Organization of American Historians, 1995): doi:10.2307/2945110, pg. 1031-1032.

¹⁰⁶ Teresa Bergman, *Exhibiting Patriotism: Creating and Contesting Interpretations of American Historic Site*, (California: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2013), p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p. 34.

criticisms from veterans who thought the Navy film played in the theater was not adequately critical of the Japanese, and from the Hawai'ian Japanese American community who did not appreciate the representation of their group as being potential enemy spies.¹⁰⁸ Outside guidance was brought in to determine the validity of these concerns and possible avenues of compromise, especially for the latter, which continued to escalate until a compromise was achieved. The museum staff, remembering all of the earlier issues, were careful to ensure that multiple perspectives were respectfully displayed, while accurately representing the historical event and its aftermath. The public was consulted and there was outreach for comments on each element of the new interpretative exhibits.¹⁰⁹ This example demonstrated how “commemoration is a notoriously difficult terrain to navigate. There are a variety of stakeholders and competing claims to historical accuracy, combined with limited space and shrinking budgets.” The evolution of the Center demonstrated “how historic representations are incomplete, how its exhibits are not static, and how there is no one fixed definition of a site’s meaning.” The Center was successful in that it did not sacrifice its historical authenticity for anyone, but still managed to discover ways to compromise with individuals and groups and bring their perspectives into the narrative.¹¹⁰

“Museums take risks to represent difficult histories to awaken a kind of passion in visitors by challenging the taken-for-granted historical truths that can reveal the struggles for a more just and compassionate moral order.”¹¹¹ However, the institution must also be careful not to shock the visitor to the point that it becomes harmful, raising many concerns among museum professionals.¹¹² Some professionals questioned whether hiding horrible images behind privacy

¹⁰⁸ Teresa Bergman, *Exhibiting Patriotism*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57-58.

¹¹¹ Julia Rose, “Developing Ethical Representations of Difficult Histories.”

¹¹² *Ibid.*

walls softened the story, or if it was necessary considering the audience. In addition, “the museum wanted perpetrators to ‘speak; in the exhibit so that visitors could penetrate the murderous logic of their world... This idea threatened to contaminate what was for many was a commemorative space.”¹¹³ It could also cause people to focus on the wrong idea. Edward Linenthal in his book, *Preserving Memory*, raised the question of “should museums be free from the presence of murderers for the commemorative desire or does that create unintentional and insidious consequences?”¹¹⁴ Displaying the trauma of soldiers and victims could bring audiences closer to understanding the ramifications of war, but it needed to be done carefully in order not to overwhelm or frighten the visitors.¹¹⁵

In the end, each military museum faced the challenge of being a place for remembering, commemorating, and reflection, while also having to keep them clearly separated. A successful military museums needed all of these three elements: “the scholars with their preference for a detached approach, for judgment without instruction of consultation; the museum professional, who value reach and the connective value of culture; and the soldiers with their knowledge, experience, and memories and need for respect for what they have done.”¹¹⁶ A military museum must link both society and the armed forces together; however, the answer to how successfully to accomplish this was not clear yet. In addition, Jay Winter illustrated elements that every military museum should adhere to when representing war. First, they must have had a place that enabled people to contemplate the past quietly without being told that they could share the “experience.” Next, exhibits must maintain an explicitly comparative framework where the broad historical

¹¹³ Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum*, p. 198-199.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹¹⁵ John W. Chambers, *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, (UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 221.

¹¹⁶ Franklin van der Pols, “The Future of Military Museums,” p. 39-40.

narrative of the war was told with all nations shown together. Third, museums should use the space to challenge conventional representations of war and beliefs about its redemptive features. Finally, professionals should challenge the viewer by developing different forms of representations of war in its displays, using signs, symbols, metaphors, and other methods to allow individuals to analyze personally the event.¹¹⁷

Does War Belong in Museums?

The book *Does War Belong in Museums* stated that it was clear that war did belong in museums; however, a clearer answer has yet to be discovered on how it should be represented.¹¹⁸ Harker and Vining stated that the field of museum history “has so far had little or nothing to say about military museums. Part of the reason may be the well-known academic distaste for military studies, but the neglect of the history of the military museums may also stem from their origins unlike other museums,” leaving little guidance for military museum professionals.¹¹⁹ As Edward Linenthal discussed in *Preserving Memory*, war was an expansive, complex, and multi-faceted topic that was problematic to contain within a finite space like a museum exhibit.¹²⁰ As affirmed by Jay Winter, “war museums are about real events that can never adequately describe, not because the designers are limited, but because the subject burst through the limits of any conventional set of parameters to control it.”¹²¹ Therefore, it needed to be determined by museum professionals which stories and aspects of war should be the focus within their exhibits.¹²²

¹¹⁷ Jay Winter, *Remembering War*, p. 226-231.

¹¹⁸ Wolfgang Muchitsch, “The Representation of Violence in Exhibitions,” p. 1.

¹¹⁹ Barton Harker and Margaret Vining, “Military Museums and Social History,” p. 42.

¹²⁰ Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, p. 200.

¹²¹ Jay Winter, “Museums and the Representation of War,” p. 24.

¹²² Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory*, p. 200.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The goal of this research was to address the issue of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war. The definition of sanitization was to make a topic less offensive by limiting, altering, or removing anything, including representations of extreme acts of violence, suffering, or death, which could be considered inappropriate or controversial for the public. The methodology used to gather qualitative data for this study was semi-structured interviews with thirteen open-ended questions organized around four broad research subjects derived from four core research questions, which emerged from the current literature. Eighteen interviews were completed by museum personnel from fourteen military history museums located across the U.S. The following museums agreed to participate in this study:

- National World War I Museum and Memorial, Missouri
- National Vietnam War Museum, Texas
- Flying Heritage Collection, Washington
- National Infantry Museum, Georgia
- Eldred World War II Museum, Pennsylvania
- National WWII Museum, Louisiana
- Museum of Flight, Washington
- Lewis Army Museum, Washington
- American Civil War Museum, Virginia
- Cody Firearms Museum, Wyoming
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, New Jersey
- National Museum of the Marine Corps, Virginia
- U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Maryland
- Naval Undersea Museum, Washington

Four core research questions emerge from the current literature and data analysis that shaped the direction and structure of this study.

- What are the processes or policies that help determine what information should go into a war exhibit and who is involved?

- In what ways, do military history museums avoid or actively sanitize war within their exhibits? What are the reasons for sanitizing warfare in exhibits?
- How do museum professionals think about striking a balance between commemoration and critical analysis when presenting the topic of war?
- To what extent, does the museum staff realize that the matter of the sanitization of war in exhibits exists, and what roles does it play within their institution?

Four broad research subjects were drawn from those initial research questions:

- Museum policies and processes
- Visitor sensitivities
- Commemoration and critical analysis
- The practice of sanitization

Participant Selection

The sample set of museums selected for this survey included fourteen military museums.

Selection was based on the following criteria:

- Must be a military history museum or discuss relevant military topics
- Must have professional staff qualified to discuss their institution's exhibition development process and philosophy
- Must fulfill a geographic distribution profile
- Must have current military history themed exhibits
- Must relate to one of the four focuses, described below

Each museum used for the study was found through online internet searches. One institution, the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, was recommended by Pacific Studio in Ballard, Washington. Participating military history museums were categorized into five groups:

- War-specific museums: [focus solely on a specific war or conflict]
 - American Civil War Museum in Virginia
 - National World War I Museum in Missouri
 - Eldred World War II Museum in Pennsylvania
 - National Vietnam War Museum in Texas
 - Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center in New Jersey
- Soldier focused museums: [located on military bases, mission of telling the stories of the ordinary soldier]
 - National Infantry Museum in Georgia
 - Lewis Army Museum in Washington
- Military branch museums: [focused on the history, mission, and future of a specific branch within the military]
 - National Museum of the Marine Corps in Virginia
 - U.S. Naval Academy Museum in Maryland
- War technology museums: [focused on a specific technology used during a war and analyzes its history and evolution over time]
 - Flying Heritage Collection in Washington
 - Cody Firearms Museum in Wyoming
 - U.S. Naval Undersea Museum in Washington
- General museum departments: [focus on the exhibit development and education departments to analyze how exhibits are created and how visitors are taught about war]
 - Museum of Flight in Washington
 - National WWII Museum in Louisiana

These groupings matter to the methodology in order to ensure that all types of military museums were interviewed.

The participants selected from the sample set of museums was based on the following criteria:

- Individual qualified to answer questions related to general museum curation and exhibit policies, interpreting difficult stories, visitor sensitivities, and the balancing of critical analysis.
- Curators and exhibit-developers preferred, but job title was not critical.

The head of the curatorial and exhibit development departments at each site was contacted in an email, and was asked to participate in a phone or in-person interview, depending on their location. At least one individual from each site was interested in participating in the interview. The time and mode of interview were set depending on the individual's schedule and the museum's location. Participants included one archivist, a communications director, two directors, an associate vice president of education and access, four exhibit-developers, and nine curators.

Interview Guide and Data Collection

Interviews took place via phone, email, or in-person. The interview guide contained thirteen questions related to the topics of general museum curation and exhibit policies, interpreting difficult stories, visitor sensitivities, and balancing critical analysis and commemoration. Interviews lasted between 40 and 90 minutes, and were recorded on a hand held tape recorder. The recorders were stored on a password protected personal computer, along with the transcripts. At the end of this study, all recorders and transcripts will be permanently deleted from the computer. Discussions were guided by a set of questions that were open-ended, semi-structured and emergent. Participants were encouraged to bring up their own ideas during the interview, as long as they answered all interview guide questions to ensure that all topics were addressed. Due to time constraints, four participants whose interviews exceeded the 60-minute mark were unable to respond to all interview guide questions. The interview guide is located in Appendix 2, page number 92.

Data Analysis

Following the completion of the eighteen interviews, the audio recordings of the interviews from a digital hand recorder were transcribed. The answers from the National Vietnam War Museum's communications director and the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum's

curator were exceptions as they were sent by email. The interview guide's questions were organized into four broad research subjects: museum policies and processes, visitor sensitivities, commemoration and critical analysis, and the practice of sanitization. These research subjects were broadly related to the core thesis research questions, but addressed more specific aspects of them. Utilizing Word documents, the answers from all of the interviews were organized under the appropriate research question. The relevant research questions and responses were then organized under the broad subject areas that they referenced. A lettering system was utilized in order to connect the data to the appropriate interview (see Appendix 3b, page 96 for the lettering system list).

As the data was reviewed, key words and phrases emerged and provided a means of identifying patterns and/or classifications of themes. This system of emergent analysis was used to code data from the interview responses (see Appendix 3a, page 95 for the list of emergent code words and/or phrases). The coding of data, the identification of key words and phrases, resulted in multiple themes, which served as the analytical findings for the research data (see Appendix 3b, page 96 for an example of the coding process). The following chapter, Chapter Four: Results and Discussion was organized by research subject and then by theme.

Limitations

There were two limitations to this study. The first limitation was the sensitive nature of the process of sanitization in military history museums. The second limitation was the small sample of size of institutions and interviewees.

Chapter Four: Results and Discussion

This chapter sought to present, analyze and explain the findings and results of the data compiled through interviews with eighteen museum professionals at fourteen military history museums. Data addressing the thirteen interview questions was organized into four research subjects derived from the four core research questions. This chapter began with a brief introduction to each site, including mission statements and background information on interviewed individuals, and then presented the findings and results according to each research subject. The fourteen military history museums chosen for this research study included the following:

- National World War I Museum and Memorial, Missouri
- The National Vietnam War Museum, Texas
- The Flying Heritage Collection, Washington
- The National Infantry Museum, Georgia
- Eldred World War II Museum, Pennsylvania
- The National WWII Museum, Louisiana
- Museum of Flight, Washington
- Lewis Army Museum, Washington
- American Civil War Museum, Virginia
- Cody Firearms Museum, Wyoming
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, New Jersey
- The National Museum of the Marine Corps, Virginia
- U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Maryland
- Naval Undersea Museum, Washington

Institution Descriptions:

National World War I Museum and Memorial: A WWI focused institution located in Kansas City, Missouri. Their mission statement is: “America's leading institution dedicated to remembering, interpreting and understanding the Great War and its enduring impact on the

global community.” They are also home to the Liberty Memorial that honors all who served in the war.¹²³

Interviewed were Senior Curator Doran Cart and Archivist and Edward Jones Research Center Manager Jonathan Casey. While Cart is involved in all aspects of museum collections, he works mainly with three dimensional materials and on exhibitions with Casey. Casey manages the research center, the two dimensional collection, and the registrar.

The National Vietnam War Museum: A Vietnam focused institution located in Weatherford, Texas. The museum was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) private, nonprofit corporation in 1999 to “promote an understanding of the Vietnam Era, while honoring those who served,”¹²⁴ according to their mission. It was meant to engage diverse audiences and designed to tell the unbiased and balanced story of everyone involved in the Vietnam war including Americans who served, supporters of the conflict, the Vietnamese people and those on the home front. This is the first national venue dedicated to examining the legacy of the Vietnam War in the United States.¹²⁵

Interviewed was the Communications Director and Board of Directors Member Edward T. Luttenberger who is in charge of creating press releases, developing advertisements, answering inquires, and serving as the resident amateur historian. He served for over eight years on active duty in the U.S. Army with two tours in Vietnam, first as an enlisted man and then as an officer with the rank of Captain.

¹²³ “About Us,” The National World War I Museum and Memorial, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://www.theworldwar.org/about-us>.

¹²⁴ “About the National Vietnam War Museum,” The National Vietnam War Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.nationalvnwarmuseum.org/the-museum-today.html>.

¹²⁵ “About the National Vietnam War Museum,” The National Vietnam War Museum.

The Flying Heritage Collection: An aviation technology focused museum in Everett, Washington. A collection of rare military aircraft, which comprises artifacts from Germany, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Microsoft co-founder Paul G. Allen loaned his WWII aircraft collection to develop this institution. The institution does not have an official mission statement; however, they are guided by four primary functions: investigating and acquiring identifiable aircraft and military equipment, restoring aircraft to working condition, sharing the artifacts with the public, and maintaining working aircraft for the future.¹²⁶ Flying Heritage Collection is committed to educating the public about historic aircraft from across the world and the aviation technologies of the 1930s and 1940s. It is operated by Friends of Flying Heritage, a 501(c)(3) organization.¹²⁷

Interviewed was Curator Cory Graff who is in charge of the archives, developing exhibits, and working with the public by giving lectures and talks at special events.

