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## Letter from the Journal Team

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Anne Midgley

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Welcome to the Spring-Summer 2018 issue of the *Saber and Scroll Journal*. With this issue, the journal has entered a new phase in its publication career as we are operating without a formal Editor-In-Chief. Special thanks are due to Senior Editor, Michael Majercyzk, who has led the journal for the most recent two years as Editor-In-Chief. Under his leadership, the journal has expanded its reach and continued to break new ground for the *Saber and Scroll Historical Society*, attracting new academic authors from outside the American Public University System. This issue leads off with the work of one such scholar, Walter Gam Nkwi, PhD. Doctor Nkwi, a historian educated at the Leiden University—the oldest university in the Netherlands—holds a PhD in Social History/Social Anthropology. He currently teaches at the Department of History, University of Buea, Cameroon. We are also pleased to have author Susan Danielsson join us once again from Sweden.

In this issue, we welcome a number of returning authors, including Robert Smith, PhD, Cynthia Nolan, PhD, Tormod Engvig, Bill Hanson, Ryan Lancaster, and Michael Majerczyk as well as one new contributor, Jamie Alluisi. We encourage new and emerging scholars as well as previously published historians to continue to provide previously unpublished feature articles and book reviews to the *Saber and Scroll*. Please see detailed instructions for abstract and manuscript submissions on the *Saber and Scroll* “[Call for Papers](#)” site.

Thank you to our authors, editors, proofreaders, and to you, our readers. We are grateful to all who continue to support the journal and its efforts to provide the American Public University System community with a peer-reviewed journal to publish scholarly works of history from all sub-genres.

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# Communication in Africa: Talking Drums and Town Criers in Pre-colonial and Colonial Bamenda Grassfields, Cameroon

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Walter Gam Nkwi, PhD

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This article focuses on the historical vicissitudes of the talking drum and town criers as forms of communication in the pre-colonial and early colonial Bamenda Grassfields of the northwest region of Cameroon. It debunks simplistic and skewed views long held by European-based scholars that all in Africa was savage chaos before the advent of European colonisation of the continent. The apologists contend that pre-colonial Africans neither knew how to invent a plow nor a wheel. Through the available evidence provided in this article, those derogatory and unscientific statements are proved to be unfounded. Using interviews with people who witnessed the use of talking drums and town criers and those occupied in their use, together with the archival data, this article concludes that the Bamenda Grassfields had developed a high level of communication in the pre-colonial and early colonial period. This article is structured into the following sections: an introduction that generally outlines the key argument of the paper and its conceptual analysis; a section that outlines the various methods and sources that were used to gather the data; one that describes the geography and demographics of the study area known as the Bamenda Grassfields, showing the different indigenous groups and their relations to talking drums and town criers; a section that focuses on the talking drums and town criers in Africa; one that examines the town criers and talking drums in the Bamenda Grassfields, and findings together with recommendations for further research and conclusions.

## Introduction

Eurocentric scholars for a long time held very dearly that all in Africa was savage chaos before the Europeans set foot on the continent. Apologists maintain that pre-colonial Africa neither knew how to invent a plow nor a wheel. According to historian and philosopher Georg Hegel, “Africa has remained cut off from all contacts with the rest of the world; it is the land of gold, for ever pressing in upon itself, and the land of childhood, removed from the light of self-conscious history and wrapped in the dark mantle of night.”<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Africa did not appear in his four cultures or civilisations and therefore was unhistorical and undeveloped.<sup>2</sup> Available evidence in Africa shows the contrary. According to African studies

scholars, Bogumil Jewsiewicki and ValentinYves Mudimbe, it was from the 1960s onwards that there was a transformation and a metamorphosis in the practice of African history by Africans and Africanists historians. It was a period in which orthodox historical critique was adapted to merge with the analysis of oral data. The need to prove to a rather disbelieving world the cogency and rationality of the concept of African history led to studies trying to show that the oral mode of conserving information guarantees its transmission and could be just as effective as the written facts.<sup>3</sup> Thus, from the 1970s onwards, Africanists have exhibited a lively interest and engaged in debates in social—and more recently—intellectual history. Historians are bringing closer attention to micro-histories as Valentin Yves Mudimbe posits that, “today Africans themselves read, challenge, rewrite, as a way of explicating and defining their culture history and being.”<sup>4</sup> It is within this line of thought that this article positions itself.

Talking drums and town criers are, what will be referred to in this article, channels of traditional communication technology. Talking drums are large, all-wood instruments made from a single log featuring hollow chambers and long narrow openings. The drums produce resonant notes when they are struck with wooden sticks. There are often small supports under each end of the drum to suspend it from the ground and to allow it to vibrate more freely. The bigger the log from which the drum is made, the louder the sound produced and thus the farther away it can be heard. The drummer can tune his instrument to produce a lower or higher note. Drummers hit the drum edges with sticks to beat out rhythms of high and low notes. In royal palaces, these drums are sacred and stored in shrines. These drums were made of special wood. The drum is made out of the wood of “small leaf,” better known in the botanic jargon as *Piptadreniastrum africanum*. According to local experts, the talking drum was carved out of wet and dry wood or the *kei* tree. From the pre-colonial period to the 1960s, drum makers usually seasoned the wood for about two years before they used it. The first talking drum of this type was made c.1460 and was used by the *Ngamba*.<sup>5</sup> Once the wood has seasoned, the carver takes two to three weeks to carve a talking drum.<sup>6</sup> Drummers use two sticks to play the drum, made from the bottom portion of the raffia bamboo.

Town criers acted as a second form of pre-colonial communication. Typically muscular men with obstreperous voices, they broadcast news to villagers in the evenings. The crier beat the gong twice or thrice and delivered his message. This was done repeatedly in the village. Talking drums and town criers are still used to communicate, but not as they had been used in the pre-colonial and early colonial periods. They are not used in place of modern technology, but



rather in a ceremonial way to commemorate the past.

These media were not introduced to African societies like the modern mass media. Thus, they are still part of indigenous culture and contribute greatly to shaping communication in the society. According to Joy Chioma Nwabueze, professor and lecturer at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria, these media can further be described as a continuous process of information dissemination, entertainment, and education used in societies that have not been seriously dislocated by Western culture or any other external influences.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that traditional forms of communication were borne out of indigenous environments and have not been adulterated by external forces.



Figure 1. A typical talking drum in its shrine. The author took the photograph during the fieldwork.

Historians have not yet given sufficient attention to the communication systems of pre-colonial Africa. This paper posits that for a fuller understanding of the development of communication technologies, there is a need to appreciate what was there before the introduction of “modern communication technology.” This helps in the understanding of the development in the history of communication. According to Martin Klein, professor emeritus of history at the University of Toronto and namesake of the Martin A. Klein Prize in African History, “what defines the historian is the belief that things can be understood more fully if we understand how they came into being. Social phenomena are too important to be left to other social scientists.”<sup>8</sup>

The people in most parts of rural Africa still depend on traditional media because of their interpersonal nature. According to Emmanuel Akpoveta and Wilson Des, professors in the University of Uyo, Nigeria, traditional media include aspects of traditional African communication technologies, namely: folklore, music, town/village criers, village square meetings, and festivals. Based on previous research on the history of communication in colonial British Cameroons, these forms of communication showed that prior to colonial or “modern” communication technologies, African societies already had a pre-colonial communication system that had been set up by traditional rulers.<sup>9</sup> These pre-colonial communication systems (talking drums and town criers) deserve historical research to appreciate pre-colonial civilisations that yet remains a *tabula rasa* in pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields of Cameroon. In responding to this deficiency, this article describes the centrality of talking drums and town criers in Bamenda Grassfields before the establishment of colonial network of communication systems.

Africa is witnessing a period of rapid technological development, dubbed in some quarters as the information revolution. These new technologies—also known as information and communication technologies (ICTs)—include amongst other things electronic networks embodying complex hardware and software.<sup>10</sup> According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, new technologies cover internet provisioning, telecommunication and information equipment and services, media and broadcasting, and commercial information providers. The new ICTs in Africa are the internet, phones, and cell phones. Despite the prevalence of these new ICTs, traditional modes of communication used in pre-colonial times persist. It is relevant to note that while complex new communication technologies exist in the society, traditional and older forms have survived and lived side by side with the new ones. Arguably, with modernity, some of the traditional forms of

communication have lost their meanings but have not completely disappeared from the communication topographies. They are now used in purely traditional settings or ceremonies.

### **Methodology and Sources**

In writing this article, the author drew from three principal sources. The first source was the archives. In the National Archives of Cameroon in English-speaking Buea, Cameroon, the author consulted mostly assessment and intelligent reports that British anthropologists wrote at the beginning of the British colonial rule to enable the British to pacify and administer the area. In *Gold Coast Diaries: Chronicles of Political Officers in West Africa, 1900-1919*, Thora Williamson echoed the importance of archival records. She maintained that, at both local and provincial districts, reports were essential since the British generally assumed that the colonial official was the first to keep written records for the specific area. It was therefore only in the keeping of records that subsequent administrators would have a sense of the territory. Although her focus was on the Gold Coast, Williamson also said what was true of the Gold Coast was also true of the British Cameroon in which the Bamenda Grassfields was found. Records were vital for the colonial administrator at all levels—district, division and province—for effective administration.<sup>11</sup> The weaknesses suffered by the archival documents made it preponderant for the author to resort to interviews. Secondly, the author conducted interviews with people who witnessed the talking drums and town criers. The third source was secondary literature, which helped the author to understand what was going on in other parts of pre-colonial Africa. This material was also used to make comparison and see whether what was happening in Bamenda was also going on in other parts of pre-colonial Africa. The author consulted numerous secondary sources as each appeared to be coloured by the background and biases of its authors.

### **Locating the Bamenda Grassfields**

The Bamenda Grassfields is located in the Northwest of Cameroon. It has a land surface of 6,680 sq. miles, almost the size of Belgium. Following the 2010 census its population stood at 1,828,953 people at a density of 100/km. It has more than thirty ethnic groups and languages and was administered as part of the British Southern Cameroons from the end of the First World War until 1961.<sup>12</sup> The term Grassfields dates back to the period of the German colonization (1884-1916). The

Grassfields are characterised by its high altitude and grassy nature. Except for the forest galleries, the area is full of beautiful grassy scenery. The indigenous population of the area immigrated from various directions and broadly speaking, these groups fall under five major headings: Tikar, Widikum, Chamba, Tiv, and Mbembe. Table 1 below shows the major groups of the region.