The National Infantry Museum: A museum focused on the U.S. Infantry, located in Columbus, Georgia. Their mission is to “provide education and training to soldiers, families, and the general public on all facets of the history of the United States Infantry, the origin and development of Fort Benning, and an overview of the U.S. Army.” It preserves and displays one of the greatest collections of military artifacts in the world, but “it is a museum of people, not things.” The museum does not receive federal, state, or city funding. The U.S. Army reimburses the Museum’s Foundation for approximately 30 percent of the museum’s annual operating

¹²⁶ Cory Graff, e-mail message to author, May 24, 2016.

¹²⁷ “About FHC,” The Flying Heritage Collection, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.flyingheritage.com/TemplateMain.aspx?contentId=38>.

expenses, with the rest coming from donations, memberships, and attractions. It serves as one of the Army's largest institutions.¹²⁸

Interviewed was Arms Curator Jefferson C. Reed whose primary responsibility is for the accountability and curation of the firearms collections, but is also responsible for all of the historic property due to a small staff. He is also involved in the large exhibit project that is currently taking place.

Eldred World War II Museum: A WWII focused Museum in Eldred, Pennsylvania. Their mission statement is to preserve and interpret the war's history, to commemorate the contribute of 40 million Americans that supported the soldiers, and to help shape a stronger future by helping present and future generations understand the 20th century lessons.

Interviewed was Director Steve Appleby who began as a promotions person, then curator, and finally as director and now who does the jobs of all three positions. He is responsible for the everyday running of the museum, including leading tours, intake of artifacts, and preservation work. Previously to this position, he spent 28 years in the Army.

The National WWII Museum: A WWII institution in New Orleans, Louisiana. Its mission to tell "the story of the American Experience in the war that changed the world- why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today- so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn." Originally founded in 2000 as the D-day Museum, the museum is now the top-rated tourist destination in New Orleans and is designated by Congress at the official WWII museum of the U.S. The museum has a national charter from

¹²⁸ "About Us: Our Mission, Our Story, Our Team," The National Infantry Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://nationalinfantrymuseum.org/about/>.

Congress but they are an independent, non-profit.¹²⁹ They are currently in the process of a large exhibit project.

Interviewed was the Associate Vice President of Education and Access Owen Glendening who is responsible for contents, which includes provisions of curatorial services, research, archives, history, education, and exhibitions.

Museum of Flight: An aviation and space technology focused institution in Seattle, Washington. Its mission statement is “to acquire, preserve, and exhibit historically significant air and space artifacts, which provide a foundation for scholarly research, and lifelong learning programs that inspire an interest in and understanding of science, technology, and the humanities.” It began in 1964 with a small group of aviation enthusiasts who established the Pacific Northwest Aviation Historical Foundation whose twin goals were to save significant aircraft and related aircrafts and educate the public about their importance.¹³⁰

Interviewed was the Director of Exhibits Chris Mailander, exhibit developer Peder Andreas Nelson, exhibit developer and adjunct curator for space history Geoff Nunn, and assistant exhibit developer Cody Othoudt. Chris runs the department where they create their own exhibits and host traveling exhibits.

Lewis Army Museum: An Army museum located on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Washington. This museum is the only certified U.S. Army Museum on the West Coast. It has the mission of preserving historic artifacts relevant to Camp Lewis, Fort Lewis, the Army

¹²⁹ “About the National WWII Museum in New Orleans,” The National WWII Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/about-the-museum/?referrer=https://www.google.com/>.

¹³⁰ “About the Museum,” The Museum of Flight, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://www.museumofflight.org/about>.

component of Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), and the units that have served there. They educate both military professionals and the public.¹³¹

Interviewed was Curator Heidi K. Pierson who handles collection management, exhibit design, and outreach and education. She previously worked with the Forest Service and then for the National Park Service at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

American Civil War Museum: A museum focused on the Civil War, located in Richmond, Virginia. Its mission is to “be the preeminent center for the exploration of the American Civil War and its legacies from multiple perspectives: Union and Confederate, enslaved and free African Americans, soldiers, and civilians.”¹³² The museum was founded in 1891 by the Daughters and Wives of Former Confederate Leaders, and opened in 1896. A part of the institution is the White House of the Confederacy, which was leased to the Confederate government to be used as the executive mansion when the capital moved to Richmond in 1861.¹³³

Interviewed was Curator Cathy Wright whose current primary responsibility is to research and work on a new permanent exhibition for the new museum facilities that will be constructed in the next few years. Her other duties are to work on temporary exhibitions; care for artifacts; complete research on new donations; work on inventorying and cataloging the object collections, archives, and library; and give tours as needed.

Cody Firearms Museum: A firearms focused institution located in Cody, Wyoming. It is a part of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, which has the mission “to inspire, educate, and engage global audiences through an authentic experience with the American West.” The

¹³¹ “Lewis Army Museum,” The Lewis Army Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/dptms/museum/museum.htm>.

¹³² “Our Mission,” American Civil War Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://acwm.org/about-us/our-mission>.

¹³³ “Our History,” American Civil War Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://acwm.org/about-us/our-story>.

Firearms Museum is committed to telling the story of the West with the most comprehensive assemblage of American firearms in the world from the sixteenth century to present day.¹³⁴

Currently, the museum is being renovated.

Interviewed was the Robert W. Woodruff Curator Ashley Hlebinsky who is essentially the director of the museum. She deals with the day-to-day operational planning and budgeting, writing grants, design exhibitions, manage the collections, and produce academic fellowships. Presently, she is the project manager for the new museum, which involves writing the exhibits and managing PR for the project.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational

Center: A museum focused on the Vietnam Era, located in Holmdel, New Jersey. Their mission is to “offer a meaningful and engaging experience that recognizes the sacrifices, courage and valor of Vietnam veterans and that encourages and fosters a thorough understanding of the Vietnam Era including the political, historical, social, cultural and military aspects which affected the United States, and especially New Jersey.”¹³⁵ The memorial commemorates the courage shown by all who served in the armed forces during the conflict. The museum provides a means to present factual and unbiased information about the era. The New Jersey Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Foundation was created and incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey as a non-profit corporation.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ “Our Mission- Our Vision- Our Credo,” Cody Firearms Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <https://centerofthewest.org/about-us/mission/>.

¹³⁵ “Mission Statement,” New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.njvvmf.org/mission-statement>.

¹³⁶ “Museum Overview,” New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.njvvmf.org/museum-overview>.

Interviewed was Curator Sarah S. Taggart who is in charge of exhibits, historical research, and programming. She works with school groups and manages volunteers as well as the website.

The National Museum of the Marine Corps: A museum focused on the story of the Marine Corps, located in Triangle, Virginia, this institution's mission statement is to "preserve and exhibit the material history of the U.S. Marine Corps; honor the commitment, accomplishments, and sacrifices of Marines; support recruitment, training, education, and retention of Marines; and provides the public with a readily accessible platform for the exploration of Marine Corps history." It is under the command of Marine Corps University. The museum contributes to the recruitment, training, education, and retention of Marines by informing and inspiring visitors through its exhibits and programming, providing a backdrop for recruitment initiatives, and hosting Marine classes.¹³⁷ Currently, construction has begun on the Final Phase of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. This section will open in phases over a 4-year period with the first phase opening in 2017.

Interviewed was the Deputy Director Charles Grow who is responsible for the everyday museum operations, including managing people, facilities, and operations. Previously, he served as a marine and worked as the assistant arms curator.

U.S. Naval Academy Museum: A Naval museum located in Annapolis, Maryland. This institution's mission statement is "to collect, preserve, and exhibit the artifacts and art that are the physical heritage of the U.S. Navy and the Naval Academy in order to instill in Midshipmen a knowledge of the history and heritage of the U.S. Navy and the Naval Academy." In addition, they strive to supplement the instruction of all academic Academy departments, and to

¹³⁷ "A Monument to Honor, Courage, and Commitment," National Museum of the Marine Corps, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.usmcmuseum.com/index.html>.

demonstrate to the public the contributions of Academy graduates. Finally, they motivate in young people a desire to join the Brigade of Midshipmen. It tells the story of the history of sea power, the development of the Navy, and the role of the Academy in producing efficient officers.¹³⁸

Interviewed was Senior Curator James W. Cheevers who reviews offers of gifts, researches their value to the collection, checks their authenticity, and processes new acquisitions. In addition, he proposes new exhibit ideas, works in public relations, and serves as a lecturer.

Naval Undersea Museum: A naval technology institution, located in Keyport, Washington. This museum's mission statement is "to preserve, collect, and interpret naval undersea history, science and operations for the benefits of the U.S. Navy and the people of the U.S." It is an accredited museum operated by the U.S. Navy and established in 1979. It is focused on telling the story of the Navy's undersea operations, technology, combat, research, and salvage. The Naval Undersea Museum Foundation is a private, 501(c) (3) non-profit organization whose mission is to obtain and provide financial support for the development of the museum and its programs and exhibits.¹³⁹

Interviewed was Curator Mary Ryan whose responsibilities include exhibit research and development, management of collections, artifact and historical research, and publication. She has worked in the museum field as a curator, interpretative planner, and exhibit developer.

Participants from each military museum were interviewed using the interview guide in Appendix 2, which contains 13 questions designed to elicit information about how these museums consider the concept of sanitization and its effects on the museum field in general.

¹³⁸ "About the Museum," The U.S. Naval Academy Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.usna.edu/Museum/>.

¹³⁹ "History," The U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, accessed April 12, 2016, <http://www.navalunderseamuseum.org/history/>.

Once all the interviews were conducted and transcribed; the researcher coded the transcripts and looked for emergent themes, such as best practices for displaying and interpreting the difficult topic of the horrors of war.

Findings and Results:

Research Subject 1: Museum Policies and Processes

What are the processes or policies that help determine what information should go into a war exhibit and who is involved?

1A. (*For Exhibitors*) When developing an exhibit in which war is a central topic, what policies or processes within your museum do you adhere to when designing a new exhibit? How many people are involved in the exhibit decision-making process?

1B. (*For Curators*) When developing an exhibit in which war is a central topic, what policies or process within your museum do you adhere to when determining what content should be placed in a new exhibit and how it is interpreted? How many people are involved in the curation decision-making process?

2. How do you determine what stories or topics to tell? Do/Have any difficulties or challenges emerged when trying to fit the expansive, complex topic of war into a finite exhibit space?

3. How do you determine what may be considered too inappropriate or controversial to show to the public? Are there any policies in place at your museum that help you deal with this specific issue?

4. What is your personal philosophy on best practices, or best methods to display and interpret war in a museum setting?

To address research subject 1, the first four interview questions were analyzed. They targeted policies or processes that military museums had in place to help determine potential war exhibit topics, and methods that were utilized to ensure that visitors could engage with the subject matter. Coding of relevant responses revealed six themes: A) Personal Judgement with Tough Decisions, B) How to Organize an Exhibit, C) the Importance of Context in the Storyline,

D) the Human Element focus in exhibits, E) Cooperation and the Community, and F) Limitations of Museum Facilities.

A) Judgement: All of the museums stated that they did not have any official, long-term policies and processes in place to assist in handling visitor sensitivities or determining the limit concerning what stories were too harsh or inappropriate to display within an exhibit. Instead, the museums focused on adhering simply to the standard best practices within the general field and relying on their personal judgements to make their decisions.

The majority of the professionals remarked that they were given free rein to create exhibits, and used the guidance of others to assist them whenever they felt that their personal judgement calls were not enough. However, professionals who were under the oversight of a higher organization, such as the Army or the government, understood the specific limitations that this played on their decisions. Those particular professionals did not seem to have had a great deal of encumbrance from this guidance, as they were usually trusted to make their own decisions. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center stated that working in a collaborative environment was important in order to make strong judgement calls. When their permanent exhibit was being developed, the entire staff worked together to analyze everything concerning issues of violence and stereotypes.¹⁴⁰ Guidance from others was a useful tool; however, the professional determined when they wanted the assistance, so they needed to trust themselves and their convictions.

The area that every professional unanimously agreed upon was that their most important tool when trying to make the correct judgement call was their museum's mission statement. As shown above, each museum had a unique mission statement, meaning that each professional

¹⁴⁰ Sarah Taggart, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, New Jersey telephone interview with author, March 1, 2016.

approached their decision-making process differently. With their personalized missions, each museum had a statement on which to base their judgement calls for their specific audience and community.

Even though they were all military museums, they each focused on specific areas within the larger scope of military history, which affected their decisions. For museums that focused on the Vietnam War, they remembered that some aspects of the war were considered offensive due to the political nature of the war. The story remained emotionally raw as it was still considered to be a part of current affairs.¹⁴¹ In the case of the American Civil War Museum, there was less need for judgement calls on the use of atrocity videos in their exhibits due to the greater separation in time. However, they had to be very sensitive and careful in their decision making since each side had their own distinct perspectives on interpreting the war. The way the museum was initially founded, “it was meant to celebrate if not war itself but at least the sacrifices of the people involved.”¹⁴² However, this museum decided that they did not want to continue to perpetuate this focus on the war. Instead, they felt it was better to become more educational and objective and to present the war as a real experience that was often horrendous.¹⁴³ The Museum of Flight stated that it was “sometimes more challenging interpreting war history when the people who participated are still alive and part of that history. As time goes on, memories evolve and stories change, and, at times, are at odds with accepted facts.”¹⁴⁴

According to the analysis of the responses to these four questions, the inherent issues within the distinctive focuses of each institution, it seems that a professional military museum

¹⁴¹ Charles Grow, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, National Museum of the Marine Corps, Virginia telephone interview with author, March 2, 2016.

¹⁴² Cathy Wright, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, American Civil War Museum, Virginia telephone interview with author, February 24, 2016.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, personal interview, Museum of Flight, Washington, February 18, 2016.

professional needed to understand what those issues were and use their personal judgements to determine how they would handle them within their own institutions.