**TABLE 1: Different Ethnic Groups of the Bamenda Grassfields**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Population</b>
Tikar	Kom, Nso, Oku, Mbiame, Wiya, Tang, War, Bum, Bafut, Mbaw, Fungom, Mmen, Bamunka, Babungo, Bamesi, Bamesing, Bambalang, Bamali, Bafani, Baba, Bangola, Big Babanki, Babanki-Tungo, Wimbun
Widikum	Esimbi, Beba-Befang, Mankon, Ngemba, Ngie, Ngwo, Mogamo, Meta, Chomba
Chamba	Bali-Nyonga, Bali-Kumbat, Bali-Gangsin, Bali-Gashu, Bali Gham
Tiv	Aghem Federation
Mbembe	Mbembe, Misaje, Mfumte

Source: Paul Nchoji Nkwi, *Traditional Diplomacy: A Study of Inter-Chiefdom Relations in the Western Grassfields, North West Province of Cameroon* (Yaounde, Cameroon: Department of Sociology, University of Yaounde, 1987), 15.

The table above shows that the Tikars have the most sub-ethnic groups, followed by the Widikum and the Chamba. It is fair to say that the least numerous are the Tiv and Mbembe. These ethnic groups collectively constitute the population of the Bamenda Grassfields. The lives of the people of this region are coloured by migration. In the pre-colonial period, they mostly migrated to Northern Nigeria where they traded in kola-nut and in return bought spices and clothes. Exceptionally, they also ventured to the Bight of Biafra where they sold livestock and bought Dane guns and palm oil. Much has been researched and written on the Bamenda Grassfields from the perspectives of anthropologists, sociologists, and to a much lesser extent, historians.<sup>13</sup> In relation to new and old forms of communications, the more numerous Tikar have been associated with

more drums and town criers.<sup>14</sup> Quite recently, the Tikars appropriated newer forms of communication from the other ethnic groups.<sup>15</sup> Reports have ascertained that through these migrations the various groups came to know about the type of wood used for the talking drum and the different ways to make the gong that the town crier used to send out messages.<sup>16</sup>

### **Talking Drums and Town Criers in Africa**

According to a senior re-toucher at Gloss Studios, New York City, Timothy Sexton in *African Talking Drums: More Than Just a Musical Instrument, the World's First Portable Phones*, communication instruments such as talking drums, which are often with an hourglass shape, are frequently used in African music recordings.<sup>17</sup> They are called talking drums fundamentally because most African societies used them to communicate with each other. Talking drums can be used to approximate the spoken language, and under the most ideal of conditions, complex dialogues can take place between drummers positioned as much as twenty miles away. Usually, the conversations would only take place between drummers who were about five miles away and then pass on from drummer to drummer to the villages that were farther away.

Talking drums arose in Western African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. The talking drum worked well to communicate highly developed thought because the actual spoken languages of these African societies had a tonal component to them in which each syllable of a particular word contains a different pitch. Amongst the Yoruba of Western Nigeria, the use of talking drums was highly developed and it was in fact, shaped and known as a *dun-dun*. The drummer holds the *dun-dun* over his arm and strikes it with a curved, hammer-like stick. On the outside of the talking drum are tightened leather cords that the drummer can squeeze to control the pitch of the drumbeat. The actual beat of the drums, as indicated, can travel for several miles across the wide-open expanses of the African plains. In *Things Fall Apart*, the celebrated African writer Chinua Achebe describes that the Ibos of Eastern Nigeria widely used the talking drums to send out messages and gather people of the society.<sup>18</sup> Yet talking drums were used not just to send messages. They also played a role in several social rituals in African societies, such as to pay solemn tribute to tribal spirits or to honor living tribal chieftains.<sup>19</sup>

The talking drums have often symbolized the power of a traditional political leader in Africa. The specific talking drum patterns and rhythms were also closely linked with ogun, or spiritual beings associated with the traditional Yoruba

beliefs in Nigeria or Ghana. Early slave traders felt threatened by the talking drum because of the potential of talking drums to “speak” in a tongue unknown to them.<sup>20</sup> At the advent of European colonial rule, the talking drum telegraphy had developed to a level that the colonial administrators were shocked to realise that drum messages could be transmitted at the speed of a one hundred miles per hour.<sup>21</sup> Researchers—primarily anthropologists, sociologists, and linguists—have documented their findings about the talking drums in Africa.<sup>22</sup> Talking drums are known by various names in some parts of West Africa. Table 2 below lists the names that different ethnic groups in Africa applied to talking drums.

**TABLE 2: Ethnic Groups and Indigenous Names of Talking Drums**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Indigenous name of the talking drum</b>
Wolof of Senegal	<i>Tama</i>
Yoruba of Nigeria and Eastern Benin	<i>Gang gan; Dun Dun</i>
Akan of Central Ghana and Cote D’Ivoire	<i>Dondo</i>
Hausa of Northern Nigeria, Niger, Northern Ghana, Benin and Cameroon	<i>Kalangu</i>
Songhai and Zarma of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger	<i>Doodo</i>

Source: John F. Carrington, *Talking Drums of Africa* (NY: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 75. The ethnic groups listed above are not all inclusive. The sample illustrates that the talking drum was the traditional telegraphy of most parts of Africa. Although the general name has been lumped up as talking drums, there is no single international drum language. When a drum is used in speech mode, it is culturally defined and depends on the linguistic and cultural boundaries of a particular society. Consequently, communication could suffer from translation problems as in vocal communication.<sup>23</sup>

### **Town Criers in Pre-colonial and Colonial Africa**

Historically, town councils employed town criers to make public announcements in the streets. In a broader context, in Africa these muscular men were charged to broadcast news to the villagers in the evenings.<sup>24</sup> They were

sometimes known as “gong-men,” and were typically teenage boys who carried along a noise-making instrument that they used to disseminate general information about events and the social welfare of communities. They have always constituted an important political tool for local chiefs, as their use was a low cost means of communication that reduced confusion about new information. Chiefs and/or kings had a near monopoly on this form of indigenous communication. Town criers necessarily must possess loud voices and the ability to shout at a volume audible to most of the people in the village. After a metal gong was hit twice or thrice the town crier delivered the message. This was repeated in all the corners of the village.<sup>25</sup>

According to Oludayo Ebenezer Soola, Reader, Department of Communication and Language Art, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, town criers constituted communication wings of traditional rulers and traditionally took messages from royal palaces to the community.<sup>26</sup> They carried a large conical metal gong that they normally would beat with special sticks or carved bamboo rods.<sup>27</sup> They beat the gong round the village attracting the attention of people and then recited whatever information they had to pass out.<sup>28</sup> The town crier was usually an eloquent fellow who understood the community and wherever he beat his gong, heads turned and ears twitched to listen to him.<sup>29</sup> The people recognized that the message was important and urgent to warrant the dispatch of the crier. Soola further describes the town crier as a potent force in information dissemination and an authoritative voice of the traditional authority.<sup>30</sup> Most of the time, they went round the village early in the morning or early in the evenings. In doing so, the town crier took advantage of the morning’s calm or the return of people home from the day’s activities in the evening.

The town crier relayed information to his audience, the villagers, and simultaneously to the compound heads. These village leaders, in turn, delivered the message vertically to the people through family heads. The messages relayed were diverse. They ranged from those that called the people to perform duties on behalf of the community, such as carrying building materials to construct a new building to those that called the people to congregate for political or social purposes. In most Nigerian polities, these messages passed through several stages. From the source, such as the Oba, Emir, and Council of Elders whose deliberations occasioned the order, to the village square meetings. The town crier timely reminded the people of the messages and accelerated the peoples’ compliance. In the same vein, other special messages, apart from the local ones from local government, from national and state levels circulated round the village to both groups and individuals, vertically and horizontally. In his seminal path-breaking

novel, *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe gives a graphic description of town criers in pre-colonial Nigeria. Amongst other things, he said, “Okonkwo had just blown out the palm-oil lamp and stretched himself on his bamboo bed when he heard the *ogene* of the town crier piercing the still night air. *Gome, gome gome, gome*, boomed the hollow metal. Then the crier gave his message, and at the end of it beat his instrument again.”<sup>31</sup>

While considerable scholarly attention has been focused on African town criers, those in Cameroon have been less studied. For instance, Onuora Nwuneli attempted to explore traditional forms of communication in Africa. He opined that town criers were widely used in West, Central and East African communities, no matter the situation. He further maintained that the town crier was invariably used as the all-purpose, general information disseminator.<sup>32</sup> They were imbued with obstreperous voices, and were charged to broadcast news to the villagers.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, pre-colonial and colonial Bamenda have not benefitted from much study of its communication.

### **Town Criers in Pre-colonial and Colonial Bamenda Grassfields**

As outlined above, the Bamenda Grassfields is located in the Northwest of Cameroon. Town criers constituted an important political tool for the *foyns* (variously known as chiefs or kings). *Foyns* had a near monopoly on this form of indigenous communication because they often passed information from the palace to other parts of the *foyndom* or kingdom.<sup>34</sup> Generally speaking, the Tikar (see table above) have strong and well-organized political institutions. The political and administrative leader of the group is known as the *foyn*. The institution of the *foyn* is sacred. The *foyn* is the custodian of the culture of the people and it is assumed that he performs quasi-religious functions. The jurisdiction that he governs is known variously as *foyndom*, kingdom and chiefdom.<sup>35</sup>

Amongst the Kom, one of the largest ethnic groups of the sub-region, a town crier was known in the local diction as *bu-ngem*, literally meaning the man who hits the gongs. Gongs were made up of metal with a hollow core. Because of the hollowness once it is struck, its sound was loud and could travel far. Amongst the Wimbun the town criers were known as *ngwentou*. The iron technology used to make the gongs has a deep history going back to the time when people settled in the region and became quite pronounced in late nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> An anonymous informant who had witnessed a town crier describes this particular town crier in the following words:

*Nyongo M+ja*—(a name that would strike a bell for the older



generation of Kom people in Kom and diaspora) was a town crier in Njinikom, wag for the kids, singer for the folk, poet for the listeners. His armpit was his guitar. His chest was his drum. His stomach was home to his many characters. This is the first ventriloquist I met in the kingdom of Mountains; Sad, this talent brought him no income, but it earned him popularity. Children loved him in Njinikom. We used to follow him up and down the hills of Mungoango.<sup>37</sup>

If *Nyongo M+ja* was a typical town crier, it meant that he was appointed by the quarter head of the village. There were also town criers who were under the tutelage of the Foyn. Royal town criers were directly under the foyn and carried information to the villages and compound heads where the town criers of the commoners took the information to the nooks and crannies of the kingdom.

Another informant, Ngong, who was a royal town crier, narrated how he was recruited and the job description of a royal town crier. He said:

I was approached for this job through my father because he had been a town crier. My grandfather too had done the job in the days of *foyn* Ngam (1912-1926). My father then decided that I should be a royal town crier. My job was to take information from the foyn and broadcast it to the nearest village. The village will then take it to the compound heads which will then finally go round. This job was done in the evenings and early hours in the morning. If there was community work like road construction, laying of wooden bridges or the meeting of the Native Court, then I will broadcast the information. This was during the days of *foyn* Nsom Ngwe'e (1956-73). I did this job till the death of foyn Jinabo II (1989) when I was sent on "retirement." It was a difficult job and no payment but I enjoyed it because I was working with the *foyn*.<sup>38</sup>

The physical condition of the town crier was important. As a result, only robust, healthy men were recruited and employed for the traditional service, which ensured that they were fit enough to carry out their duties. As far as the physical nature of these people was concerned, Captain L.W.G. Malcolm said, "In physical appearance, the men are well built and in many cases are of excellent physique. It is an extraordinary thing that whenever men have been recruited they always turn out to be first-class shots. This has been remarked over and over."<sup>39</sup> According to interviews conducted in this region, town criers were people from the lowest rungs

of the society and thus constituted what was called the commoners or the subalterns.

Yet their job was crucial to the community as attested by some informants during the fieldwork. For instance, Henry was born c. 1924 and lived to see the town criers. According to him, the town criers passed any useful information in the village. Their messages passed from when there will be community work to the judgment of cases in native courts. They usually broadcasted their messages during the evenings, and especially during the dinner period. This practice ensured that the crier's message reached the people during a quiet time. Once a metal gong was beaten three times people had to pay attention to get the message. In this sub region, which was still very communal in outlook, people did things as a community, such as men constructing bridges or roads or women tilling the farms of the *foyn*. The town crier communicated appointed days for communal works. Amongst the Chomba indigenous group of the Bamenda Grassfields, the town crier was often associated with the gong and he did not only pass the message verbally but also used the gong to lay emphasis on a message.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Talking Drum in Pre-colonial and Colonial Bamenda Grassfields**

Like most parts of West Africa, Cameroon widely used talking drums for communication. In a like manner, communication technologies in Africa developed through the ingenuity of the people. As far as the talking drum was concerned, the Australian born literary icon Shirley Deane first touched on them in *Talking Drums: From a Village in Cameroon*, although he never devoted any chapter to the talking drum per se.<sup>41</sup>

Writing in 1924 about the talking drum of the Meta, an indigenous group of the Bamenda Grassfields, the Assistant Divisional Officer (ADO) for Bamenda Division, Charles John Albert Gregg said, "The Meta are expert in tapping out messages and it is wonderful how many names, alarms and matters of everyday life, arranged in ancient times are remembered in the talking drums."<sup>42</sup> This means that apart from the talking drum merely used as a tool of communication, it was a storehouse or an archive where names as well as alarms of the everyday Meta country could be remembered. Carvers were imbued with the skills of societal history and could carve the drum in a way that once struck certain aspects of their history was broadcasted. Gregg maintains that the talking drum was used to get back his lost dog as he said: "The writer lost a dog, and the native drummer was able to find its whereabouts by means of his drumming."<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, he shows how the Meta used the talking drum on day-to-day

transactions and how the village genealogy could be remembered through the talking drum. As far as this aspect was concerned, he said:

It was never necessary to call a village head by messengers, the drum was sufficient. Anyone able to receive the messages of the Meta drums would be “au fait” with the greater part of the remembered clan history. The village is called up, then the name of the father or a well-remembered ancestor, and so on to the newly arranged name, which soon becomes familiar, through constant repetition, throughout the clan. . . . Each message has to be separately arranged, and the frequent use is remembered.<sup>44</sup>

In a broader historical perspective, the Meta talking drums illustrate how “African worked objects signify an archival dimension with a commemorative function. They impress onto their own society silent discourse and simultaneously, a loci of memory, recite silently their own past and that of the society that made them possible.”<sup>45</sup>

Finally, Gregg compared the talking drummer to the modern telephone operator. He said:

In effect, it is the same as when a telegraph operator becomes expert he ceases to think of dots and dashes or when recognizing the national anthem we never think of the notes of music, which go to make up the tune. . . . The members of *kwifoyn* are called by beating a tattoo on the iron gongs and when they have assembled legislation begins. After the debate a member dons masked dress and announces the order to the town, the chief by this time is back in his compound and with resignation say, “*kwifoyn* has spoken” thus clearing himself of the responsibility of an unpopular order.<sup>46</sup>

Generally, the above quotations from Gregg show how important the talking drum was in a typical Cameroonian indigenous setting in sending out messages. It also reveals the technology involved in the making of the drum and more importantly, he draws parallels between the talking drum specialist and the telephone operator. The iron tools used to hollow the tree to create the drum suggests the existence of an iron industry in nineteenth century Bamenda Grassfields. As a matter of fact, iron smelting in most parts of Cameroon, including the Bamenda Grassfields, was a very busy industry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>47</sup>

Apart from the art employed in the construction of the drum, family and genealogical history played out in the language of the talking drum. In other words, the talking drum acted as an archive of family memory. The mention of the phrase “members of *kwifoyn*” needs an explanation. *Kwifoyn* is the legislative arm of the traditional government in that part of Cameroon while the chief was the executive. This model mirrors the checks and balances in the Western model of government. The talking drum was used to invite the members for a meeting. This shows the extent of advancement of some pre-colonial and colonial polities in their original settings. It also shows the creativity of Cameroonians long before the colonial era and even in the post-colonial period. In 1938, Harry Rudin, assistant professor of history at Yale, is reputed to have said,

[E]vidence of high intelligence in the native is the use of the drum woven together in Southern Cameroons for sending messages. The two tones of the drum woven together by intricate rhythm made it possible to send by night as well as by day any message that could be spoken. It was an achievement in communication far superior to that of the Whiteman before the invention of the telegraph.<sup>48</sup>

It is likely that no one could have framed a more apt description than that made by Rudin. He also poured praises for the achievement of the Bamenda Grassfielders through the talking drum technologies. Talking drums were borne out of the necessity to communicate in pre-colonial Bamenda Grassfields. They no doubt suffered some drawbacks in that their sounds could not have transmitted information as far as the modern telegraph or today’s cell phones, but they were precursors to modern telephones. Through them, drummers disseminated messages in a relay manner to and through people. Those who first heard the message transmitted it to the people they met and so the chain continued.

In the pre-colonial period, experienced drummers trained those recruited to join them. This was because during *Ngumba* (a sacred society in the Ngemba palace made up of males who are feared and respected by all) sessions, fathers usually took their children with them, exposing them to the way the drummers played. The elders then trained those who developed an interest in playing the drum. Others developed the talent from birth.<sup>49</sup> The society trained as many drum players as possible so that when the need to communicate information arose, the *foyn* or chief looked for the closest drum player to relay the news.

Also, the drum had different rhythms depending on the type of message to be given. The people usually understood and interpreted the sounds of the drum. The people had names for the different sounds of the drums, which corresponded to

different ethnic groups of the region. For instance, amongst the Widikum, *Ngokoh* played when someone died, amongst the Babungu, *Ngo geu* called people to assemble in church. Likewise, in Babanki, *Ngo keben* meant dancing, amongst the Ngie, *Ngo Metabue* beat to assemble people, amongst the Ngemba, *Mbo Ngo* played if information had to be passed in the market, and amongst the Kom it was *wul-fi, ngu tum nkwifoyn*.<sup>50</sup>

Most scholars in the likes of Eugenia Herbert, Jason R. Young, and Elizabeth Oerhke hold the view that the talking drum was a sacred instrument as well as an institution in most parts of Cameroon as well as other parts of Africa.<sup>51</sup> These authors collectively and individually hold that rituals and rites were a means of bringing into limelight the religious experience of a group of people using the talking drums. Rituals and rites thus constituted some kind of religious expression. Rituals were a means of concretizing one's belief system and expressing one's experience between the super sensible world and the supernatural beings. In short and in simple terms, rituals were acts or forms of worship or communion and communication between one and one's objects of worship. This was the situation before colonization, but from the 1930s when colonial administration introduced landline telephones, there was a sharp decline in the use of the talking drum although it did not peter out completely.<sup>52</sup> However, they continued to hold sacred places in most Cameroonian societies.

Empirical evidence gathered from the field suggests that women were forbidden from playing the talking drum because it was sacred, but most informants failed to explain why women were excluded from using such technological objects as the talking drum or from being town criers. It could however be explained that like in most parts of Africa, in Cameroon women are still seen as the weaker sex and not masculine enough to do what men can do.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

Until the late colonial period, it was widely believed among Western historians that Africa, south of the Sahara had no "civilization" and thus no history. Others insisted that even if there were events of a historical nature, such a history was unknown and unknowable, since African societies, for the most part, were non-literate and as such left no records that historians could study. The era of decolonization, mostly during the 1940s and 1950s, and the immediate post-independence years witnessed a growing rank of Africanists who vigorously reject this eurocentric and anti-African historical epistemology that privileged civilization and written sources as the only rational bases for historical scholarship and that

denied the possibility of civilization and history to small-scale and non-literate societies dominant in Africa. With decolonization and independence came the era of nationalist and liberalist historiography, which rejected the notion of a barbaric and static Africa “without history.”

Communication has been one of the most important aspects of human civilization and thus human history. This article has taken the talking drums and town criers as indigenous forms of communication in Africa focusing on the Bamenda Grassfields of Northwest Cameroon as a case study. Using primary and secondary sources, the article has constructed the role of the indigenous people in using their environment to enhance communication long before the advent of colonial rule. The paper contends that the changing cultures of African societies notwithstanding enabled by technology to communicate, local people do not extrapolate what is modern while abandoning the old (such as the talking drums and town criers) completely. The paper has also shown how verbalized messages are communicated in local ways and how important such age-old acoustic speech devices are among the poor communities who may not afford to buy sophisticated modern gadgets for communication like the cell phone. Furthermore, interviews corroborated with colonial reports in the archives show a relationship between their migrations and town criers as well as talking drums. On a final note, the hope is that such studies based on African auditory production could be carried out elsewhere in Cameroon and Africa at large and hypothesis checked, tested, and compared to better have a fuller understanding of pre-colonial and colonial communication in Africa.

## Notes

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5. Ruth Finnegan, “Drum language and literature,” in *Oral literature in Africa*, ed. Ruth Finnegan and Mark Turin (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2012); John F.Carrington, *Talking Drums of Africa* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 75.

6. National Archives Buea, Cameroon (NAB) File No. Rg. (1924), 12, C.J.A. Cregg, “An

Assessment Report on the Meta Clan of Bamenda Division,” Cameroons Province, 1924. Except otherwise stated, all the files in this article are from NAB.

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8. Martin A. Klein, “African Social History,” *African Studies Review* 15, No. 1 (1972):18.