B) Organization: The museum professionals interviewed offered many effective and useful organizational approaches for developing war exhibits. Anniversaries and holidays were helpful in pre-determining when stories should be told. In other circumstances, the museum had a pre-generated list of ideas of potential exhibit topics, engaged in active brainstorming sessions with staff members, or considered an interesting object that was found or donated to the museum to spark an idea. Most of the museums in this study used the method of organizing their stories chronologically, by theaters, or by displaying technological change over time. Developing themes was also beneficial in organizing the stories that needed to be told within the exhibits to enhance the visitors' ability to understand and observe similar, larger concepts together in a single location.

Adding touchstones and personal stories within the larger story context was effective in developing a personal connection between visitors and the past. The Flying Heritage Museum stated that a bad exhibit was like looking through the Jane's All of the World's Aircrafts, an encyclopedia of airplane statistics, which was simply full of countless, dry facts and figures that would drive visitors away. A good exhibit needed a hook or an overall lesson in order to engage people before being brought into the broader narrative.¹⁴⁵

Along with this, a museum professional needed to balance the stories that were told in the exhibits so that not all of them were about battles. There were many different aspects of war beyond the fighting, including the home front, civilians, children, and race.¹⁴⁶ A good exhibit

¹⁴⁵ Cory Graff, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, Flying Heritage Museum, Washington personal interview, Northgate Mall, February 6, 2016.

¹⁴⁶ Cathy Wright.

included stories from several of these different categories so that no one felt excluded or overlooked and so that visitors would leave having a larger understanding of the impacts of war on different aspects of society.

This did pose a challenge of needing to incorporate countless diverse stories within a single exhibit or series of exhibits. According to the American Civil War Museum,

with digital technology, there is a bit more [professionals] can do now with kind of nesting information within interactives or computers rather than having it all printed out on banners or as conceptual labels. With computers and touch screens, it has helped in many ways to condense a lot of the information that otherwise have to be written out everywhere.¹⁴⁷

A museum professional must understand how much space was available to them and did their best to highlight the main story points within that space. After that,

use your AV media to deepen that, use your programming to add depth to that, use your docent led tours to layer on additional information. Exhibits themselves are only capable of telling x amount of story, where you get more mileage out of that is by layering on information through the audio tour, AV media, docent led tours, and special topic guides that the Museum produces.¹⁴⁸

More information could be added for the visitors who wanted to delve deeper into the history without taking up additional space, and supplementary diverse stories actually had an outlet in the exhibit. Thus, according to the responses to the interview questions, several avenues and approaches could be used to help professionals condense the large war story without omitting crucial components of it.

Similarly, it was also crucial to understand current events when attempting to determine the next exhibit topic, as a museum should tell the story that was relevant to visitors who were actively dealing with or trying to comprehend a particular situation. For example, the American Civil War Museum understood that the notion of the Confederacy and its symbols had become a

¹⁴⁷ Cathy Wright.

¹⁴⁸ Charles Grow.

more prominent discussion in society, so they decided to conduct a temporary exhibit on various Confederate flag designs. With this exhibit, they were trying to connect the past and present to help visitors find personal connections to the subject. When dealing with current events, museums should remain objective and analytical in order to avoid potential hostilities or backlash from people who may be emotionally involved with the subject.¹⁴⁹ An interesting system used by the National Museum of the Marine Corps was to utilize “advance organizers” for each of the war specific galleries to offer background information concerning the war and gave visitors a global sense of what was happening. For their Vietnam gallery, however, they decided that a different approach needed to be utilized since the war remained too much a part of current events. The exhibit instead stationed the “advance organizers” to the end of the exhibit and included a home front display of a television store. This gave visitors a sense of the entire era and left it up to the visitors to interpret the story and come away with whatever conclusions they wanted while walking through the gallery.¹⁵⁰ The museum understood the sensitivities surrounding the war and discovered an organizational way to allow visitors an opportunity to think critically without being given any answers initially. The responses of the professionals to the first four interview questions suggested that the type of military museum played a significant role in the organizational structure of the exhibits and the specific stories within them. For instance, the National Museum of the Marine Corps had to display multiple wars within the galleries of one building. The galleries currently being worked on cover the years 1976 to the present. These galleries are roughly the same footprint as the galleries on WWI and WWII. In essence, six years of war has the same amount of space as forty years of war. In a comprehensive museum such as the National Museum of the Marine Corps, it was complicated to treat each

¹⁴⁹ Cathy Wright.

¹⁵⁰ Charles Grow.

war the same given the limitations of space and the availability of artifacts from modern wars. Collections for WWI and WWII were expansive; however, it was difficult to gather artifacts and documents from wars that were ongoing. According to one respondent, some military museums, such as aviation institutions, had the easier task of not having to tell a comprehensive war history, and could simply tell the story of technological change over time.¹⁵¹

The methods and approaches used to organize a balanced war exhibit could also be effective in inserting difficult stories and issues within the larger context of war to make them less uncomfortable and overpowering. In keeping with the data acquired from the interviews, the respondents suggested caution and careful planning as difficult images or stories were incorporated into exhibitions. Observation of visitors' reactions was important so that visitors were given ample warning about anything that might be horrific in subject or offend their sensitivities. Pursuant to the interview responses, the horrific aspects of war should not be excluded from the story since they were a crucial component of the history; instead, it was best to work them into the exhibit carefully while ensuring that only enough were included in the display so that they would not overwhelm the visitors, but still illustrate the history.

As noted by the respondents, the issue of organization of such a broad, massive topic was important, especially when trying to determine what stories should be told, what the visitors need to know, and in what order everything should be exhibited. There was general agreement that they understood that it was impossible to tell the entire war story in one gallery space or institution. Instead, they used war as their framework and bookended their stories by two fixed points, the beginning and the end. Using this framework, the museum applied it to their specific

¹⁵¹ Cory Graff.

mission and then combined the story with the available material culture. In this way, their mission helped to simplify and limit the war story to a more manageable level for the museum.

C) Context and the Storyline: In terms of the storyline, every museum professional agreed that it was their duty to ensure that information within the exhibits was factual. According to the respondents, truthfulness was critical to the storyline. If the facts were difficult to decipher, professionals should not pick one set of facts over another. Present both sides without bias. In addition, filtering out cultural or personal biases was important to ensure that the story being presented was not skewed. Along with the facts, an exhibit needs to be interesting and captivating for the visitors. As the National WWII Museum stated, “it's all about engaging and compelling storytelling that conveys the difficulty of the challenge, the horrors of the experience, and the lessons learned by individuals and society at large.”¹⁵²

Many of the interviewed museum professionals understood the significance of placing their artifacts into a larger context. The Cody Firearms Museum simply placed guns on their walls and had people view and enjoy them with little interpretation. The curator stated that it worked for them; however, they decided that they needed to add additional context in order to ensure that the deeper history was being understood by the visitors. Without historical context that discuss the larger war history, the exhibit was just a bunch of weapons and artifacts that had no connections to each other or to the visitors.

Similarly, the professionals agreed that military museums should not be afraid or shy away from telling the complete story, even the horrific and difficult aspects of it. Show the “warts and all” noted Edward Luttenberger, for “no knowledge can be gained by watering down

¹⁵² Owen Glendening, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, National World War II Museum, Louisiana telephone interview with author, February 17, 2016.

the realities or trying to rewrite history to suit current attitudes.”¹⁵³ In the opinion of the interviewees, visitors needed to understand that war was terrible and should not be used unless as a last resort. The violence and horrors of war was to be integrated into the storyline, not just placed in the exhibit without context. The Cody Firearms Museum’s curator stated that she “would hazard against doing a separate exhibit on violence and death because those things are integral to the storyline so you can better need to explain them in a context when you separate you glorify it and when you find a way to tell it within a storyline, people get it

At the National Marine Corps Museum, they focused on both the negative and positive aspects of the military branch because they were not afraid to tell the whole story. That was the only way that soldiers in training could learn.¹⁵⁴ Many interviewees agreed that they appreciated the work that the National Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. did and wanted to follow its example. The museum was effective in providing visitors with the background of the event, describing the heinous nature of the Holocaust and confronting visitors with the horrors in a way that was not gratuitous. If the horrors were too gratuitous, then the museum would lose visitors. According to Glendening, there needed to be honest, unvarnished portrayals of the horrors of war, but to pile it on caused people to leave and nothing would be accomplished.¹⁵⁵ Ryan of the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum advised, “Let the research, information, and artifacts drive the content while being careful to ensure that professionals are not dramatizing or obscuring aspects of the story.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Edward Luttenberger, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, National Vietnam War Museum, Texas email interview, January 18, 2016.

¹⁵⁴ Charles Grow.

¹⁵⁵ Owen Glendening.

¹⁵⁶ Mary Ryan, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, Washington email interview, March 9, 2016.

D) The Human Element: The majority of the museum professionals in this study realized that exhibits should be based on personal narratives in order to give a human element to a storyline and experience that visitors connected to on an emotional level. Focusing on human stories was beneficial because war was a human endeavor that always generated stories of people. Personal stories were the building blocks in understanding the bigger picture. For the National World War I Museum, the “guiding principle of all of [their] exhibitions are the humans that were in the war, the people that were involved in the war. They are always our guides, they are always the ones who are telling is which direction to go.”¹⁵⁷ The professionals of this study accepted that they could not tell the vast, epic scale of war within the finite spaces of a museum. Therefore, the intimate, human element was utilized to connect with visitors on a personal level. The human element needed to be incorporated respectfully and thoughtfully.

E) Cooperation and the Community: According to the American Civil War Museum, if the museum wanted to be relevant to their visitors, they needed to appreciate the public’s diverse perspective and involved them in the process of presenting war stories in exhibits. However, the first line of defense was still the professional’s own digression and beyond that, they had the guidance of their director or superiors.¹⁵⁸ The National Museum of the Marine Corps, the Cody Firearms Museum, and Flying Heritage Collection all discussed how outside perspectives could be invited in by the professionals to provide guidance when deemed necessary. The professionals decided if the given advice fits within the museum’s mission, and if it could be followed.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, National World War I Museum, Missouri telephone interview with author, February 3, 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Cory Graff.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Grow, Cory Graff, and Ashley Hlebinsky, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, Cody Firearms Museum, Wyoming telephone interview with author, February 26, 2016.

As discussed by the Cody Firearms Museum, it was important to know the community and environment that the museum exists within, and integrate the institution within it.¹⁶⁰ For example, the Lewis Army Museum is located in the middle of a military base. Through their experience in that location, the institution learned that they could not always do everything the base wanted them to do; they tried to help them where they could and retain a diplomatic balance. As the museum stated, “a good relationship will be embraced with appreciation and respect making for a strong community and museum.”¹⁶¹ A good method for building this strong relationship was to allow the community to have had a voice in how the stories were told and presented.

At the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the American Civil War Museum, and the Flying Heritage Collection, exhibit developers and curators invited other staff members, especially education and marketing staff, to participate in exhibit decisions in order to gain diverse perspectives and ensure that the majority of the staff of the institution agreed with the final decisions.¹⁶² As noted by U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, staff members sometimes became too close to the content of their exhibits, so other staff or outside experts reviewed exhibit scripts to help ensure neutrality.¹⁶³ For many of the professionals in this study, if there were serious issues with a topic, they went to their Board for assistance.

Interest groups and in-house committees were both shown by the Cody Firearm Museum to be effective exhibit review systems. An approach taken by American Civil War Museum was to start with a relatively small exhibit piece which could begin with an idea from a person or a

¹⁶⁰ Ashley Hlebinsky, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, Cody Firearms Museum, Wyoming telephone interview with author, February 26, 2016.

¹⁶¹ Heidi Pierson, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, personal interview, Fort Lewis Army Museum, Washington, February 19, 2016.

¹⁶² Doran Cart, Jonathan Casey, Cathy Wright, and Cory Graff.

¹⁶³ Mary Ryan.

team of people, and then had it reviewed by multiple other groups in order to receive different perspectives concerning it. The American Civil War Museum had a team of historians review their exhibits to ensure they met rigorous academic standards. They also engaged a team of teachers and educators from the community to ensure they were hitting their educational goals and for sensitivity reasons for children.¹⁶⁴ For the Cody Firearms Museum, they possessed an exhibition committee who reviewed any potential exhibit topics. In addition, they utilized a panel system where they had different audiences voice their opinions including pro-gun groups, anti-gun groups, the gun industry, academics, military people, and others.¹⁶⁵ This system helped the museum find the middle ground in order to avoid leaning too heavily to one side or the other, and to understand reactions to the subject matter.¹⁶⁶

As discussed by the Lewis Army Museum, it was important to remember that everyone has an opinion they wanted to share or had displayed, but that it was impossible to please everyone.¹⁶⁷ For example, veterans develop emotional ties to the technology and tools that they used during a war, which made working with some artifacts delicate. At the Museum of Flight, professionals wanted to create an interactive for a YO-38, a silent nighttime surveillance aircraft, where visitors could hear the engine's noise (the plane could be heard at ground level, but not in the air). When former pilots were asked for assistance, they became very upset because they firmly believed that the plane was always silent and could not be recorded.¹⁶⁸ There was no way that the museum could make the pilots happy while also adhering to their mission of telling the factual history of aviation.

¹⁶⁴ Cathy Wright.

¹⁶⁵ Ashley Hlebinsky.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Heidi Pierson.

¹⁶⁸ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

Some military museums operated under the command of military branches such as the National Infantry Museum, the Lewis Army Museum, the National Museum of the Marine Corps, the Naval Undersea Museum, and the U.S. Naval Academy Museum. With this, it was necessary for them to understand the mission of the military branch, the military branch's plans for accomplishing it, and the military branches connection to and influence on the museum's own mission.¹⁶⁹ Under command influence, the National Infantry Museum could not show imagery of soldiers that were in partial uniform or in a modified uniform. They "almost want these cookie-cutters, public affair images and combat does not happen that way. Soldiers roused about this a bit."¹⁷⁰ The museum had to find a balance between showing soldiers honestly to appeal to their soldier audience while maintaining a certain amount of conformance to the desires of their command structure. Similarly, for the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, they "cannot use any information that is classified or restricted from public release, which could eliminate a possible subject."¹⁷¹ Museum professionals in this situation needed to comprehend the level of supervision and limitations that the chain of command had over them.