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10. V. Theissen and Dianne Looker E, “Cultural Centrality and Information and Communication Technology among Canadian Youth,” *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 1, (2008): 313; R. Mansell and R. Silverstone, *Communication by Design: The Politics of Information and Communication Technologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 44-47.

11. Thora Williamson, “Introduction,” in Anthony Kirk-Green, ed., *Gold Coast Diaries: Chronicles of Political Officers In West Africa, 1900-1919* (London and New York: The Radcliffe Press, 2000), 3-13. The genesis of this work is quite unusual and rather suggestive. Thora Williamson, the author of record, became acquainted with a retired member of the Colonial Service, Howard Ross, who had served in the Gold Coast from 1905 to 1920. Inspired by his reminiscences, she eventually made several trips to Ghana between 1966 and 1995 (when she was over seventy), solely for the purpose of transcribing the district diaries that were moldering in the National Archives. By the time she was finished with her avocation, she had transcribed by hand all or part of ninety-seven such diaries, encompassing half a million words.

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15. Ibid.

16. NAB, File Ab (1939) Bamenda Area Intelligence Report ; File Cb (1928) 2 Bamenda Division Annual Report for the year ending December 1928 by L.L. Cantle, ADO; R.W.M. Dundas, D.O.; N.C. Denton, D.O.

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18. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann, 1958), 96.

19. Ibid.

20. See *Africa Imports*, accessed June 29, 2013, [www.africaimports.com](http://www.africaimports.com).

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43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
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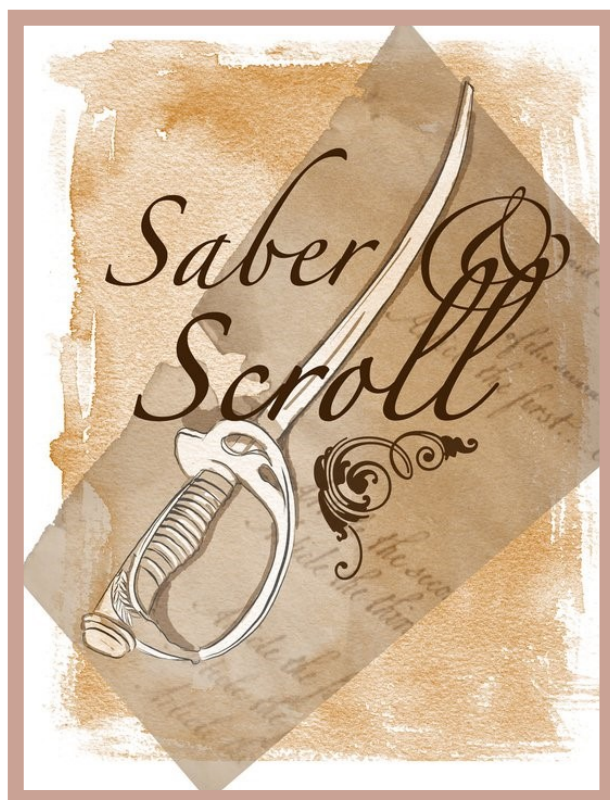
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## Vermont Soldiers in Control of the Home Front: Family and Social Guidance through Letters

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Jamie Alluisi

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With the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 came the immediate need for large numbers of men to join the Union ranks and put down the southern rebellion. As patriotic as any, Vermont men enlisted in volunteer regiments as a duty to their country and families, and to fulfill personal and social concepts of manhood and honor. These societal expectations shaped how Vermont soldiers looked upon their actions, as well as those of their friends and family on the home front. Through correspondence with family and friends, Vermont soldiers guaranteed that their behavior and motives for fighting were well known; they also attempted to maintain control and influence over the actions and opinions of those at home.

Although predominantly rural, Vermonters conformed to popular Victorian social norms that centered on concepts of manhood, gender-acceptable behavior, responsibilities to family, and tempering one's behavior for the betterment of society. These ingrained ideals did not cease for these men simply because they left for battle and were no longer around family or occupying their hometowns. Not only did these soldiers take these views with them and incorporate them into their daily military life, but they also espoused them to family and friends through letters. Letters served the purposes of delivering war and camp news, as well as ensuring that families were aware of the ideals of the soldiers for the war and understood what the soldiers expected of them while they were separated.

During this period of American history, men were mainly responsible for providing for their families while women remained in the home and raised the children. Society of the time dictated that both men and women operate in different spheres, each designed to best highlight and cater to the idea that men should operate in the wider world of commerce and industry while women remained at home tending to their families. The idea was that society operated best when each group knew their place and what was expected of them.

Men felt that it was their duty to regulate as much of their social and personal lives as they were able. It was the popular Puritan view of a "calling" that men responded to when they went out into the world of capitalism. This world of capitalism was a world of selfishness where men were required to be calculating, shrewd, and demanding in their various areas of employment.<sup>1</sup> Men understood that their fortunes could rise and fall unpredictably in this world. This uncertainty

in the daily lives of men encouraged many of them to look for ways to create structure and certainty in other areas of their lives.<sup>2</sup>

The structured world in which men functioned made it so they were always aware of exactly what was expected of them regardless of the unknowns. Men were required to work hard to support their families and to be strong role models for their children. In many ways, identity was based upon occupation, moral convictions, and gender. Society judged harshly any man who strayed from norms through vices such as drinking, and gambling or other atypical behaviors.<sup>3</sup>

Responsibilities to one's country were viewed in the same fashion as responsibilities to one's family. Though not confined to the traditional concepts of family, many saw the Union as a family unit that all must serve and defend when the situation called for it. Across the north, men frequently wrapped political discussions about the Union in familial terms, which allowed them to accept and process the political ideals more readily and to endure those hardships that came as a result.<sup>4</sup> Yet one must realize that by conveying things in ways that were familiar to the population as a whole it became easier for people to accept the trials ahead. Families of this era had expectations of each member and these expectations extended to society on a larger scale. Men were the proactive members of society, guided by strong ideals of what it meant to be a man and to be the breadwinner of a family. Men were the ones required to react to the call from outside sources to meet personal and societal expectations.

The start of the Civil War brought a clearer understanding of the concept and reality of men having to choose between responsibility to family, society, and country. For those who were single and had few responsibilities at that point in their life, the decision to enlist in the army and go to war was a simple one. Those who had families, businesses, or farms tended to find the task much more difficult to justify and accept. Rather than appearing as though they were choosing one over the other, the men described enlistment as an obligation. In joining the Union, the soldiers were protecting the homes of their family and friends from the threat posed by the Confederacy.<sup>5</sup>

At stake for many of these men was their very manhood—not in the physical sense but in the social sense. What men did in the world as an occupation defined who they were and offered clarity to the overall perception of their goals and sense of worth. The country needed them, the very society that they were part of and that allowed for this overall sense of manhood was crumbling. Not answering the call to fight in the war was, in some instances, the same as saying that those who stayed behind were less manly or that they did not deserve to hold the respect and social presence of those who were answering their nation's call.

Men looked at this call for troops as a duty and as a requirement of manhood. "Remaining a civilian was thought unmanly; going to war a proof of manhood . . . another attitude toward the relationship of soldiering and manliness was that claim that those who refused to fight were not men at all—they might as well be women."<sup>6</sup> It was the duty of men to defend their country, homes, and families; they would need to leave their families to do so.

The men, however, were not the only ones who society prompted to do their duty regarding the war and meet its demands. Women were also held to a patriotic standard that demanded they be willing to make any sacrifice that was necessary for their husbands to be at the disposal of the country. Since the role of women was in many ways a supportive one, these same expectations applied to their role in the war. War was a man's occupation and not a woman's, so it was thought that women should gladly and willingly support their men when they decided to go to war.

Charles Cummings, a Lieutenant in the 16th Vermont Volunteers, explained his motives to his wife: "I feel as if I had a duty to do here and I mean to do it to the best of my ability. If our regiment does nothing to distinguish itself and aid in putting down this rebellion, it shall not be my fault. I will do my duty, and then my sheets will be clear."<sup>7</sup> Cummings was determined to do what he felt was in the best interest of the country. He wanted to be successful and do his duty, by stating that his conscience would be clear if he did what was necessary to distinguish himself. Here we see the confidence of Cummings, he believes in the cause and in his ability to endure what is demanded of him. Men viewed their roles as proactive in this fight; they did not want to wait for the war to dictate to them what would happen. Instead, they hoped to take the fight to the enemy. This optimism is telling. Men such as Cummings were optimistic; they believed in their cause and saw the positive aspects of war. It is difficult to determine exactly what motivated this confidence, but it is telling that soldiers were so confident at the beginning of the war and expressed this confidence when they had yet to be in any fighting or endure any real challenges associated with warfare. It is easy to make such confident statements before one feels the reality of war.

Despite the pressure on the women to support the cause of war, as well as their husbands' willing participation in it, some women were hesitant and even worried about the outcome of this support. Mary Jane Henry, the wife of a Vermont soldier, wrote to her husband shortly after he left Vermont for a camp in New York, "I cannot bear to think seriously of your going off to war . . . it does not seem so nice to think of your going off to run such a risk. I do hope something will happen . . . to prevent you going."<sup>8</sup> Though not enthusiastic about her husband's

eventual departure for the field of battle, she was still willing to accept his decision even if that meant facing the challenges that were to come. She later went on to remind her husband that, though her life was entirely focused on him, “I do not let any one know how I feel. I am too proud for that. No one has seen me shed a tear since.”<sup>9</sup> The heartache that she—and other women—would feel clashed with social expectations forcing her and others to simply accept their circumstances.

Although they were leaving for war, many of the Vermont soldiers still tried to guide their families by explaining to them how best to behave, respond emotionally, and manage certain responsibilities. A primary concern for many of the men was that their wives would become too emotional over the separation and become sick or otherwise unstable. Prominent medical theories of the time indicated that if a woman was too emotionally or mentally excited or stimulated, then it could cause a great deal of nervous energy and thus lead to insanity or other mental problems. Women were encouraged to funnel any nervous energy that they were experiencing into the care of their families and household responsibilities.<sup>10</sup>

Men encouraged their wives to avoid over-stimulation. In response to his wife’s letter regarding her concern about his leaving for war, William Wirt Henry replied, “I thought you would do just as you said you would, ‘calm down’, and do nothing but take care of Mollie and I know very well if you did that you would be all right in a few days, and now I have to thank you for doing so, and being a good girl.”<sup>11</sup> He later went on to tell her that he was “so glad to hear that you keep brave yet—that is right—you must keep brave to the last. It is not half so dark as some people paint it.”<sup>12</sup> William attempted to keep his wife calm and not overly emotional about his being in the army, acknowledging the rumors that were surely spreading back home about army life. Regardless of this encouragement and the motivation of patriotic duty, women still worried about their loved ones.