F) Museum Facilities: The U.S. Naval Undersea Museum discussed that a large limitation for professionals was fitting all of the historical background and key events of war into a restricted space.¹⁷²

Another challenge was the need for a strong collection in order to tell specific stories as efficiently and effectively as possible, as discussed by the National World War I Museum and Memorial.¹⁷³ If there were no suitable artifacts to tell the story, then it could not be told.

¹⁶⁹ Jefferson Reed, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, National Infantry Museum, Georgia telephone interview with author, February 5, 2016.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Mary Ryan.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

Therefore, some important stories were not told as few artifacts [related to that story survived?]. The Museum of Flight does not cover the strategic bombing story from WWII, not because the topic was difficult to discuss, but because of the availability of the appropriate planes in the collection.¹⁷⁴

The facilities could also prove helpful in that electronic media and interactives could be used to help tell the story on a deeper level, according to the American Civil War Museum.¹⁷⁵ In addition, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center discussed how temporary exhibits and programs were beneficial to ensure that visitors were exposed to many different stories; professionals could gage reactions, and address some of the complex subjects that may had been left out in the permanent exhibit.¹⁷⁶

Research Subject 2: Visitor Sensitivities

In what ways, do military history museums avoid or actively sanitize war within their exhibits?

What are the reasons for sanitizing warfare in exhibits?

5. How do you think about, or handle the emotional sensitivities of your visitors with a topic like war, especially those who may have been personally affected by war or know someone who has? How does this influence your exhibit or curation decisions?
6. What are your personal thoughts on how, or if, museums use atrocity imagery in exhibits?
7. Has there ever been an instance within your museum where you had to remove content or images in an exhibit that was deemed inappropriate or controversial for the visitors?

To address research subject 2, the three interview questions were analyzed. The participants were queried regarding how their institutions thought about or handled the emotional

¹⁷⁴ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

¹⁷⁵ Cathy Wright.

¹⁷⁶ Sarah Taggart.

sensitivities of their visitors and the use of atrocity imagery in exhibits. In addition, they were asked whether there were any instances where content was removed due to inappropriateness or controversy. Interview questions five through seven related to these topics. The following six themes emerged from coding: A) Tailoring to Your Audience, B) Effects of the Different Wars on Visitors, C) Handling Offended Visitors, D) How Soldiers Are Affected by Exhibits, E) Comfort Strategies for Visitor Sensitivities, and F) Where the Limit Lies.

A) Tailoring to Your Audience: According to the National World War II Museum, it was crucial that the museum professionals understood their specific audiences. Diversity of visitors was broad among the institutions in this study in terms of age, knowledge, and gender.¹⁷⁷ Many visitors did not have experience with the particular subject matter of these museums, while others were experts; therefore, a balance was needed between the aficionados, enthusiasts, and experts and the novices, while ensuring that the novices received the necessary introduction to help them understand the basics.¹⁷⁸

According to the Eldred World War II Museum, young children should not be exposed to shocking, horrific information. The institution understood that aspects of the WWII story were not always pleasant, but ensured that it did not traumatize kids. Instead, they taught them inspirational stories about heroes, a more appropriate subject for this specific audience.¹⁷⁹ The Lewis Army Museum's primary audience of soldiers and veterans wanted to see the material culture that they used during which war; however, the staff knew that many children came through the exhibits and worked to avoid showing disturbing imagery like dead bodies to remain

¹⁷⁷ Owen Glendening.

¹⁷⁸ Ashley Hlebinsky.

¹⁷⁹ Steve Appleby, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, Eldred Museum of World War II, Pennsylvania telephone interview with author, February 5, 2016.

family-friendly.¹⁸⁰ The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center did not engage children younger than high school age, so that they had an audience that could handle a mature story.¹⁸¹ Finally, at the Eldred World War II Museum, a group of Japanese students visited unannounced. They knew everything about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but nothing about other subjects such as Pearl Harbor, the Rape of Nanking, or Unit 731. When these stories were told to them and they were shocked and stunned, they had not received this information in their country.¹⁸²

B) Effects of Different Wars on Visitors: As stated by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, each war or atrocity had different effects on visitors, changing how each institution approaches their specific exhibits.¹⁸³ For World War I, the National World War I Museum and Memorial noted that there was no one left who had been personally affected by the war; it was a historical event. It became easier to tell the history without being worried of offending or angering people.¹⁸⁴ In contrast, the Museum of Flight noted that World War II museums had to ensure that veterans from the war felt that their stories were being told, and that they were being honored for their service and sacrifice.¹⁸⁵ In contrast, the American Civil War Museum had other difficulties because there were such diverse opinions on the subject, and some people had connections to the war that they took very seriously.¹⁸⁶ According to Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, the Vietnam War was still an open emotional wound for many. This war had yet to

¹⁸⁰ Heidi Pierson.

¹⁸¹ Sarah Taggart.

¹⁸² Steve Appleby.

¹⁸³ Sarah Taggart.

¹⁸⁴ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

¹⁸⁵ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

¹⁸⁶ Cathy Wright.

become comfortably distant in time and remained a part of current events, increasing the difficulty of interpreting the war without causing pernicious emotions.

C) Handling Offended Visitors: As discussed by the Flying Heritage Collection, military museums had to be careful of presenting complex, emotional topics of war, which could potentially offend people.¹⁸⁷ For instance, the Museum of Flight had to deal vandalism by a visitor offended by certain WWII artifacts, a Nazi flag and a tailpiece from a plane with a swastika. Even though aspects of the exhibit offended some visitors, the majority of people understood why the museum chose to include those items in their exhibit.¹⁸⁸ According to the Flying Heritage Collection, today's society is more sensitive and less tolerant of having their opinions challenged than in the past.¹⁸⁹ Military museums had to handle easily offended and/or intolerant visitors. For example, the Flying Heritage Collection understood that some people were angry over the swastikas on their planes; however, it was the museum's mission to restore planes to the way they looked when they were built or in service. For many, it was an objectionable symbol, but the museum made the choice that accuracy trumped emotions.

Currently, the Flying Heritage Museum is considering an exhibit that would contain atomic bomb replicas in it. They knew this was an emotional subject matter, and were now more sensitive and attuned to any potential problems. According to the institution, it was important to be careful and fully prepared as early as possible, and had open discussions with others to determine what could be potentially offensive.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, the Museum of Flight stated that there was a lot of controversy around the attack on Pearl Harbor in WWII concerning how much the government knew prior to the attack. According to the Museum of Flight, a "good way to

¹⁸⁷ Cory Graff.

¹⁸⁸ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

¹⁸⁹ Cory Graff.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

address some controversial topics was not necessarily to present all sides but to tie a particular event or decision to a particular person to help navigate that. If you say that so and so believed that or that the reports suggested, then it was not being presented as fact but as somebody's statement or best understanding of the situation."¹⁹¹ In this way, the museum was not taking sides. The National World War I Museum displayed information about the Armenian massacres by the Turks. A few visiting Turkish officers did not agree with this, but could not argue with it since the museum used Turkish records and reports from the time.¹⁹²

Visitors were also more open to dealing with difficult topics if they had a place to contribute to the conversation. As discussed by the Cody Firearms Museum, "programming can be better than having the topic always within the museum. People cannot ask questions to help understand what was going on. If you do exhibit a difficult topic, have a sound-off board so that people can feel that they can contribute to the conversation and not just be talked at."¹⁹³ In this way, the visitor will be less likely to become overly offended if they feel able to speak openly within the exhibit.

In some circumstances, exhibits that prove controversial could have been handled differently. At the American Civil War Museum, one version of the Confederate flag exhibit had a section that showed how the flag was used in popular culture. There was a mid-1990s drag queen film titled "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar." In the opening, a famous drag queen, RuPaul, wore a full-length sequined Confederate flag gown. The museum professional and the exhibit designer decided to get a life-size image of her in the dress for the exhibit from the film. In early testing, many people found this image to be extremely upsetting

¹⁹¹ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

¹⁹² Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

¹⁹³ Ashley Hlebinsky.

including some individuals who did not like a man wearing a dress and others felt that anyone wearing a flag was a desecration.¹⁹⁴ In the end, it was removed because it was detracting from the story of the exhibition and making people upset. In retrospect, the professionals at the American Civil War Museum wondered if they had scaled down the image, whether it would had been as noticeable or offensive to people. Many people also thought it was fabulous and were sad to see it removed, but they were less vocal. This also demonstrated that sometimes imagery or objects should be removed even if they only caused offense to a few for the good of the exhibit and its message. As the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum's curator stated, her

tipping point would be if [she felt] that the controversy around a subject will dominate or heavily overshadow an exhibit's messages. [She does not] believe in being intimidated or bullied out of doing an exhibit, but once the politics and/or controversy are so large as to drown the exhibit messages, it seems like the exhibit is rendered mostly ineffective anyway.¹⁹⁵

Not only did military museums have to deal with offended visitors, they also needed to handle difficult groups who wanted to work with the museum on terms that were not aligned with the museum. The Museum of Flight had experience dealing with difficult groups who wanted to control the story. The institution "try to get them to understand the Museum's mission and sometimes formalize relationships with a Memorandum of Understanding to agree on roles, responsibilities and obligations between both parties."¹⁹⁶ If the terms of the Memorandum were spelled out clearly, then there were generally no objectionable issues; however, if problems did emerge overtime, the museum used their best judgement and approached the issues in good faith while being willing and open to accommodate the group's wishes when it did not go against the mission.

¹⁹⁴ Cathy Wright.

¹⁹⁵ Mary Ryan.

¹⁹⁶ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

The Eldred World War II Museum, the National Vietnam War Museum, and the American Civil War Museum all stated that they cared more about presenting an accurate storyline than offending a few people. If these museums ultimately determined that something needed to be presented, then they would move forward at the risk of upsetting one of more groups.¹⁹⁷ The Eldred World War II Museum specifically believed that if a museum did not want to shock people and wanted to be politically correct or gloss over certain aspects, then history was going to repeat itself. The next generation was going to be running the country someday, so they needed to know their history and thus, museum professionals could not be afraid to shock or upset them. In some circumstances, the more shocking imagery or objects provide the concepts that had a lasting impact on people. For instance, at the Eldred World War II Museum, the board decided that a human skin lampshade was too horrific to place on display; however, the director had it in a nearby office to show to select visiting groups so that they could be shocked enough to understand why the war was fought.¹⁹⁸ For the National Vietnam War Museum, if it was appropriate to the story the museum was trying to tell, then it was appropriate to show. In addition, sometimes the story cannot be properly told without using some graphic imagery.¹⁹⁹ In the end, many military museums accepted that they were dealing with difficult subject matter and that offending some groups simply came with the territory.²⁰⁰

D) Soldiers and Exhibits: According to the Eldred World War II Museum, soldiers and veterans experienced war firsthand and many were affected physically, mentally, and emotionally by their involvement, making military museums very emotional places.²⁰¹ Museums

¹⁹⁷ Steve Appleby, Edward Luttenberger, and Cathy Wright.

¹⁹⁸ Steve Appleby.

¹⁹⁹ Edward Luttenberger.

²⁰⁰ Sarah Taggart.

²⁰¹ Steve Appleby.

should present and interpret the topic of war within their exhibits, knowing that soldiers and veterans would visit and may have had a certain emotional sensitivity to it. There was no way that a museum could develop a policy to handle this issue, so all the institution could do was to understand why their audience was there. Many soldiers were simply excited to visit a museum and see the equipment and weapons that they used during their tour of duty. However, there were also soldiers suffering from conditions such as PTSD who could have had an attack or flashbacks while in the exhibit. Each museum had their own method for dealing with this matter, depending on its specific audience and focus.

The National Infantry Museum stated that they did not discuss the costs of victory or battle when working with soldiers and their families. According to the institution, there was an unwritten sanitization guideline to allow the museum's exhibits to avoid delving too deeply into certain aspects of war that made soldiers feel unsafe and uncomfortable, while remaining factual.²⁰² The museum was not avoiding difficult topics, but it was approaching them very carefully. According to National Infantry Museum, it was not censorship or distortion; rather a cultural, unwritten editing. On the other hand, other soldiers could be offended by obvious sanitization in exhibits. As the National Infantry Museum noted, they had seen the dark side of war and did not enjoy that they were only being given a clean version of it.²⁰³ These two different but similar segments of a military museum's audience required a great deal of balancing. The Museum of Flight encountered another difficulty when a display of medals bothered veterans because the stars on the medals were not in the right orientation. Based on the responses from these three questions, military museums were responsible for ensuring that the emotions of visitor-soldiers were handled correctly and respectfully.

²⁰² Jefferson Reed.

²⁰³ Ibid.

At the Naval Undersea Museum, “most of the service members that [they] interface with are older, retired sailors who enjoy reminiscing about their service. Their concerns are generally two-fold: ensuring protection of classified information and ensuring their fallen shipmates are honored and remembered.”²⁰⁴ The museum was careful to guarantee that both of these sensitivities were observed, especially the latter. There were thousands of retired sailors in the area, many of whom participated in veterans’ groups. Keeping the memory of their lost peers alive was an important reason those groups existed. They honored lost ships and crews when relevant to an exhibit.²⁰⁵ The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center had an in-memory program that focused on veterans that had passed on because of their service. Soldiers and veterans enjoyed knowing that they had a quiet, reflective location where they could honor and remember these people.²⁰⁶ If a military museum wanted to satisfy their soldier audience, they needed to ensure that their exhibits included the concepts of remembrance and reverence when appropriate.

The American Civil War Museum discovered a strategy of “drawing on the distinct parallels between Civil War veteran’s experiences and current day challenges that are facing modern veterans.” They tried to show veterans that “their experiences may be unique in some ways but they are also a part of a long tradition of past military experience and some of the things that they are feeling and experiencing have been felt by others.”²⁰⁷ The museum hoped that the veterans felt that they were not alone and learned something that brought them some comfort or strength.

²⁰⁴ Mary Ryan.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Sarah Taggart.

²⁰⁷ Cathy Wright.

It was useful that many military museums had veterans working with them, so they had an internal understanding and ability to draw on their personal experiences to determine how to handle topics about war. This ability was useful for to the Eldred World War II Museum when collecting stories from WWII veterans. The veterans had not talked about their experiences in 75 years to anyone, but felt comfortable with the Director of the museum because he knew about the veteran's specific units and had experienced war himself.²⁰⁸ This was useful as military museums served as safe places for veterans to speak openly about their experiences, while the institutions received valuable personal accounts for their exhibits.