Remaining calm was not the only advice that husbands offered their wives from the field. Men were also very concerned about their wives’ behavior and about those with whom they associated. Roswell Farnham was quick to give his wife advice on how she should behave and who were acceptable companions. Most of his advice, however, focused on maintaining the correct political outlook:

I saw Abby & Jenny Write in New York- and Mary Stibbins Davis. She is a secessionist & her husband is in the southern army. I told her she would not be very well received in Bradford. I hope you will treat her with becoming coolness. Tell Laura if Mary is a

secessionist I want her to keep away from her . . . I am afraid that some of the folks have been talking “copperheadism” to you by the way you write about my being a target for the government &c. Do not write any such stuff again, for if any of the rebels should get hold of your letters, I want them to think that you are ready to sacrifice anything to put down the rebellion.<sup>13</sup>

Roswell Farnham was very opinionated as to whom his wife and family should and should not talk to and about what subjects were acceptable. Here one sees that men had powerful feelings about what their loved ones did in their absence. It is difficult to know what Mary Farnham wrote in her letters but the reaction to them is unmistakable. Roswell Farnham had a clear understanding of what he was doing and was not receptive to any viewpoint that went against his ideals and goals. He wanted his wife to share his viewpoints. Discovering that she said things in opposition to the positions he held caused him concern. It could indicate to someone that his family did not fully support the Union cause. Men expected their family to be supportive of the cause for which they were fighting; to hear otherwise proved to be grounds for great consternation. It was appropriate for that time and social context for him to reprimand his wife for what she had been writing. This was a key method of men finding ways, even from the battlefield, to guarantee that their families upheld the male view. Society expected women to keep their political views private and to behave in ways that would positively reflect upon their husbands.<sup>14</sup>

Society expected women to keep their political views private and to behave in ways that would reflect positively upon their husbands. While some men reacted with direct censure when discussing with their wives some of what had been written, others took a different approach and instead told their wives of undesirable behavior they witnessed in others. For instance, Captain Valentine Barney described to his wife a visit made to an army hospital in Virginia, which cared for both Confederate and Union wounded soldiers. According to Barney, several Union women visited the Confederate soldiers and brought them gifts. He stated that these activities only benefitted Confederate wounded and that Union troops were overlooked. In relaying this information to his wife he highlighted the type of behavior he did not wish to see repeated by his associates.

Where some used references of events they encountered to promote certain behavior from their families, others deployed less subtle tactics. Newly married Vermont Colonel Wheelock Veazey was persistent in telling his wife how his world revolved around her and of her devotion to him. He frequently

wrote her that, “You must be good & happy & confident & love your husband. . . . The best of all is to know that I have such a good wife. I know you are good, & try hard to do all you can to be good.”<sup>15</sup> Here one sees that Veazey is reminding his wife as much as himself that she is devoted to him and will behave in his absence. Having married just two weeks before leaving for war, Veazey was still in the honeymoon stage. He wished to be reassured that all was well in his marriage while war separated him from his wife. Here is a prominent example of how society viewed proper behavior and how men would frequently speak to their spouses in paternal language. In referring to her as a good girl, Veazey is invoking some of the popular paternal ideals of the time. He looks at his wife as

one who is almost childlike and who needs constant reminders of doing what is right and maintaining proper behavior. It is difficult to determine if there was something about his wife’s personality or activities that caused him to feel that his wife needed these constant reminders on her behavior and devotion.

The need for women to support the decisions of their husbands regarding going to war was not the only major obstacle that women faced. The separation of men from their families caused major changes for Northern women. As societal constraints had previously barred women from the world of employment, finance, farming, and business, they were ill prepared to navigate those fields. Many

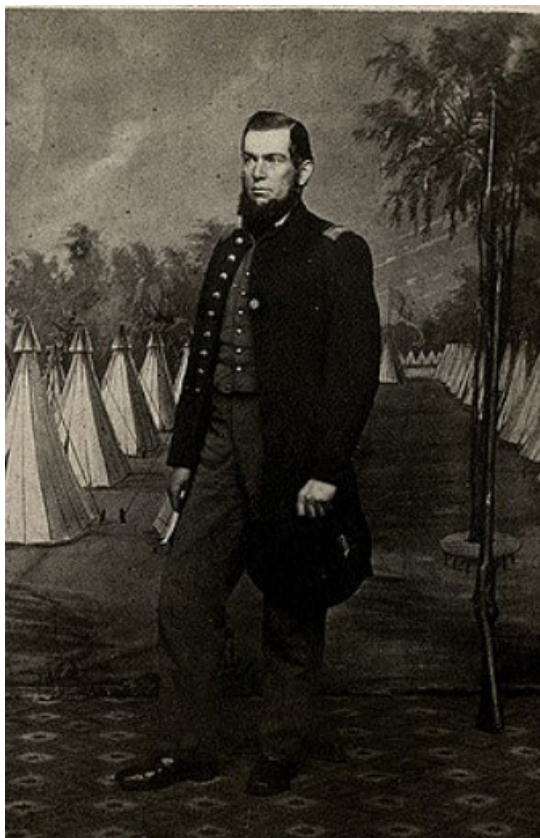


Figure 1. Valentine Goodrich Barney (1834-1889) by an unknown photographer. Houghton Civil War Photographs, Vermont Historical Society.



women whose husbands left for the war were now responsible for managing the household by paying bills, buying goods, and even finding a source of income. Their inexperience in the world of commerce and employment caused many women to be taken advantage of when negotiating contracts and maneuvering through the economic responsibilities required of them.

Some Union women did not experience financial difficulties when their husbands and sons went to war. Those women whose families were financially stable, or who had relatives with whom they could live, found the experience much more tolerable and even comfortable. This, however, was not the standard for Northern women, especially those from farming families. The loss of their husbands to the war meant that women had to step in and manage both farm and family. Entire families usually worked many of the farms that operated in rural areas, such as Vermont. The loss of men to the war made labor scarce and jeopardized production.<sup>16</sup>

Some husbands attempted to guide their wife's decisions and actions in the marketplace by suggesting bills to pay, livestock to buy, and decisions to make. Charles Cummings encouraged his wife in a letter by saying, "I am glad that you get along so well with the things at home. I knew you would as soon as you had had a little experience. You will have a good supply of garden vegetables and pork."<sup>17</sup> He then went on to encourage his wife to discuss speculating in sheep with his father, for he was confident that they would be a sound investment in the future. Though anticipating being able to participate in the rewards of such speculation, some did not consider what their families would do with these additional responsibilities if they did not make it home.

Those who left home did so to fulfill their roles as men, but this did not mean that they were unaffected by the events taking place on the home front, or that they were not involving the home front in the events occurring in camp. Soldiers took the rumors and opinions of those at home as though they were facts and many soldiers spread rumors themselves. Soldiers also informed families and loved ones on the behavior of those in the military.<sup>18</sup> This attempt to connect to home through letters, and even rumors, allowed the men to feel that they were still involved in many ways with the community they left behind.

Although the men at war worried about the behavior and activities of those at home, they also felt it important to share their views on the war and army life. The behavior of fellow soldiers, as well as the daily occurrences of camp, filled the letters. Recently promoted Lieutenant Colonel Valentine Barney of the 9th Vermont shared a great deal with his wife. While some of the experiences he shared were amusing, many indicated just how hard life could be for some of

these men. On August 20, 1862, Barney wrote to his wife, "I went out to get the relief guard off and while at work I heard the discharge of a gun up in quarters. I sent up a sergent up to see what was the trouble and found that a man in company 9 had shot himself (and probably purposely) right through the body while lying down, he died instantly."<sup>19</sup> Although the men were motivated to serve their country, there were times when the hardships were more than some could bear. This was not the only suicide that Barney dealt with; while waiting to be exchanged at Camp Douglas, another of his soldiers committed suicide, and he discussed with his wife the challenges of attempting to keep the morale up in such conditions.

The bleak outlook of some aspects of these letters sharply contrasted with the frequent stories of antics that sometimes occurred in the camp. One of the most amusing instances that Barney mentioned, in regards to attempting to bring up the morale of the men, was a joke that he played on a fellow officer. He wrote,

Co. Lieut Sewell . . . has just got a letter from his wife and is now reading it and is expecting to find that some of his folks are dead. I got the letter from the office and before giving it to him I painted around it with ink and make it look like a mourning envelope, and his eyes stuck out when he first saw it, now he has smelt the rat and the boys are having quite a laugh at him to think how he was fooled. We have to make a little fun occasionally some way and sometimes at someone's expense, for without we had something of that kind to enliven our spirits in this monotonous camp life, we would all rest out.<sup>20</sup>

Any individual in a situation such as Barney and his troops at Camp Douglas needed to find ways to decompress as well as find some amusement in their present circumstances. Barney did take a gamble in this situation. However, there could have been bad news in the letter, and his actions could have caused more pain or even conflict with Sewell. The main thing to notice here was not the gamble made by altering the appearance of the letter, but the fact that Barney was confident enough in his knowledge of the type of person Sewell was that he knew he would not react badly to a practical joke. It was important for Barney and his troops to have instances in their daily life that allowed for amusement and camaraderie, a chance to look at their lives in a way that was more relaxed and outside of stressful daily responsibilities.



Figure 2. Group of Company F, 4th Vermont soldiers in camp by an unknown photographer. Houghton Civil War Photographs, Vermont Historical Society.

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While there were instances of antics carried out in camp to raise morale, it was the poor behavior of some of the soldiers that were discussed in letters home. Antics and amusement were part of life, but soldiers commented on behavior, especially bad behavior, more frequently due to the impulse associated with ensuring that each person behaved in a way that was socially acceptable and not embarrassing to those back home. One area of behavior that was heavily discussed was drinking. In dealing with a drunken soldier, Barney discussed the fact that this was not typical behavior for his soldiers for they were a temperance group. There was, however, one instance where he acted to punish some drunken soldiers:

The other day for stealing whisky of the commissary and getting drunk, I took three barrels and had holes cut through the bottom large enough to let their heads through and put them on the men so all that was to be seen of them was their heads sticking through the ole and a part of their legs & feet. I kept them marching with them marching

with them on for three days & nights- 4 hours on and 2 off and gave them nothing but hard bread soaked in whiskey- and I don't think they will steal whiskey again soon.<sup>21</sup>

Disciplining a soldier was in many instances a public event. If a soldier had become publicly drunk, gotten into a fight, stolen something, or disobeyed a direct order, they merited public punishment. This insured that everyone was aware of the repercussions of these offenses. Drinking was a common infraction due to the availability of alcohol from suttlers in the camps. Soldiers who were far from home and stressed because of their current circumstances found some comfort in the drinking. While Army regulations did not completely prohibit drinking, soldiers were highly encouraged to refrain from drinking based on social cues, and the desire to remain in control of their faculties. By putting the soldiers in a barrel and making their punishment public, Barney made it known to not only the other soldiers but also to those at home that he did not tolerate specific behaviors.