E) Comfort Strategies: Military museums found it necessary to discover strategies for young audiences, sensitive people, and soldiers with conditions such as PTSD in order for them to bypass and avoid difficult subjects displayed in the exhibit if needed. Those methods ranged from exhibit organizational or design choices to specific staff and docent training, all of which proved to be effective in protecting all types of visitors.

One method utilized by the Museum of Flight was positioning. For example, the trench part of the WWI gallery in the Museum of Flight had some horrific pictures that were included to reflect some of the realities of trench warfare. The museum decided to position them high in the exhibit so that a young child would not be confronted with it.²⁰⁹ The Museum of Flight also wanted to include noises in the trench scene to make it more immersive and initially had the sound of a man moaning under a plane. It was removed, as a precaution against frightening young children.²¹⁰ According to the Flying Heritage Collection, another option was to bury some distressing facts in other label text that made the facts less glaring and blatant.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ Steve Appleby.

²⁰⁹ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Cory Graff.

According to the National WWII Museum, it was important to train staff and volunteers to handle intense emotional responses from people to the exhibited visuals or messages with respect and caution. The institution understood that many visitors became emotional when learning for the first time the full scope of what their family members went through as a consequence of a war or when a veteran opened up to their family about their war experiences. The museum was aware and sensitive to this and ensured that its floor staff and volunteers were sensitized to the emotional range that visitors could express.²¹² At the National Museum of the Marine Corps, they “try to make [their] staff and docents aware when someone is having an experience, so if it is in the Vietnam gallery and one of the visitors has a flashback or something, the docents will help take them someplace safe.” The majority of docents at this institution were former military personnel or spouses of military personnel, so understood the emotional impact of the subject; they were also emotionally invested in taking care of the visitors and ensuring that they had a safe and comfortable experience.²¹³

The National Museum of the Marine Corps employed a system to ensure that visitors overwhelmed by emotional responses had the ability to avoid or exit areas where difficult subjects were displayed. Where counter insurgency was discussed, the National Museum of the Marine Corps provided two ways for visitors to leave the exhibit quickly. First, there was a bypass that included a disclaimer at the beginning informing people about what they were about to experience and that the bypass was available if desired. The bypass provided the same information as the exhibit without being immersed in it. Next, there was an escape hatch if visitors became overwhelmed in the exhibit. They could exit quickly to a quiet spot where they

²¹² Owen Glendening.

²¹³ Charles Grow.

could be alone.²¹⁴ Contemplative spaces for visitors away from the exhibit were an effective strategy for those who were having a negative reaction to the exhibit. Warnings or disclaimers were also effective systems for handling intense emotional responses, as shown by the Museum of Flight. The institution commissioned three short films for the World Wars that contained gory imagery. Outside the theater, the museum placed a disclaimer to let visitors know about the content and decide for themselves whether they wanted to watch. They also made the conscious choice that the trench exhibit be bypassed easily.²¹⁵

F) Limitations: The National World War I Museum stated that even though it was a part of the fabric of war, they would likely not show the most gruesome images of warfare that they had in their possession. They would retain them within their collections and make them available to researchers and possibly on the website, but would not place on display. In addition, they shied away from anything racist or that showed human violence not war related.²¹⁶ The museum did not censor, but they looked at how best to tell their story.

The U.S. Naval Undersea Museum did not use atrocity images for shock value because it was usually unconstructive. “Gruesome images will catch attention initially but horrifying visitors largely prevents them from absorbing exhibit content or making meaning. Atrocity imagery is best saved for exhibits about subjects that are inescapably and inherently horrifying.”²¹⁷ Decisions made were carefully considered ensuring the best interests of the museum and exhibits, as well as their audiences.

As discussed earlier, limitations were also placed on military museums by their overseers. For example, another museum within the Infantry Museum’s system faced a problem when they

²¹⁴ Charles Grow.

²¹⁵ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

²¹⁶ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

²¹⁷ Mary Ryan.

wanted to incorporate the My Lai Massacre within an exhibit to teach visiting soldiers important lessons from the event. When the command heard about this, they decided to have it completely struck from the storyline. This event was a painful chapter for the Army, so they teach soldiers about it, but were not ready to go public with it.²¹⁸

Research Subject 3: Commemoration and Critical Analysis

How do museum professionals think about striking a balance between commemoration and critical analysis when presenting the topic of war?

8. How does your museum balance commemoration and critical analysis together in an exhibit? Do they ever conflict with one another? What are the best methods for finding a balance?

To address research subject 3, question number 8 was analyzed. The third research subject addressed how each military museum found the balance between commemoration and critical analysis in an exhibit and if they were ever in conflict. The answers provided by the participants fell into six categories: A) the Necessity of a Broad Narrative, B) the Nature of Emotion, C) Importance of Personal Interpretations from Visitors, D) The Concept of Memory in Exhibits, E) the Effects of the Diverse Focus of Museums, and F) How to Balance the Two Ideas.

A) Broad Narrative: According to the National World War I Museum and Memorial, a broad, straightforward narrative was crucial since the entire war story cannot be told in the exhibit, but the visitors needed to understand at least the basic understanding of the war.²¹⁹ Any aspect of critical analysis was left up to museum programming where visitors learned more on their own. The exhibits were not devoid of critical analysis but the exhibits were more focused

²¹⁸ Jefferson Reed.

²¹⁹ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

on telling a broad story that was to appeal to many different, diverse audiences.²²⁰ Similarly, the National WWII Museum believed they had “the interpretive responsibility to tell the American experience of the war in its broadest form in our galleries.”²²¹ For military museums, the focus was on contextualizing the story, rather than critically analyzing the war.

B) The Nature of Emotion: Commemoration generated a range of emotions in people, causing military museums to ensure that deserving individuals and groups were honored and remembered while not sacrificing the historically accurate storyline. According to the Eldred World War II Museum, emotion could not be left out of the exhibits due to the nature of the subject and the role it played on the battlefield: thus, museum professionals needed to determine how they handled emotion, and what role emotion and commemoration should play in their institutions.²²²

According to the Flying Heritage Collection, there was an underlying cultural pro-U.S. sentiment that thrived on commemoration and existed in the minds of many who grew up in this country. The institution stated that “you can go in and say that Douglas MacArthur was the conquering hero of the Pacific but when you really look into him, he was really an arrogant fathead... people will get offended because you are not following the doctrine that has been hammered into them for 25 years of commemorating.”²²³ This contradiction demonstrated how deeply embedded emotion and cultural sentiments were detrimental to ensuring that an accurate story was presented. The National Infantry Museum also discussed the natural, broader cultural process that occurred in the United States causing [military?] museums to naturally sanitize some

²²⁰ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

²²¹ Owen Glendening.

²²² Steve Appleby.

²²³ Cory Graff.

topics in order to adhere to the culturally accepted beliefs. When institutions or individuals crossed that line, they were quickly faced with public backlash.

Commemoration and memorialization played different roles in specific museums. The National WWII Museum had an engraved bricks program and honor rolls where people could honor their forbears. All military holidays were taken seriously with public commemoration ceremonies at the museum. For them, commemoration was more for individuals whose families wanted to see them remembered and honored.²²⁴ The Museum of Flight did not “put memorials within its thematic exhibits as they are not necessarily telling the history, but often are expressing a romantic interpretation based on emotional motivations...the Museum wants visitors to feel comfortable that what they are seeing in front of them is trustworthy in a factual way.”²²⁵ A system utilized by the museum was to keep memorials outside of the building and separate from the exhibits to ensure that visitors felt their expectations were recognized while maintaining the integrity of the exhibits.²²⁶

Some backlash could occur when visitors did not observe the level of memorialization that they expected within a museum. The American Civil War Museum has gone from being a commemorative institution to becoming more analytical. However, some visitors were upset that the museum changed their tone and no longer applauded Confederate figures. Some of them had an ancestor who was a Confederate soldier or a slave owner. To have their ancestors analyzed rather than memorialized was considered a personal attack on their family and heritage. As noted by the museum, all that a professional could do was to be sensitive to that perspective, but not to kowtow to it.²²⁷

²²⁴ Owen Glendening.

²²⁵ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Cathy Wright.

Similarly, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center had frequent conflicts with visitors who had family members featured on the memorials and wanted even more. A UH-1 Huey on display purposefully did not have a unit crest on it in order to be representative of all Hueys. The museum received numerous angry comments. Staff understood that a larger, contextual story could not be told while focused on only one or two people. However, as a way to compromise and respect people's opinions, staff tried to highlight those individual stories in temporary exhibits or programs. Those individual stories were utilized to tell a small part of a larger context. Staff “have to stand by [their] judgement and keep in mind that [their] job is to present the legacy of everyone who served, and try to balance that conflict, but it is definitely a real struggle and it is constant.” On the other hand, individuals and families asked to share their stories were excited and emotional to do so, showing some of the positive effects of the emotional nature of commemoration.²²⁸

C) Personal Interpretation from the Visitor: According to the Eldred World War II Museum, it was crucial not to have an exhibit that interpreted and analyzed war in such a way that it forced the museum’s perspective and opinions onto the visitors. Professionals looked down upon using exhibits to manipulate a visitor’s beliefs and thoughts.²²⁹ Instead, exhibits should present a broad narrative on the subject matter that presented visitors with enough information to make an educated conclusion based on their personal beliefs and values. According to the National World War II Museum, always “respect the sovereignty of the visitor. Visitors come to the museum on their own terms. They bring their own motivation, understanding, and prejudice with them. We're privileged to intercept them for only a short time and that requires the museum to take responsibility for creating a broader context in which to

²²⁸ Sarah Taggart.

²²⁹ Steve Appleby.

understand the greater story.”²³⁰ It was the museum’s responsibility to ensure that all perspectives were discussed so that visitors might understand every perspective before they draw their own conclusions.

The Eldred World War II Museum knew that most people who walk through their exhibits were intelligent and mature enough to come to appropriate assumptions or conclusions on the subject matter.²³¹ It was the responsibility of the museum to ensure that their interpretation happened on multiple levels, so that different audiences could come away with a deeper understanding on the issue.²³²

D) Concept of Memory: According to the National WWII Museum, there were actually three aspects that every military museum exhibit should consider when creating an exhibit: interpretation, commemoration, and memory. The museum told the story of WWII in its broadest format, commemorated the war when appropriate, and discussed how the war was remembered. As the WWII generation aged and began to pass away, the more the individual and familial ties were reduced. Therefore, it became important to understand how the memories of war developed as a part of the civic discourse. One element of memory, how the war was collectively remembered and relayed to the next generation, was key to the development of military museum exhibits.²³³ This element was as crucial as interpretation and commemoration because museums needed to know how to connect those memories to future audiences in a way that would continue to have an impact on their lives. The idea of memory was not directly discussed by other military museums; however, it raised a question that will need to be considered and answered by every institution in the future in order to remain relevant.

²³⁰ Owen Glendening.

²³¹ Steve Appleby.

²³² Charles Grow.

²³³ Owen Glendening.

E) Diverse Focus of Museums: As stated previously, each military museum had their own unique mission and focus that affected the way that they presented and interpreted war. The National Infantry Museum approached their exhibits as a training aid for soldiers on their base, such as learning doctrines from historical examples. Their version of critical analysis was about improving soldier training and knowledge. In that respect, the museum had fewer problems than other military museums in this study since they were looking at critical analysis from an operational perspective, a less controversial topic.²³⁴ The U.S. Naval Academy Museum stated that it was their “job to recruit and prepare naval officers for the next war so if there are any positive attitudes towards it, try to develop their fearlessness and so forth... That is what people come here to see anyway, they do not come here to see the negative side of war.”²³⁵ Due to their location, the focus was more on commemoration than critical interpretation. The Lewis Army Museum did not go into a great deal of critical examination because their institution focused more on commemoration, although consideration was given to enlisted men as opposed to the officer class. The institution was not specifically celebrating an event, but instead tried to commemorate the soldier’s service in general and it was not within their mission to delve into more difficult concepts of war.²³⁶ They simply wanted it to be a place where veterans felt comfortable, welcomed, and nostalgic.

The American Civil War Museum had a very distinct agenda. They commemorated, celebrated, and preserved the memory of Southern or Confederate soldiers. Over time, they decided to become more objective and educational about their aims and far less celebratory.²³⁷

²³⁴ Jefferson Reed.

²³⁵ James Cheevers, interview by Rebecca Harmsen, U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Maryland telephone interview with author, March 3, 2016.

²³⁶ Heidi Pierson.

²³⁷ Cathy Wright.

They realized the best approach was to ensure the most efficient presentation and interpretation of the Civil War. For technology focused museums such as the Cody Firearms Museum, having a large collection of artifacts, including guns, on display was destined to be commemorative regardless.²³⁸ This demonstrated that each type of military museum approaches was appropriate depending on f the museum’s specific audience, mission, and focus.

F) A Balancing Act: According to the Eldred World War II Museum, finding a balance between commemorative emotion and factual critical interpretation was difficult but feasible.²³⁹ Some institutions find the balance easily, such as the National World War I Museum which simply had exhibits that provided the story and structure of the WWI while connecting it to the present through their memorial with its own story of commemoration to loss and sacrifice.²⁴⁰ Other institutions had a more difficult challenge . An imbalance of the two could prove to be difficult, as shown with the Enola Gay controversy.

Each museum in the study seemed to find their own manner of creating that balance in their exhibits. In terms of finding this balance, professionals simply worked on a case-by-case basis. Through their knowledge of the subject matter and their relationship with their specific audience, the museum professionals interviewed for this study discovered how much commemoration and critical interpretation was necessary for each exhibit.

Research Subject 4: The Practice of Sanitization

To what extent, does the museum staff realize that the matter of the sanitization of war in exhibits exists, and what roles does it play within their institution?

²³⁸ Ashley Hlebinsky.

²³⁹ Steve Appleby.

²⁴⁰ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey.

9. Taking from the literature on this subject, I am defining the act of sanitizing war in exhibits as the process of making a topic less offensive by altering or removing anything, including representations of extreme acts of violence, suffering, and death, which could be considered inappropriate and controversial for the public. How would you personally define this idea of sanitization, in the context of how war is represented in exhibits?