Soldiers were not shy about sharing their positive and negative views of those around them. Some did not know what judgment to form about events around them. While the punishment of comrades was sure to receive space in a letter, soldiers also discussed the officers that they admired and those that they doubted. First Lieutenant Chester Leach did not understand the actions of his superior officers. In July of 1861, he wrote, "There is quite a disaffection among the men towards the Col. They think he is rather cross & severe. . . . He has forbidden all selling of eatables around the camp & our Capt was officer of the day yesterday & he permitted a woman to sell her stuff so the Col has ordered him under arrest today."<sup>22</sup> Though not openly praising his superior's actions nor justifying the views of the men towards the colonel, Leach still indicated that these actions affected him and he was trying to determine how he should respond to them. The fact that he noticed the men's attitude towards their commander indicated that he was aware of what was going on within his camp, even though he did not indicate his support of this position.

War-related issues on the home front, such as conscription, were also important to soldiers in their letters. They could assure that others were aware of their views on the situation, and vent any frustration that they had. Private Theodore Barton wrote in 1863:

I understand that they are going draft in the north and I hope they will for there is some that I should like to meet as I am going home

so that I can say to them as they say to us give it to hem we can whip them they will get sick of giving it to them and will find it no so easy whip them as it is to stay at home and say we can whip them but they will have to lend a hand and will not think it so much fun when they come to try it.<sup>23</sup>

Regardless of the frustration resulting from those on the home front who spoke of bravery while staying out of the army, the soldiers were still determined to do their duty and continued to encourage their families to both support the war and accept their decision to serve. Hiram Barton explained in a letter to his sister:

I don't expect to get out of service less than a year and a half but I hope we will for I am tired of soldiering and killing is worse than all the rest but that is not my fault if men risk their lives and try to take others in trying to destroy the best government the world ever knew I have no objection to their being killed and think it no loss to the country.<sup>24</sup>

In comments such as this, it is apparent that many of the soldiers used their letters as an opportunity to not only encourage their families to support them but also as a way of reminding themselves why they were fighting and experiencing the hardship of war.

Letters between siblings and spouses were a way for families to have some semblance of structure and unity amid the fog and chaos of war. The Civil War served as a time when men and women had to re-examine their concepts of duty, honor, and responsibilities. The loss of men from the home and workforce caused many women to be placed in situations they were not ready for nor capable of handling. The war took men from homes and towns where they had control over their futures and lives and put them into a position where little made sense. The rapid and drastic changes for both genders in society caused each to act in ways that best helped them cope with the changing situations and find ways to survive. While women were still in many of the same roles as caretakers (albeit in an expanded capacity), men found themselves in a dangerous world that made little sense. They were required to conform to regulations that they did not put upon themselves and to fulfill all duties asked of them. While much of this still holds true to the social ideals of the time, the circumstances were unusual.

In attempting to maintain control over their lives and their families, men took every action that they could to participate in home life. Whether it was by

giving advice on how to behave, providing guidance on the proper way to support the war, or even by telling about the activities in camp, men reached out to connect to a world they knew in an effort to not only feel, but guarantee, that their previous social roles were not only fulfilled but relevant.

## Notes

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2. Ibid., 30.

3. Ibid., 26-27.

4. Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14-17.

5. Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union* (London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 22-25.

6. Mitchell, 4, 12.

7. Charles Cummings letter to his wife, Nov 8, 1862.

8. Mary Jane Henry, letter to William Wirt Henry, May 15, 1861.

9. Mary Jane Henry, letter to William Wirt Henry, May 31, 1861.

10. G.J. Barker-Benfield, 50-55.

11. William Wirt Henry letter to Mary Jane Henry, May 19, 1861.

12. William Wirt Henry letter to Mary Jane Henry, June 3, 1861.

13. Roswell Farnham letter to Mary Farnham, May 13, 1861, May 1, 1863.

14. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, ed. *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War* (London: Oxford University Press, 2006), 66-69.

15. Wheelock Veazey letter to his wife, July 19, 1861 and August 2, 1861.

16. Hal S. Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 7-18.

17. Charles Cummings letter to his wife, November 22, 1862.

18. Charles Cummings letter to his wife, December 16, 1862.

19. Valentine G. Barney letter to Maria Barney, August 20, 1863.
20. Valentine G. Barney letter to Maria Barney, February 22, 1863.
21. Valentine G. Barney letter to Maria Barney, March 26, 1864.
22. Feidner, Edward J, "Dear Wife" *The Civil War Letters of Chester K. Leach* (Burlington: University of Vermont, 2002), 8.
23. Theodore Barton letter to sister, February 25, 1863.
24. Hiram Barton letter to sister, June 23, 1863.

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## The American *Übermensch*: History of Superheroes

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Ryan Lancaster

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Every civilization has its own mythology. The Greeks had their Olympians. The Vikings had their Asgardians. Early settlers in the United States had folklore characters like Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill. Today, modern man has the superhero: vigilantes that have power, depth and demand admiration or fear by all. These characters exist on the pages of comic books that continue to entertain readers and enthusiasts. Much like the gods of old, superheroes have a direct correlation to history, and this is most notable in the United States because they remain a viable entertainment and art form that has influenced much of the American experience. In the same way, current events influence the direction a comic takes.

### Funny Papers

The “funny papers” gave birth to the illustrated adventure. Enthusiasts frequently cite the arrival in 1896 of a comic strip named *The Yellow Kid* in William Randolph Hearst’s *New York Journal* as the inauguration of North American comics. In the early 1900s, these strips grew into full comic books. The first adventure comics featuring Buck Rogers and Tarzan appeared in 1929.<sup>1</sup> These larger than life swashbucklers led to the creation of more characters. Proto heroes like Zorro, the Shadow, and the Phantom dished out their version of masked justice from panel to panel. However, with every major art medium comes the often misplaced and misguided suspicion, and they quickly became a scapegoat for an alleged moral decay in the youth of the country. Subsequently, as a cultural phenomenon, the comic book carries with it a stigma attached to its methodology, its content, its creators, authors, readers, and aficionados.<sup>2</sup>

By the early 1940s, a profitable comic book market targeting teenagers and young people existed with a range of categories that included adventure, action, mystery, teen, and romance. In 1938, Action Comics #1 presented Superman, the first comic book superhero.<sup>3</sup> As the moniker “super” implies, the superhero was more than the average protagonist. These leading roles often had supernatural abilities such as alien super sleuth Martian Manhunter and the “King of the Seven Seas” Aquaman. In addition, others, such as crime fighters Batman

and the Green Arrow, had access to implausible quantities of machinery and affluence to fight for justice.

It was at this time that the initial public outcry against superheroes surfaced. The 1940 editorial “A National Disgrace” by Sterling North of the *Chicago Daily News* was the first nationwide attack against comic books. Editors republished his work in dozens of newspapers and periodicals. North asserted that the,

[B]ulk of these lurid publications depend for their appeal upon mayhem, murder, torture, and abduction. . . . Superhuman heroics, voluptuous females in scanty attire, blazing machine guns, hooded ‘justice,’ and cheap political propaganda were to be found on almost every page. . . . Unless we want a coming generation even more ferocious than the present one, parents and teachers throughout America must band together to break the ‘comic’ magazine.<sup>4</sup>

### Assemble

Political agendas creep into every viable medium, whether intentional or otherwise. This is often the case with comic books. A prime example of this is Steve Rogers, or as he is known the world over, Captain America. He is a bridge between the super hero vigilante and super patriot war hero. A creation of a lab experiment gone awry, a frail American soldier is given the amplified peak of human physical and psychological training, as well as a “vibranium” alloy shield covered in stars and stripes. His first assignment: defeat the Nazis. Captain America’s super powers are less than most other costumed protagonist like meta-humans Superman or the Incredible Hulk. This promotes his individuality. His actual abilities lie in his strength and his management skills.<sup>5</sup>

Steve Rogers embodies the American soldier marching off to Europe to fight in World War II. Captain America is a flag bearer for American ideals; he expresses this to his troops:

These are dark and desperate times. I know that some of you are afraid. It’s alright. It’s perfectly natural. But I want you to know that I am not. I am not afraid to die this day because what we do here is necessary. It may seem impossible, our enemies may appear to be endless, but that doesn’t matter. Because there is no one else. Look at me. I believe in an idea, an idea that a single individual who has the right heart and the right mind that is consumed with a

single purpose, that one man can win a war. Give that one man a group of soldiers with the same conviction, and you can change the world.<sup>6</sup>

Captain America is different than most of the superheroes of his time, as he is “given” his powers and not born with them. Steve Rogers, as a creation of the American military-industrial complex, arises as an instrument of the institution and a replacement for American foreign policy. In his first issue, when a Nazi murders Dr. Reinstein, inventor of the super-soldier serum, Captain America catches the killer and delights the reader when he bursts into a chamber in Germany and beats Hitler with his fists. All this happened nine months before Pearl Harbor. Until the war’s end, Captain America saw combat with American soldiers in Europe and the Pacific. In addition, he exposed saboteurs and secret agents at home. Nevertheless, Captain America Comics folded in 1949 but the fear of communism gave him new purpose. In the 1950s he became “Captain America, Commie Smasher” as writers sought to nourish anti Soviet sentiment in the Cold War. This run of the series was short-lived, as the series offered no additional insight into Cold War issues outside the memorandum that Communists were malicious, fat, and poor dressers.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, Captain America interrupted the bad publicity that comic books received at the time. Detractors contended that one-quarter of comics sold in 1953 were crime or horror comics. Such headings as *Crime Does Not Pay* and *Tales from the Crypt* provoked a countrywide anti-comic book campaign that ultimately steered to a self-inflicted industry code for comic books in 1954. This included eradicating most adult oriented comic books. It also helped diminish the comic book marketplace. With sales plummeting as much as fifty percent, the market continued to wane during the 1960s. Many mature categories faded away, and the superhero genre became the largest field in the market.<sup>8</sup>

In the spring of 1954, United States Republican Senator Robert C. Hendrickson stated, “Significant public concern over the possible effects of comic books on the young mind exists.”<sup>9</sup> He went on to proclaim that crime comics were crammed with every method of depravity, brutality, and violence imaginable and further said, “They are produced for one reason only—they sell for big money, \$20 million annually.”<sup>10</sup> Senator Hendrickson went on to tie the publishers of crime comics with drug dealers, pornographers, theft, and general adolescent wrongdoing.<sup>11</sup> However, Captain America was a bright spot on the largely negative opinion of the genre. He was in essence, a hero for superheroes, providing a role model for the youth of America.