10. Do you think that there are any benefits or problems to sanitizing war in exhibits? If so, what?

11. For the future, what are the best methods for helping military museums handle or manage the issue of sanitization in their exhibits?

12. As a military museum professional, is sanitizing war in exhibits something that is discussed within your museum or within the museum field more widely? If not, should it be?

13. What advice might you have for other military museum professionals who are thinking about this topic as it pertains to their museum work?

To address research subject 4, the last five interview questions were analyzed. This final research subject addressed how each military museum professional would define the topic of sanitization, describe the major benefits or problems associated with it, and advise on best methods for helping other museums manage this issue. Participants were also queried whether they believed that this topic was addressed widely and openly in the museum field and, if not, should it be. Interview questions nine through thirteen directly targeted these topics. While coding, seven themes emerged: A) the Indispensable Museum Cores, B) the Divergent Opinions of Diverse Museums, C) Necessity of Exposing Visitors to the Horrors, D) Remaining Balanced between Sanitized and Gratuitous, E) Abhorrent Practices to Avoid, F) New Definition of Strategic Selection, and G) Open Museum Dialogue on the Topic.

A) Museum Cores: Every museum in this study relied on the concept of trust to provide the public with accurate information in every circumstance. Any institution that created an

exhibit that may not be a factual would lose its credibility in the eyes of its audience. Once an institution lost its credibility, it would be extremely difficult to regain.

According to the Flying Heritage Collection, a museum was

doing a disservice to [their] community if [they] sanitize, censor, or omit intentionally because in the most simplest terms [they] are not telling the truth. As a museum, you are considered the ones who are going to discuss issues without bias, in essence when you go to a museum you think that the information you are getting is well vetted and intelligently presented and does not have spin or an agenda.²⁴¹

Cory Graff also noted that when an institution decided to present a one-sided point of view and wanted to manipulate its audience in one direction, it was like a wolf in sheep's clothing.²⁴² By doing this, the museum was abusing the visitor's trust and using the institution and its status to manipulate the truth and even reality. "Too much sanitization sacrifices truth and authenticity. Over sanitizing hard truths and experiences negates the purposes of remembering and telling this history,"²⁴³ according to the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum.²⁴⁴

B) Divergent Opinions: Divergent opinions was the most evident around the question of sanitization and whether it should be avoided completely or if it was a potentially useful tactic. An interesting dichotomy emerged through the research between the different kinds of military museums. The war-specific museums stated that sanitization was unethical and should not be used in exhibits, as it falsifies history for visitors. The military branch museums were more open to the idea, as they dealt directly with soldiers and their families. Their mission was about preparing future military leaders rather than teaching the darker topics of war. Similarly, the institutions that focused on individual soldiers and honoring them for their service and sacrifice instead of interpreting their actions were more open to some use of sanitization. The war

²⁴¹ Cory Graff.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Mary Ryan.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

technology museums were in the middle in their opinions of sanitization. Most of them discussed how sanitization was not considered a problem for them since they were merely placing objects on display for visitors to enjoy. However, they did understand the importance of context and telling the story beyond a technological framework. In the end, there was no consensus on the use of sanitization.

The Eldred World War II Museum understood that some museums may choose to sanitize to make an exhibit less offensive or shocking to certain sectors of the audience; however, the curator did not see this as a valid enough reason. He stated that he was firmly against it, and had seen examples of it in European museums and in some United States institutions that he found deplorable.²⁴⁵ At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, the professionals interviewed thought that it was irresponsible for a historian to think that they could change historic events to make them less offensive, since it went against the ethics of the history and museum profession.²⁴⁶ The National Vietnam War Museum saw no benefits in the practice, and believed that sanitization “runs the risk of desensitizing the public to the realities of war. It is not the grand, glorious, heroic epic presented by Hollywood.”²⁴⁷ For these institutions, their job was to produce a holistic look at the war that could not be done if aspects of it were sanitized.

All of the museums in this study agreed that whether sanitization was beneficial was case specific. The museums found that sanitization had both positive and negative aspects. “For each institution decisions, the pros and cons should be weighed against each other, and if the pros outweigh the cons then move forward with it.”²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Steve Appleby.

²⁴⁶ Sarah Taggart.

²⁴⁷ Edward Luttenberger.

²⁴⁸ Cathy Wright.

C) Exposure: The majority of museum interviewed including the National Vietnam War Museum, the Eldred World War II Museum, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center, and the National WWII Museum discussed how visitors should be exposed to the terrible aspects of war. They felt that in order to understand fully why war should not be considered a first resort in a conflict and to learn the major consequences it had on countries and individuals, these aspects were crucial.²⁴⁹ “War, by its very nature, consists of extreme acts of violence, suffering, and death. [Professionals] do no service to our visiting public by hiding these facts. While war museums should not be only a ‘chamber of horrors,’ neither should it try to hide the facts that war is an ugly business. Sanitization of the facts of war only serves to desensitize the visiting public to its realities.”²⁵⁰

Visitors could handle the more horrific aspects of war as long as it was presented in a context that connected it all together and gave it meaning. An example that the National WWII Museum gave was the pile of eyeglasses at the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., which provided an indirect reference to the horrors of the Holocaust through the lens of the eyeglasses. It brought the right kind of dramatic tension and context to the storyline that made visitors pause to consider the topic and theme, and the meaning to themselves, their own lives, and the world around them. This was what every institution should strive to accomplish.

D) Remaining Balanced: There has been a great deal of discussion throughout this research about how military museums found a balance in their exhibits. This was especially true in terms of creating an exhibit that was not so sanitized that visitors did not understand the realities of war or too gratuitous that the audience was overwhelmed by the horrors. To achieve balance, methods and practices were suggested by this study’s participants.

²⁴⁹ Edward Luttenberger, Steve Appleby, Sarah Taggart, and Owen Glendening.

²⁵⁰ Edward Luttenberger.

Measures began with the development of the storyline. The storyline developers had to check themselves “when dealing with a controversial topic to not be political in any way, to take kind of a journalist approach where [they] are the impassionate reporter who is getting all their facts straight” and prevent personal biases becoming a part of the exhibit.²⁵¹ The language used within the interpretative materials needed to be carefully scrutinized. The Lewis Army Museum stated that it was important to be aware when writing text of not using adjectives that describe things in a way that glamorizes.²⁵² In addition, putting current values and moral judgements on historical events or on the people who made the decisions at the time should be avoided. An exhibit needed to look at the whole picture and not just a personal viewpoint or bias.

Working in a collaborative environment ensured that the storyline and history was being presented objectively and sensitively, but care should be taken in the selection of consultants. For their first batch of exhibits, the National Museum of the Marine Corps engaged a group of senior advisors that consisted of roughly five, white, retired colonels from the groundside. This group caused the institution to miss many important stories about diversity and faces of color in the military. The lesson the museum learned was that it was beneficial to have a diverse group of advisors. Their new group consisted of enlisted men, general officers, women, and educators of various ethnicities, backgrounds and races. It was critical in helping the museum staff escape their own biases and get fresh, new perspectives, as well as to ensure that no important story was being sanitized or excluded from the exhibit storyline.²⁵³

There were a few technological methods to help ensure that everyone’s sensitivities were recognized without sacrificing the factual storyline in the exhibit. The National Museum of the

²⁵¹ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

²⁵² Heidi Pierson.

²⁵³ Charles Grow.

Marine Corps experimented in their final exhibit phase by using AV media that was age and grade appropriate, so that there would be something for everyone's needs and educators could play whatever was suitable for them.²⁵⁴ According to the American Civil War Museum, technology offered some help because "some potentially disturbing things can be put into some kind of digital component that makes it so people are not confronted with it around a corner but they have to choose to look" at it.²⁵⁵ The Flying Heritage Collection also discussed the possibility of having more interactivity or feedback from people via social media, which could be used as a tool for surveying people on subjects that could become exhibits. Military museums could also test graphic images to determine what to display.²⁵⁶

In permanent exhibits, include graphic imagery and objects, but did so strategically. The Museum of Flight stated that they provided visitors access points for those difficult topics by bringing them up at the beginning of an exhibit, but then provided them with an alternative pathway through the trench exhibit or directions to the theater to gain more knowledge on the subject if they chose.²⁵⁷ Essentially, "the best way to handle the issue of sanitization was to have general parameters in place and then make decisions on a case-by-case basis for each exhibit project... The best way to decide how to handle an individual project is to know the subject matter and story being told as thoroughly as possible; as with most exhibit decisions, the nature of the content should drive the choices that are made."²⁵⁸

E) Abhorrent Practices: A certain level of sanitization could be considered appropriate in specific circumstances. However, all institutions referenced how there were a couple of

²⁵⁴ Charles Grow.

²⁵⁵ Cathy Wright.

²⁵⁶ Cory Graff.

²⁵⁷ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

²⁵⁸ Mary Ryan.

practices that should always be avoided and that only had negative consequences on visitor's experiences in exhibits. They were the fictionalization of history, censorship, overt glorification, and gratuitous exhibits.

F) Strategic Sanitization: As shown, sanitization had both negative and positive implications on the institution and its visitors, depending on the focus and mission of the museum and the amount that it was used in exhibits. Strategic sanitization, the act of consciously employing a certain amount of sanitization within an exhibit, was necessary and advantageous for some institutions. It was “not avoiding topics or trying to skew it toward a certain political, [cultural, or personal] view,” but instead allowed visitors to engage with the content without being overwhelmed by it.²⁵⁹

Many institutions including the National World War I Museum and Memorial, the National WWII Museum, the National Museum of the Marine Corps, the U.S. Naval Undersea Museum, the Eldred World War II Museum, and the National Infantry Museum all agreed that a practice such as strategic sanitization could be necessary if the subject matter was too horrifying and ensured that visitors did not become inundated with an excessive amount of horrors.²⁶⁰ If visitors had “nothing but a steady diet of the grotesque, then we, as museum professionals, will have failed because we'll have made the exhibit about something other than the topic and mission of the museum.”²⁶¹ It was widely accepted that at a certain age level, strategic sanitization was necessary since children were not ready at a young age to hear about violence and death. However, teenagers, college students, and adults should not have the information sanitized for them. They needed to observe how horrible war was so that they will do everything that they

²⁵⁹ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoutd.

²⁶⁰ Doran Cart and Jonathan Casey, Owen Glendening, Charles Grow, Mary Ryan, Steve Appleby, and Jefferson Reed.

²⁶¹ Owen Glendening.

could to avoid it in the future.²⁶² Strategic sanitization was a helpful exhibit method if used correctly. It did not avoid difficult topics, but ensured that exhibits were not too excessive in their depiction of war.

G) Open Museum Conversation: There seemed to be no specific conversation occurring in the military museum field around the topic of sanitization; however, larger dialogues were emerging in military museums that addressed aspects of the topic. In addition, many professionals were sensitive to the idea and placed some consideration of it within their work. Based on the responses from the interviewees of this study, there seemed to be some fertile ground for this concept to become a larger, better-known conversation in the field.

The Museum of Flight acknowledged that there was an active discussion about how museums addressed current politically sensitive topics, and how museums should take stances according to their missions. This dialogue was specifically aimed at science museums, but could be extended to military museums.²⁶³ The National Infantry Museum's curator stated that it was not talked about inside the Army system, even though he wished that it would; however, his Army superiors were too busy with their own responsibilities to discuss the matter in regards to this study. The National Infantry Museum's curator also knew that the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) had a conference on how to deal with death in museums, demonstrating that the larger museum community was talking about it in a roundabout way.²⁶⁴ The Cody Firearms Museum thought even though sanitizing war exhibits was not a topic of conversation, there had "been a large push for social military history, [she] thinks it is a reflection against sanitizing because it is about understanding the mindset of the soldiers."²⁶⁵ With this, the focus seemed to

²⁶² Steve Appleby.

²⁶³ Chris Mailander, Peder Andreas Nelson, Geoff Nunn, and Cody Othoudt.

²⁶⁴ Jefferson Reed.

²⁶⁵ Ashley Hlebinsky.

be on humanizing and contextualizing the war. Even though these large conversations were not directly discussing the idea of sanitization, they were offering important information on how to handle aspects of it.

Many professionals discussed how they had not had any opportunities to have a conversation on this topic. “In a larger sense, [the curator] does not encounter this subject very often within the museum field as a whole. [The curator] expects this is because many museums face this issue occasionally, if ever.”²⁶⁶ At the American Civil War Museum, the concept was not something that the professionals talked about, but was something that the majority of the staff was sensitive to and dealt with when working on exhibits.²⁶⁷ Although the idea of sanitization was not at the forefront of anyone’s mind, it was being considered.

²⁶⁶ Mary Ryan.

²⁶⁷ Cathy Wright.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

The goal of this research was to address the issue of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war. Three major conclusions can be drawn from this study. The first conclusion is that the practice of sanitization does exist in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war in some military history museums. The second conclusion is that sanitization can have both positive and negative effects, depending on how it is used and to what extent in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war in military history museums. The final conclusion is that “strategic sanitization” can be used to define the specific circumstances where it is appropriate to incorporate some sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war in military history museums. In the end, there is no clear, straight-forward answer or consensus concerning the representing and interpreting of difficult subject matter or the appropriateness or effects of sanitization. It is a balancing act to create an effective war exhibit that exposes visitors to the horrors of war without overwhelming or offending them with the scale dependent on the specific institution.

Implications:

This research proves the existence of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war in military history museums and provides the possibility of military history museum professionals using this information to discuss sensitive issues surrounding military history and war in their exhibits to the benefit of the public that they serve. A best practice recommendation list was created through the advice given by the interviewed professionals that discusses effective methods and approaches for representing and interpreting war in exhibits and practices to avoid. The list is located in Appendix 1 on page 90.

Recommendations:

This study has identified four major recommendations. First, it is recommended that this topic further research on this topic be launched using a statistically significant sample size, in order for the results to be generalizable to the military history museum community. Second, should the same methodology be employed, is recommended that the research be conducted in-person and on-site. Third, should study on this topic be undertaken, it is recommended that atrocity museums, such as institutions focused on the Holocaust or 9/11, be included since they deal with a similar difficult subject matter and may possess interesting approaches for displaying difficult subject matter or have new perspectives opinion on sanitization. Finally, it is recommended that military history museums conduct evaluations to determine how visitors perceive the practice of sanitization and any effects it may play in their museum experience.