As public opinion in the United States changed, so did the direction of the Captain's series. A paradox in Captain America since the 1960s is the deviation amid American principles and American practice. As America evolves, Captain America's traditional character does not allow him to do the same. This anti hegemonic position is uncommon in a fictional genre that is generally about the preservation of the existing state of affairs. Superheroes are about the defense of life and material goods and virtually never seek the structure to transform profoundly.

Any character that pursues partisan activity or seeks monetary gain is, by comic book parlance, branded a villain. Consequently, Captain America inhabits a specific place within the realm of superheroes. The plots have the protagonist acting in the normal and traditional way, maintaining the status quo. Nonetheless, the authors of the scripts integrate rebellious depictions of a geopolitical nature into Captain America's plotlines and dialogues and at the same time strengthen the idea of American individuality.<sup>12</sup>

### **All New, All Different**

In the 1960s, comic books began to leap from the page and find their ways into other mediums. Batman was on television, and splash pages were in art galas. Artist Roy Lichtenstein's dependence on comic books by this time is copiously recognized. He did not create his scenes but bootlegged his characters and thought bubbles from already circulated comics. With only a few exclusions, Lichtenstein dodged distinguishable comic book heroes such as Superman and Batman. As an alternative, he used identifiable sorts and typical passages from the increasing amount of war and romance books distributed for a mushrooming teenage market after World War II.<sup>13</sup>

Topics that are more adult began to ooze from the writers and illustrators of comic books, especially from frontrunners at Marvel Comics. Drug use and racial prejudice were commonplace, especially in books like the *Uncanny X-Men*. "Feared and hated," as the platitude states, by normal human beings for their unpredictable differences and supposed benefits, the X-Men are a race of super-human mutants with powers provided by a coincidence of biology. As the targets of xenophobia, bigotry, or homophobic violence, the X-Men are likewise powerless to castoff or refute their powers but chastised by family, friends, and others for having them.

This is a first appearance of unenthusiastic heroes, left to defend Americans from not just super villains, but other Americans as well. X-Men author

Stan Lee expounds just that “people fear things that are different,”<sup>14</sup> and the comic’s innumerable authors and aficionados contend that its anti-despotic meaning can be useful to any individual or populace suffering from one or another form of coercion within a governmental structure. Past X-Men writer Joe Casey states that the X-Men plea to “every oppressed minority and disenfranchised subculture, and numerous decriers have protracted analyses of X-Men outside the typical arenas of race and sexuality in order to deduce the comic book through the discernments of McCarthy-era America and with respect to the anti-Semitism that its authors confronted within the comic book industry itself.”<sup>15</sup>

The main protagonists and antagonists of the book were unconventional as far as the typical comic book character went for the time. The story of the X-Men has orbited around the racial maneuverings of the mutant extremist Magneto and the gallant pacifier Professor Charles Xavier. Magneto, a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust sees race war with humans as unavoidable. The Brotherhood of Mutants (or his Acolytes) rejects the possibility for conciliation and defends the formation of a mutant state as desirable to the only other scenario: the enslavement of “mutant kind.” Contrariwise, the compassionate Professor Xavier and his pupils counter Magneto’s thoughts. They would rather work with both their mutant adversaries and humans to achieve nonviolent cohabitation. Magneto and Professor Xavier are in the likeness of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. and that is how the reader should approach these two characters. They both hold true to mutant kind. Magneto has a very separatist outlook, yet Professor X trusts that all men and mutants are equal.

These far-reaching metaphysical equivalents of Xavier and Magneto’s connection to the African-American civil rights frontrunners is not a direct parable. A blue-blooded white American who inherited a considerable family wealth, Xavier does not merely pass as a regular human. He even masks the secret motives of his school being a haven for mutants and even his own mutation until he is “outed” by a competitor. While Magneto’s distinctiveness is far more fashioned by the violent certainties of discrimination, the regularity with which he declares himself sovereign of one country or another and heartlessly slaughters his rivals scarcely makes him a consistent point of empathy for readers. His actions are a troubling connotation of non-whiteness or strangeness with unwanted and malevolent conduct.<sup>16</sup> Yet, the distinction from right and wrong can become confusing by the actions of these characters, as villains like Magneto or Bolivar Trask felt they were doing what was necessary for their race, and not just for personal profit (i.e. Lex Luthor’s ludicrous schemes at global domination which riddled Superman comics at the time).

The fight for equality rests on the shoulders of the mutants and other civil rights activists. The message is clear—youth has influence over adults. This is a very empowering message to teenage readers. Xavier starts an institute to teach mutants, not humans. His justification for doing so is that when humans see that the mutants do not endanger society, they will have no motive to fear them. The analogous stratagem of teaching African Americans on how to work better with Whites was encouraged by some African American leaders in late nineteenth and early twentieth century, principally by Booker T. Washington. Nevertheless, this approach was completely gone by the 1960s, when Malcolm X, King, and other civil rights leaders all supported some sort of opposition. Furthermore, Xavier seldom truly agitates crusades, or even voices out for mutant rights. Instead, he concentrates on persuading the X-Men to use their tremendous talents to defend a world that dislikes and fears them from other, more malicious, mutants. This is comparable to King protecting the White majority from Malcolm X and the Black power crusade rather than struggling for African American egalitarianism and impartiality.<sup>17</sup>

The Vietnam War and race relations polarized America, and comic books echoed these concerns. In a 1968 book, *Silver Surfer*, (one of the most self-sacrificing and yet most beleaguered cosmic entities in the Marvel universe) bitterly declared: “Of all the countless worlds I’ve known . . . of the myriads of planets upon which I’ve trod . . . never have I known a race so filled with fear . . . with dark distrust . . . with the seeds of smoldering violence . . . as this . . . which calls itself Humanity.”<sup>18</sup> The 1970s saw a grander amount of social obligation and commitment amongst comic book artists, many of whom had grown up reading comics as storybook essentials and had consequently become aware of the changing times. Particularly, both DC and Marvel were to feature honest, forthright, and open dialogues of drug compulsion, difficulties of the inner city, discrimination, and other present-day social concerns in their superhero titles.<sup>19</sup>

A deeper understanding of the characters allows one to understand the message the writers and illustrators included in their work. Readers eyeing for practical equivalents for Xavier and Magneto should observe the lives and labors of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. du Bois. Like Xavier, Washington stressed the want for the burdened group to work together with the prevailing group (Whites) and saw schooling of African Americans as the principal means to achieving approval and acceptance. In the meantime, du Bois started out as Washington’s collaborator but over time grew progressively critical of Washington for his reluctance to refute Whites about African American civil rights. Mr. du Bois called Washington “The Great Accommodator,”<sup>20</sup> but the two men sustained



a continuing interchange about discrimination and the African American fight, long after they began to diverge on the best way to attain these rights. Yet the Magneto/du Bois parallel is also inconsistent. Contrasting to the habitually iniquitous Magneto, du Bois never encouraged wholesale slaughter of Whites and was compassionate towards the egalitarian communist dogma.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1970s, the young male comic fans that patronized comic shops soon found themselves branded as “fan boys.” In addition to fan boys, these shops catered to readers of comic book pornography, a profitable genre for both vendors and publishers.<sup>22</sup> Comic book circulation considerably shifted from newsstands and other all-purpose wholesale outlets to distinct comic book shops. The newfangled shops depend on direct distribution, as stores preordered comic books with stringent restrictions on return of unsold books. This transformation led to an adjustment in the proportion and kind of persons reading comics. By the end of the decade, the comic book market was a minor subgroup of teenagers and college-age male readers.<sup>23</sup>

Super villains evolved from the stereotypical world domination scheme to something far much sinister: gentrification and racial genocide. Inhabitants of the “X-universe” are a range of anti-mutant hate assemblies such as Friends of Humanity, Humanity’s Last Stand, and Stryker’s Purifiers, which signify actual despotic groups like the Ku Klux Klan and a range of other White Supremacy assemblages. It is also noteworthy that, like some African Americans in the pre-civil rights South, many mutants keep their status concealed, hopeful to blend into conventional culture, while others want to be human so much that they agree to take a “cure” with unidentified possibilities.<sup>24</sup>

The X-Men comics do more than simply model a philosophy of acceptance and diversity. They scrutinize the grounds of bigotry and prejudice and pit opposing viewpoints against each other as dissimilar characters try to come to terms with the moral and psychosomatic insinuations brought on by the emergence of a new evolutionary chapter. Chromosomal mutations have given a minority of humans an assortment of various superpowers in this world. Mutants are projected as a parable for persecution overall. X-Men readers oversimplify Professor Xavier’s attitude of acceptance and acclimatization to other beleaguered clusters, containing ethnic and racial subgroups and gay communities.<sup>25</sup> Regrettably, the parallels are not at times ample.

### **The 11th Hour**

As Americans climbed out of the 1970s and into the 1980s, they had more

of a mindfulness towards the misgivings of themselves and their government. Skeptical and pessimistic were the status quo, and this mentality poured into the work of comics and superheroes. In such books as author Alan Moore's and illustrator Dave Gibbon's idealistically cynical *Watchmen* of 1986, former hero Adrian Veidt (Ozymandias) blows up a large portion of New York City in an effort to save the world. Yet, the peril of global disarray in *Watchmen* is vital to the main themes of personal interactions and desires. Each of the main characters is based on the comic book heroes of the 1930s and 1940s. These characters turn into masked protagonists who must manage their diminishing powers and changing times through its representation of the breakdown of the superhero order.<sup>26</sup> The anti-hero Rorschach mutters under his breath to his teammates the chilling sentiment Americans felt towards their bitter Soviet rivals: "No. Not even in the face of Armageddon. Never compromise."<sup>27</sup> The innate fear that Americans felt towards the impending nuclear destruction of the United States and the Soviet Union was palpable, and Moore preyed upon this mindset. *Watchmen* became an instant classic.

Comics in the 1980s became more introspective, and observed more of the internal struggle inside of man. A prime example of this is author Frank Miller, and his new-age noir books like *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Sin City*. In 1987, Miller teamed up with artist David Mazzucchelli to do a protracted series on the beginnings of Batman. The four issues of *Batman: Year One* expand on what was initially a two-page tale in a 1939 issue of Detective Comics. The proceedings that first took place in one or two panels spread over pages. Miller engaged the reader with memories blended with first-person accounts. This produced the air in which Bruce Wayne, unaccompanied in Wayne Manor, finally grasps the means and method in which to take vengeance for his parents' murder,<sup>28</sup> and offers a certain new level of angst to the character.

It was around this time that collectors found that comics had more than just an intrinsic value of entertainment, but a tangible one as well. With the rising interest in comic books in the 1980s, sales amplified into the early 1990s, until abruptly the market entered a calamity with an unexpected and sudden drop. In 1997, popular, mid-level comic books reported to have monthly sales of 40,000-60,000. The most prevalent comic book, *Amazing Spiderman*, had monthly sales of 234,000 in 1995, far outperforming the neighboring contender by more than double the sales.<sup>29</sup> It was safer to buy flag books with household names than obscure characters that most likely would not bring any financial value to a collection.