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Appendix 1: Best Practice Recommendation List

1. Know your institution's focus, community, and specific audiences, including their sensitivities
2. Cooperation both external and internal is a useful tool, but never let anyone else have control over the story or sacrifice the museum's mission and values
3. Know your mission and make every decision based on it
4. Use your best judgement to make up for the lack of official policies and processes
5. Context is important; never place anything on display without placing it into the broader history.
6. Find the appropriate strategies that work for your specific institution to comfort emotional visitors, and institute ways to allow sensitive visitors to choose what they want to encounter
7. Never manipulate visitors to one point of view; exhibits should address all perspectives to allow visitors to come to their own conclusions. Leave personal and cultural biases out
8. Avoid extremes- do not create an overly gratuitous or propagandistic exhibit where visitors become so overwhelmed that they miss the exhibit's meaning; only show what best tells the story
9. Utilizing the human element of war as a framework for your exhibits is beneficial, as it gives visitors something to connect to on a deeper, more personal level
10. Remember the soldier and veteran audience and ensure that staff and volunteers are prepared for PTSD, strong emotional reactions, or flashbacks. Have quiet, contemplative areas for them to relax
11. Commemorate events and people when appropriate. Determine how memorialization should be used within your institution, whether separated from the thematic exhibits or placed with the broader historical narrative

12. Do not be afraid to have open discussions on sanitization within your institution and other professionals within the field
13. Never censor or fictionalize history, it goes against the ethics of the profession
14. Recognize the limitations of the museum's facilities and available collections
15. Allow visitors to contribute to the conversation and the exhibit, through methods such as sound-off or talkback boards or by posing questions to them
16. Use the exhibit to connect the past and present together to make it more relevant to contemporary audiences. Carefully analyze current events through war's historical lens
17. Expose visitors to the more difficult aspects of war in order to teach them that war should never be a first resort. It can have a lasting impact on people to be shocked by the information.
18. Understand and respect the limitations and mission of your overseers or supervisors
19. If a displayed topic causes an excessive amount of controversy and the subject dominates or overshadows an exhibit's overall message, then it should be removed
20. Understand that anything within an exhibit can be conceived as offensive, including the language that is used for the context
21. Never sanitize to the point that your museum loses its credibility. It is difficult to regain

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Warts and All: The Representation and Interpretation of War in Museums

University of Washington

Rebecca Harmsen

RHarmsen514@gmail.com

Thesis Advisor: Wilson O'Donnell, Lecturer, Museology Graduate Program

Interview Protocol Form

Introduction: I am asking you to participate in a semi-structured interview that is part of my Master's Thesis work at the University of Washington. The goal of this research is address the issue of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war. Your participation is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve in no penalty or loss of benefits, and you may discontinue participation at any time. As a reminder, the identities of both you and your museum will be revealed in the final results of this study. If you do not want this, I will ensure that your name and museum remain confidential. For your information and protection, interview recordings will be stored on my password-protected personal computer and will not be shared or posted beyond the research team. This interview will be recorded in order to transcribe the data later. Do I have your permission to record this conversation? Also, I may quote you in my final paper. If you wish, I will give you the opportunity to review any direct quotes before publication. If you have any questions or comments at any time afterwards, you may contact either my advisor or myself. Do you have any questions currently? Finally, do you agree to participate in this interview?

Research: The goal of this research is address the issue of sanitization in the development, design, and presentation of exhibits about war.

Notes to Interviewee(s):

Thank you for taking time out of your day to conduct this interview. I believe that your input will be valuable to my research and to growing all of our professional practices. This semi-structural interview should last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Interview Questions:

To begin with, I would like to ask you a few questions about your role at your museum...

What is your job title?

How long have you worked at this museum?

What are your primary job responsibilities?

What was your professional or academic background prior to your current position?

Next, I would like to discuss your museum's policies and processes.

1A. *(For Exhibitors)* When developing an exhibit in which war is a central topic, what policies or processes within your museum do you adhere to when designing a new exhibit? How many people are involved in the exhibit decision-making process?

1B. *(For Curators)* When developing an exhibit in which war is a central topic, what policies or process within your museum do you adhere to when determining what content should be placed in a new exhibit and how it is interpreted? How many people are involved in the curation decision-making process?

2. How do you determine what stories or topics to tell? Do/Have any difficulties or challenges emerged when trying to fit the expansive, complex topic of war into a finite exhibit space?

3. How do you determine what may be considered too inappropriate or controversial to show to the public? Are there any policies in place at your museum that help you deal with this specific issue?

4. What is your personal philosophy on best practices, or best methods to display and interpret war in a museum setting?

Now to discussing the management of difficult stories and visitor sensitivities.

5. How do you think about, or handle the emotional sensitivities of your visitors with a topic like war, especially those who may have been personally affected by war or know someone who has? How does this influence your exhibit or curation decisions?

6. What are your personal thoughts on how, or if, museums use atrocity imagery in exhibits?

7. Has there ever been an instance within your museum where you had to remove content or images in an exhibit that was deemed inappropriate or controversial for the visitors?

Some research indicates that it can be important for an exhibit about war to balance the ideas of commemoration and critical analysis.

8. How does your museum balance commemoration and critical analysis together in an exhibit? Do they ever conflict with one another? What are the best methods for finding a balance?

Finally, I would like to talk about the topic of sanitizing war in exhibits.

9. Taking from the literature on this subject, I am defining the act of sanitizing war in exhibits as the process of making a topic less offensive by altering or removing anything, including representations of extreme acts of violence, suffering, and death, which could be considered inappropriate and controversial for the public. How would you personally define this idea of sanitization, in the context of how war is represented in exhibits?

10. Do you think that there are any benefits or problems to sanitizing war in exhibits? If so, what?

11. For the future, what are the best methods for helping military museums handle or manage the issue of sanitization in their exhibits?

12. As a military museum professional, is sanitizing war in exhibits something that is discussed within your museum or within the museum field more widely? If not, should it be?

13. What advice might you have for other military museum professionals who are thinking about this topic as it pertains to their museum work?

Conclusion: That is the end of the interview; do you have any further questions or comments? Thank you again for your participation, I greatly appreciate it. This conversation has been very beneficial and insightful, and will greatly assist me in my research. If you wish to be provided with the opportunity to receive the final results of the research, I would be happy to oblige. Again, please feel free to contact me with any comments or questions. Thank you again and have a great day.

Appendix 3: Data Analysis

Appendix 3a: Themes

Research Subject 1:

- Cooperation and the Community:
 - Cooperation, community, guidance, opinion, perspective, groups, committee, testing, review
- Limitations of Museum Facilities;
 - Collections, staff, facilities, space, budget, media, temporary exhibits
- The Importance of Context in the Storyline:
 - Context, storyline, fact, interpretation, integrate, background, broad
- The Human Element focus in exhibits:
 - Human, element, personal narratives, connections, people, veterans, oral histories, relatable
- Personal Judgement with Tough Decisions:
 - Judgement, policies, processes, mission, unwritten policy
- How to Organize an Exhibit:
 - Organize, highlight, themes, wars (in the sense that different wars need to be handled differently in exhibits), framework, list, brainstorming, space, technology/media

Research Subject 2:

- Handling Offended Visitors:
 - Offense, problem, be aware, social media, objections, sensitive, politically correct, difficult groups, contribute, test, facts, judgement, appropriate
- Tailoring to Your Audience:
 - Understand, tailor, audience, sensitive
- How Soldiers Are Affected by Exhibits:
 - Soldiers, family, veterans, personal experience, emotion
- Effects of the Different Wars on Visitors:
 - World War 1, Civil War, modern wars, Vietnam War
- Comfort Strategies for Visitor Sensitivities:
 - Positioning, sensitive, emotional responses, self-regulate, bypass, limits, comfort, disclaimers/ warnings, quiet spaces
- Where the Limit Lies:
 - Adverse, shy away, shock value, limits

Research Subject 3:

- Importance of Personal Interpretations from Visitors:
 - Debates, objective, unbiased, personal conclusions, do not bend to a certain side, manipulate, fact, accessible, impressions, visitor sovereignty
- The Nature of Emotion:
 - Pro-US sentiment/doctrine, emotion, memory, fact, applauding/honor, conflict, personal attack, balance

- The Necessity of a Broad Narrative:
 - Story, structure, broad, narrative, straight forward
- The Effects of the Diverse Focus of Museums:
 - Enlisted men, more commemorative, training aids, nostalgia, more objective, recruit
- The Concept of Memory:
 - Memory, remembered, civic discourse, collective, relayed, connections
- How to Balance the Two Ideas:
 - Hook, balance, represented, case-by-case basis

Research Subject 4:

- The Divergent Opinions of Diverse Museums:
 - Individual institution, culture, community, cannot criticize, less offensive/shocking, audience, unethical, desensitize, fact, mission, holistic view, case specific, follow your conscience, focus, inappropriate/ appropriate
- The Indispensable Museum Cores:
 - Community, fact, manipulate, visitors, trust, credibility
- Remained Balanced between Sanitized and Gratuitous:
 - Check yourself, objective, language, experiment, technology, media, collaboration, framework, biases
- Necessity of Exposing Visitors to the Horrors:
 - Truth, no titillation, ugly business, expose, context, conversation, overemphasize, glorious, comfort
- Abhorrent Practices to Avoid:
 - Subverting fact, censorship, fictionalize, gratuitous, glorification, overload, propaganda, minimizing
- New Definition of Strategic Sanitization:
 - Strategic sanitization, natural process, decisions, understanding, audience, mission, focus, benefits, age
- Open Museum Dialogue on the Topic:
 - Museum community, discuss, sensitive, conversation, represented, military museums

Appendix 3b: Lettering System and Coding Sheet Example

Lettering System:

- A) National World War I Museum and Memorial
- B) National Vietnam War Museum
- C) Flying Heritage Collection
- D) National Infantry Museum
- E) Eldred World War II Museum
- F) National WWII Museum
- G) Museum of Flight
- H) Lewis Army Museum

- I) American Civil War Museum
- J) Cody Firearms Museum
- K) Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Vietnam Era Museum and Educational Center
- L) National Museum of the Marine Corps
- M) U.S. Naval Academy Museum
- N) Naval Undersea Museum

Research Subject 2 Notes:

Coding Subjects: Questions 5-7 Visitors Sensitivities

Offense: Description: Do not be afraid to offend a few, it is important to make an impact

- (C) Sometimes people think to themselves that this could be a problem. Middle of doing an exhibit right now that might have atomic bomb replicas in it. Observed the problems that were had with the Enola Gay situation and are now more sensitive and more attuned to any potential problems. Be careful and fully prepared early on.
- (C) Be aware that we live in an age where people are more capable of voicing their objections on social media so they do not have to come face to face. People are more sensitive to, they have the ability to hear a lot of people's opinions that they did not before. Remember that if 100,000 people see the exhibit and one person is angry about something, you may give that opinion more weight than it actually deserves, which is something that you want to steer clear of.
- (E) If you do not want to shock people and want to be politically correct or gloss things over then it is going to happen again. The next generation is going to be running the country someday, they need to know their history and people cannot be afraid to shock or upset them and be too protective of them then it will happen again.
- (G) With difficult groups who want to control the story, you got to try to get them to understand what the museum's mission is and give them a Memorandum of Understanding that spells out in a formal way the museum's responsibilities and obligations and the group's responsibilities. If it is spelled out clearly, then it generally runs alright. American Fighter Ace Association have their own personalities and political agendas and have a contingency in Texas that is upset that their association's collection came to Seattle. It still bubbles up now and then, just use your best judgement. Also, it is about approaching it in good faith and being willing and open to accommodate the group's wishes when you can when it does not go against the mission.
- (G) There is a lot of controversy around Pearl Harbor concerning how much we knew previously, but all the museum did was to state what we know happened in a series of events, of what Roosevelt did, and what is generally accepted. Good way to address some controversial topics is not necessarily to present all sides but to tie a particular event or decision to a particular person that can help navigate that. If you say that so and so

believed that or that the reports suggested, then you are not presenting it as fact but as somebody's statement or best understanding of the situation.

- (G7) Research suggests that when dealing with difficult topics, visitors are more open to dealing with them if they have a place to contribute to the conversation. It is good to incorporate a talk back board and pose questions to visitors for them to ponder.
- (A) In one case, they display information about the Armenian massacres by the Turks that occurred between 1915 and 1918. A few Turkish officers who have visited did not like this but they could not argue that it did not occur since they used Turkish records and reports from the time, only using the information provided in them.
- (A) People who come are more thankful than anything, they are thankful that they represent that people who were in the war and that they honor them by having the museum there.
- (I) The museum wants to do more with new exhibitions, and will test certain components in sections of the exhibit with visitor interest groups and test groups to ensure that they are hitting the right kind of tone for a lot of these different groups like people of African-American descent and people part of the Southern heritage, and then more causal people.
- (I) Need to make sure that what they are presenting and how it is presented is making connections with the different groups, and hopefully not offending anyone but ultimately if it is determined that something needs to be presented in a certain way then perhaps they will move forward with it at the risk of upsetting one or more of those groups if we feel like it is something that needs to be addressed.
- (J) Survey work and sound-out boards were completed to try to understand where the emotional sensitivity lies. It is currently not dealt with because there is not really any content to the museum so it does not really stir up a lot of emotions, they do a good job at sanitizing. However, they do deal with some angry people who despise weapons and leave very harsh comments, it has yet to be determined of how to handle this.
- (K) They treat it as a forum, a place for discussion and dialogue, a place where Vietnam veterans can walk in and feel like they finally came home and that they are welcomed there, and a place for the next generation to learn about this context hopefully firsthand (tour guides). It all comes with the territory.
- (M) No complaints because visitors know what to expect walking in. In a current special exhibit called Warriors and Writers, there is a tack board and a bunch of little slips with adhesive and pens asking people to leave their comments to get their reactions about the exhibit from them.
- (B) If it is appropriate to the story you are trying to tell then it is appropriate to show. Sometimes, the story cannot be properly told without using some graphic imagery.
- (E) In the Holocaust room, the images and film footage are pretty brutal. He expanded to almost poster size the graphics of some of the more iconic images of the Holocaust. In his opinion, that is the kind of stuff that sticks with people for a long time, it has a lasting impact on them. He had seen some horrible stuff as a soldier so he might be more

desensitized but he still thinks that it is important for young people to see that, to understand the truth. Learn to stop evil before it gets out of hand, using history lessons. It is the mission to ensure that the next generation takes up the torch and keeps the country free and safe like countless people did before them.

- (G) They had a Nazi flag and tailpiece with a swastika on display that were vandalized. It was not in your face and was off in the corner. Most people understood why we choose to include it to just reinforce of exactly what the Nazis were doing and how.
- (G) Only remembers one old Jewish guy who complained out of millions who visited.
- (H) Museums should use atrocity imagery if it is within their focus. It has not come up yet, but in the future if it was appropriate then it would be worth talking about.
- (I) Back then, it was the first time that Americans saw photographs of dead bodies that absolutely shocked them, but present day people would not be as shocked since they seem almost sanitized to us compared to what we see in the media.
- (K) If places like the 9/11 Museum or the Holocaust Museum did not exist or just ignored the violent atrocities then they will be repeated and the heroes will be forgotten.
- (K) If someone is uncomfortable with the experience, then they simply will not go to a place like this where it is displayed. They can avoid it and you can tell the story.
- (A) The only thing Doran could remember was a 1926 mural called In Memorium that had a large bare breasted women serving as an allegory of the Spirit of America. Some home school or religious school tours have remarked on it but it did not stop them from entering the museum.
- (A) Jonathan remembered that in the epilogue gallery there are pictures of someone with a quote by them, one of which is Hitler since he served in the war. An Israeli journalist stated that he did not care for Hitler being in there, so I just said that he was in the war and it is just part of the story.
- (E) He found an artifact of what is believed to be a human skin lampshade that was horrific and horrible but he felt needed to be shown to the public. The Board said no. It felt to him like political correctness. He fought for the artifact to be displayed for a year and a half, we need to show it so that people can understand why we fought this war. He was allowed to build a room for it but they changed their mind when it was done. Now, he was it in a nearby office and he will show it to groups that come in. He believes that some young people need to be shocked to learn the truth.
- (L9) The Holocaust museum does a great job in simply ways of dealing with things that are offensive to one group, children for instance, and less offensive to others. For example, the walls with experience for kids on the outside of it.

Tailoring: Description: Understand your audience and work with them

- Understand the visitor, place yourself in their shoes- give them an introduction to everything, try to understand where they are coming from. There is a large diversity of visitors coming in, try not to leave anyone out (1)

- For the audiences, many people do not have experience with the subject; therefore, find a balance between the aficionados, enthusiasts, and experts and the everyday person (1)
- (E) Tailor to your audience. For example, Cub Scouts should not be hit with the shocking stuff or with the blood, gore, death, and destruction. It is a vital interest of a war museum, but I teach them the inspirational stuff about the heroes.
- (E) For the ladies, talk about the female role in the war. For a group of Japanese students last year, they knew everything about Hiroshima and Nagasaki but nothing about Pearl Harbor, the Bataan Death March, the Rape of Nanking, the slaughter of civilians in Manila, or Unit 731. They were shocked and stunned by it, and he just told them the truth. They did not get that information in their country, you have to be aware, careful, and sensitive of that. Tailor it to them.
- (J) It may be necessary to show difficult things as long as it is placed in context.

Soldiers: Description: Make them feel comfortable and safe but remember their experiences

- It is important to know your audience. If you are working with soldiers and their families almost exclusively, consider not discussing the costs of victory or battles. There is an unwritten sanitization in the way that you are still factual about the events but avoid delving too deep into certain parts that may make the soldiers feel unsafe and uncomfortable in the space. You are not avoiding discussing the challenges that will be faced, but you do tip toe around the topic. Not censorship or distortion but cultural, unwritten editing (1).
- Soldier focus is important, it means a lot to them to come back and see their stuff (1)
- (B) Majority of the Board of Directors are Vietnam War veterans so they have the ability to draw on their own personal experiences to determine how to handle topics about war. Many of their exhibit decisions are based on honoring their memory, without distorting the facts.
- (D) The mature, older soldiers are almost offended by their quite frankly sanitization. They have seen the dark side of it and do not like that they are only being given a clean version of it. Another segment of the audience is young soldiers and their parents so you have to balance a tightrope.
- (D) There are things that can be done to appease that soldier audience but one of the other constraints is that we put a picture of a soldier in combat or something, there is another filtering process. With the command influence, they do not want soldiers that are in partial uniform, modified uniform, or not adhering to uniform. They only want the cookie-cutter, public affairs images, even though combat does not happen that way. Soldiers were upset by this since it is not the reality. The professional would like to work that balance so that he can show soldiers in their honesty as it would be more appeal to their soldier audience and would not look like they are giving a complete sanitize view of events. However, a certain amount of digression should be used due to higher power.

- (E) Encountered problems that they want to collect every story of WW2 veterans that is possible. They have not talked about their experiences in 75 years to anyone and they relate to the professional because he knows everything about their unit, he can relate to them. They talk and then they have nightmares because it all came back and they spoke about it, and now they are having nightmares that they have not had in over thirty years.
- (E) A war museum is an emotional experience for many, especially veterans and their families. It is a delicate thing, there is not a way that you can come up with a policy but you just have to set out to see why your audience is there, what they are there about.
- (I) For veterans, a strategy is to draw on the distinct parallels between Civil War veteran's experiences and current day challenges that are facing our modern veterans and try to fit it into some context to show veterans that their experiences may be unique in some ways but they are also a part of a long tradition of past military experience and that their experiences and feelings have been felt by others. On one level, they are not alone and may learn something from this that can hopefully bring them some comfort and strength. There are also distinct differences too from past to present.
- (J) It is simpler for the weapons museum than military museums because the veterans just want to see the gun that they carried.
- (K) This is an emotional place and a section is included with the museum where there is a memorial and part of that is their in-memory program that focuses on veterans that have sense passed on because of their service. It is a daily occurrence to see people crying. Embrace and respect the emotions in every program and exhibit that is done, try to be sensitive.
- (N) Most of the service members that the museum interfaces with are older, retired sailors who enjoy reminiscing about their service. Their sensitivities are generally two-fold: (1) ensuring protection of classified information, and (2) ensuring their fallen shipmates are honored and remembered. Staff is already careful about the information.
- (N) The latter is usually the sensitivity that is carefully considered. Thousands of retired sailors are in the area, many of which participate in veterans' groups. Keeping the memory of their lost peers alive is one of the most important reasons these groups exist. With this, they make sure to honor lost ships and crews when relevant to an exhibit.
- (G) There was a small typo in one of the labels where the numbers were transposed for the Japanese executive order. A couple commented on it which shows the major implications for visitors who experience that and how that impacts that story. Similarly, for a display of medals, it bothered veterans when the stars were not in the right orientation. It may seem small and not noticeable for most people, but for a veteran it hits them harder.

War Diversity: **Description:** Each institution is effected differently

- (A) Close to the U.S. Army Command and Staff College: students come daily as part as their coursework from all over the world. Veterans come a great deal as well. They had not been personally affected by WW1 like Vietnam, it is a historical event.
- (I) It is a difficult time with the Civil War because people feel so differently on all sides of it. Some people have connections to the war while others do not. For those who do not, try to show them the ways that our society and political system is set up today is directly influenced by these things, give them a different personal connection to it.
- (L) At the museum, they look at the good, the bad, and the ugly, of what they can do better, what they need to stop doing, what do they need to add. For the next galleries, the post 9/11 world will be difficult because the young veterans will be relatively fresh off the battlefield and they do not know how they are going to copy with stuff.
- (K) It depends on what museum is being discussed and on the atrocity. The Vietnam War is still an emotional wound for many. With this, you should not shy away from telling the story but do it in the right way where you are respectful honoring the memory and legacy of the people and their experiences.
- (M) The Navy does not have pictures of battlefields full of cadavers since the battles were fought at sea and bodies were collected quickly to avoid blood split that made the deck slippery. If they did have these images, then it would depend on the theme of the exhibit and the points that they want to get across.

Comfort Strategies: Description: Reflection/Safe Space, Self-Regulation, Warnings, etc.

- (C) One of the ways that you can help visitors is through positioning. The trench part of the WW1 gallery in Museum of Flight has some horrific pictures that were done with some considerations. It was meant to reflect some of the horrors of the event. Three parts to the scene. First, positive beginning where there is people doing ridiculous training and are at camp. There were family photos or photos of newly minted soldiers from each country- trying to humanize these guys. Naïve of what is next. Second, the realities of WW1 trench warfare are discussed with discussions of weaponry and videos of fighting and artifacts. Finally, the grim realities of it- photos of people being washed after being gassed and a blinded man from the gas, and there are pictures that are pretty grim that are at the end and at the top right. Pictures of a decomposing body and other dead bodies. They felt like it was their duty to put them in there but they are really high so a young child will not be confronted face to face with it.
- (C) Another option is to bury some objectionable facts in all sort of other texts.
- (F) Floor staff and volunteers are sensitized to the emotional range that visitors could express. Many visitors become emotional because maybe getting for the first time the full scope of what their family members went through or a veteran is finally opening up to his family. Be aware and sensitive to that.
- (G) In the trench exhibit with the more graphic imagery, there was a conscious choice that it is a path that can be bypassed easily. It allows visitors to self-regulate.

- (G) For the WW1 and WW2 exhibit, there was a limit to the gory imagery. There are three short films commissioned for the wars that the gory stuff was left in so a disclaimer on the outside of the theaters was placed to let visitors know about the content.
- (G) The trenches were too iconic of the war to not be included even with aviation. There are noises coming from the trench. Initially, the sound of a guy moaning was placed under plane, but it was not kept as it was decided that it would freak little kids out of thinking someone was actually underneath the plane dying. The more brutal imagery was placed at the end because to leave them out would be sanitizing and it is something to impress on people. For WW1, most of the gorier images are in the theater.
- (H) Focusing on the soldier and material culture and then the background context kind of keeps it sort of family-friendly and safe for visitors. It is not within their mission to delve into the more difficult concepts.
- (J) The professional has considered some type of room of remembrance for veterans where they can kind of leave their stories, or a veterans' garden where people have a place to go and reflect. Wait to see what will be done for it when the context is added later.
- (L) With their galleries, they try to come up with contemplative space for visitors who are having a reaction have a quiet, dark place where they can sit and sort out their thoughts.
- (L) Make sure that the staff and docents are aware when someone is having an experience, so if a visitor has a flashback or something in the Vietnam gallery then the docents will help take them some place safe. The majority of docents are former military or spouses of military so they get it, they are emotionally invested and want to take care of the visitors.
- (L) Where they talk about the counter insurgency so 2004 and forward, they provide two ways to get out, one is a bypass that includes a disclaimer on the way to let people know about what they are going to experience and that they can bypass it if desired. They get the same information without being immersed in it. Another one is that ¼ of the way through, there is an escape hatch so if they go in and realize that they did not want to be in there then they can just get out of that exit and there is no feeling that they quit or turned around. It takes them to a quiet spot where they can be alone.
- (C) People have had angry over the swastikas on the planes, but it is the museum's mission to restore the airplanes to the way they looked when they rolled out of the factories or when they were in service. It would be fictionalizing things if you eradicated the swastikas on the planes. It is an objectionable symbol to many but they made the choice that accuracy is more important than offending someone who is upset by it. However, as a way to be fair, they naturally steer away from having airplanes with swastikas on them on big signs or posters. So, you may say that you are going to be brave and lay it out there, but in the back of your head that you need to be careful.
- (I) In her opinion, it generally should be included in a degree to not present an overly glorified image of war because death is a direct outcome of war and should be

considered. Consider it sensitively, remember that veterans with possible PTSD could be triggered by certain images or language and also young visitors or sensitive people. Acknowledge them and make them feel comfortable as well by positioning the images in a certain way or having textual warning, could be all you need.

- (J) She liked the box around the graphic imagery at the Holocaust museum as a form of self-regulation. The option to see it or not is a powerful choice for someone.
- (M) They have a series of photographs of the dead body of American Revolutionary War naval hero Commander John Paul Jones whose body was perfectly preserved. They are available for researchers but they have never been put on public display as a matter of taste. They are not a medical museum.
- (I) There are things that prove controversial that is discovered may not have been if they had dealt with it differently. For example, one version of the Confederate flag exhibit had a section that showed how the flag is used in popular culture. There was a mid-1990s film called “To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar,” which is about drag queens. A real famous drag queen is in the opening, RuPaul, who is wearing a full-length sequenced Confederate flag gown. It was decided to get an image from the film of her in the dress for the exhibit and it was printed out as a full size image. In early testing, they found this extremely upsetting including conservative types that do not like a man wearing a dress, and pro-military and pro-U.S. who felt that anyone wearing a flag is a desecration. Many comments were made about it, and in the end the higher powers decided to remove it because it was essentially distracting from the point of the overall exhibition and making people upset. In retrospect, they wondering if they had scaled down the image then it might not have been as noticeable or offensive to people. Many people thought it was fabulous and were sad to see it removed but those were not the most vocal people and we did not want to front desk to be bombarded with questions for the curatorial decisions constantly. Review policies and procedures will hopefully help with preemptively stopping anything like that from ending up in an exhibit.

Limitations: Description: Certain lines that should not be crossed, careful

- (A) It is a part of the fabric of war and we probably do not show the most gruesome images that we have but they are in the collections and are available to researchers and possibly the website. They do not censor but they look at what is going to tell the best story. Not averse to using nudity in photos or graphics if it tells a story. Explain the context to help people understand, never place a graphic image without it.
- (A) There are certain images that we have not used in exhibits like white soldiers in black face or racist Native American cartoon postcards. All available for researchers. They do tend to shy away from anything blatantly racist or show human violence that is not war related.
- (N) She does not generally believe in using atrocity images for shock value because they are usually unconstructive. Gruesome images will catch attention initially but horrifying

visitors largely prevents them from absorbing exhibit content or making meaning. They are best saved for exhibits about subjects that are unescapably and inherently horrifying. For example, for the Holocaust Museum, atrocity is unavoidable and essential to its mission to ensure nothing like this ever happens again.