The 1990s saw a change in the mindset of Americans as well. As victors

of the Cold War and other military engagements like Operation Desert Storm, as well as enjoying a relatively successful economy, Americans dialed down the negative attitudes. The fight for equality and capitalism had moved to the “War on Drugs.” This, in turn, echoed in the pages of superhero books, with characters that ironically gained their superpowers from the use of drugs. Captain America, as already mentioned, is a prime example. While the drugs given to him by the United States government may have advantaged his beginnings, his sustained triumph ascribed to his constant hard work. A 1990s story had Captain America lose the gifts of the super-soldier serum, seemingly since it was straining his body. In truth, the editor’s column of the book clarified that the creative team behind this decided it was a way to teach the readers about the dangers of performance-enhancing drugs.<sup>30</sup>

Comic books have never been an exclusively American art form or entertainment. The rest of the world also had their own versions that grew to the same heights and notoriety as American books. However, they did offer a different approach to storytelling. These books eventually made their way to the United States, mostly from the growth of internet business. American comic books are still led by superheroes, even though a sundry collection of categories for both youngsters and grownups does exist. Japanese books called *manga* also have become gradually widespread over the last few decades, outfitting an adolescent market.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, books still lost steam in the shops, and Americans just were not buying as many comics as they had done prior. The overall estimated comic book sales in the United States in 1993 were at \$850 million. By 2001, when the business stabilized, sales had deteriorated to an appraised \$225 million. Efforts to lift comic book sales have incorporated larger collaborations with the feature film industry by making motion picture accounts of comic books. Instances are *the X-Men*, *Batman*, and *the Incredible Hulk*, as well as different graphic novels, such as *Ghost World*, *the Losers*, and *Road to Perdition*.<sup>32</sup> Film adaptations of comic books have completely rejuvenated the field, and opened up a completely new market for readership that had not been there prior.

However, this is still a venue of art and entertainment that met with some resistance by the media. Comic book content remains branded as attending to macho-imagined identification in superhero comics or aiding in depraved wishes in books with sexually overt material. A vital facet of the stigma of comic books has been worldwide disapproval of them as an art form.<sup>33</sup> Many of the depraved or lower inhibitions that are synonymous with the mentally ill are avenues of storytelling in the comic world. Sex, drugs, and violence are still customary in

most books, and thus receive backlash from the moral majority.

Still, the Information Age opens up for creative minds and artists alike to fashion more superheroes and tales of their adventures. Stan Lee, who toiled exclusively for Marvel for sixty years, engaged in a 2000 contract to pen comic books for DC while he continued to yield the regular *Spiderman* comic strip for Marvel. The main comic producers in spirit have become advertising setups, with production detached to an intricate system of subcontractors. Publishers no longer need to rent costly city center space for their artists, most of whom work from home and make available their own working area and gear.<sup>34</sup> Accessibility to the field is at an all-time high.

Now the superhero has found its zenith, as many of these characters have become household names. There are just as many collectors that refuse to enjoy reading the books as there are that relish in the unique storytelling. On August 16, 2002, eBay had 16,558 auctions proceeding in Silver Age comics as opposed to 5,087 for comics printed before 1956 and 10,181 for comics distributed from 1970 to 1980. Clearly, time has an effect on comics from this period, so value differs extensively and is a main element of a comic's worth. The grading scale that has progressed in the market distinguishes various grades centered on such physiognomies as rips, folds, lightness of the paper, gloss of the cover colors, and state of the spine.<sup>35</sup>

Comic books are a worthwhile entertainment and art form that has swayed much of the American understanding. The proceedings in history openly affected superhero comic books as well. Much as society evolves and changes; so do its heroes and villains. This was not always the case, especially when comic books were in an embryonic state. As Josh Lambert said in 2009 in his piece in *Cinema Journal*, "The basic hero is really rather stupid. . . . [He] is always in trouble, and spends much of his time trying to clear his good name of crimes the villain has committed."<sup>36</sup> Currently, the hero is multifaceted, versatile, and sometime unscrupulous. As time evolves, so does art and literature.

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## How Rehabilitation and Reintegration Impacted the Masculine Identities of Disabled British Veterans of the Great War

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Susan Danielsson

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Private Charles Neal, formerly a milkman, served in the British army during the Great War. Months of exposure in the trenches caused him to develop chronic infective arthritis that left both legs nearly immobile and movement in his right arm restricted. Doctors rated him 100% disabled. After the Armistice, the 24-year-old married and had four children. He supported his family with his pension and odd jobs, but between 1922 and 1925, his service-related condition worsened. Unable to find employment, Neal and his family turned to the War Seal Foundation for assistance, which housed the family in the Fulham Road Mansion.<sup>1</sup> Neal's condition made it difficult, if not impossible, to compete with healthy or less disabled men for jobs. With a family to support, Neal used the Mansion's printing press to create stationery that he sold door-to-door. When the Mansion found out, they warned Neal to stop or face eviction because they were a residence and not a business. Neal failed to appeal the decision but continued to create stationery on the Mansion's printing press. He travelled further away from the residence to sell his goods to appease complaints but unsatisfied; the Mansion evicted Neal and his family.<sup>2</sup>

Neal was one of the 750,000 British soldiers left permanently disabled at the end of the war. By 1929, 1.6 million men received war pensions for service-related disabilities.<sup>3</sup> The amended Military Service Act of 1916 required every man—married or single—between the ages of 18 and 41 to register for conscription.<sup>4</sup> Volunteers and conscripts expected to return to their normal lives after the war. Most young men aspired to establish their male independence through secure employment, marriage, and potentially children. Older men with established occupations and families wanted to resume their pre-war identities. However, those unfortunate enough to return home disabled had to navigate an uncertain political and social landscape that left many without employment or state support. On November 24, 1918, Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated,

What is our task? To make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in. I am not using the word "heroes" in any spirit of boastfulness but in the spirit of humble recognition of the fact. I cannot think what these men have gone through. . . . There are millions of

men who will come back. Let us make this a land fit for such men to live in. . . . Let us make victory the motive power to link the old land up in such measure that it will be nearer the sunshine than ever before, and at any rate, that it will lift those who have been living in the dark places to a plateau where they will get the rays of the sun.<sup>5</sup>

His speech promised to ensure the well-being of the soldiers that served in the war. Despite his promises, the British government attempted to escape financial and social responsibility for the overwhelming number of injured and disabled veterans returning from the front. Instead, the government encouraged private charities, organizations, and philanthropists to assist disabled veterans with expenses such as medical care and housing. Without a set of standards on how to treat the disabled, charities and philanthropists based their treatments on making the disabled man an independent, productive member of society that would reaffirm the veteran's masculinity. Under the political conditions of 1914 to 1939, disabled veterans dealt with legislation and organization policies that acted against the base belief of treatment. Disabled veterans, like Neal, had the will and desire to work rather than live off charity but policies made it difficult to do so. These types of scenarios had a devastating impact on disabled veterans and their families. This paper will explore the connections between the rehabilitation and reintegration policies of 1914 to 1939 and their effect on the masculine identity of the disabled veteran.

### **Masculinity in the Great War and the Disabled Veteran's Dilemma**

During the early 1900s, British men maintained their identities through the traditional roles of protectors, providers, and sources of strength. Men had the responsibility to protect their families and country from hostile forces. Young recruits enlisted to fulfill the romantic image of the heroic soldier created from pro-war propaganda and examples like legendary heroes such as Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener. Many of the young men skipped their trade schools and apprenticeships to answer the call to arms. For others, the army offered a seemingly easy opportunity to support their families during hard times. Fathers and sons sent their paychecks home. Men expected to resume their pre-war identities or future aspirations of employment and families after the war. Reality crushed the dreams for those unfortunate to return disabled. The British masculine identity consisted of financial independence, owning a home, marriage with

children, and adapting to hardships without complaints.<sup>6</sup> Disabled veterans wanted to reaffirm their traditional roles but faced challenges with social role reversals with their wives and unemployment. Failure to meet masculine expectations often led to shame, even from fellow disabled ex-servicemen.

The declaration of war against Germany in 1914 unleashed a wave of national fervor and pro-war propaganda that encouraged men to enlist. Private William Dove recalled watching the Royal Fleet sailing across movie theater screens as “Britons Never Shall Be Slaves” played in the background. It stirred up such emotion he rushed to enlist.<sup>7</sup> Other forms of propaganda utilized legendary soldiers such as Kitchener to entice potential recruits. Private Thomas McIndoe, sixteen at the time of enlistment, stated, “It was seeing the picture of Kitchener and his finger pointing at you—any position that you took up the finger was always pointing to you—it was a wonderful poster really.”<sup>8</sup> Propaganda created the image of the heroic soldier, which symbolized the ultimate form of masculinity. The soldier embodied the pinnacles of courage, endurance, adaptability, and duty, and the experience of war would transform the men into “individuals with the moral power to uphold the social order they had defended while in uniform.”<sup>9</sup> Society encouraged potential recruits to enlist as a way for them to establish or prove their manhood. Failure to enlist led to shame tactics from the public such as the infamous white feather that called the man’s masculinity into question. Rifleman Norman Demuth stated,

As well as being given white feathers, there was another method of approach. . . . When she got to about five or six paces from you she would suddenly freeze up and walk past you with a look of utter contempt and scorn as if she could have spat. That was far more hurtful than a white feather. . . . I was looking in a shop window and I suddenly felt somebody press something into my hand and I found it was a woman giving me a white feather.<sup>10</sup>

These tactics branded men as cowards and often led the shamed men into enlistment such as in the case of Demuth. Literature also played an important role in pushing the rosy images of war.

In December 1914, the British government enacted the Defense of the Realm Act (DORA), which censored defeatist or realistic accounts from the front. Images of injured soldiers were restricted. The media only published pictures of wounded soldiers with socially acceptable injuries such as an arm in a sling or bandaged forehead. Britons relied heavily on the media for information on the

battlefront but the one-sided narrative impaired the public's understanding of the soldiers' experiences and the war.<sup>11</sup> Ian Hay wrote the fiction novel, *The First Hundred Thousand: Being the Unofficial Chronicle of a Unit of "K(1),"* which followed a freshly-recruited Scottish regiment through basic training and the trenches. Their time in training was light-hearted because they believed they were destined for victory. Later, the regiment billeted in a small village, where they held daily morning parades. The locals viewed them as "kilted heroes" and welcomed them with "patriotic sounds and waved handkerchiefs."<sup>12</sup> Even the public remained confident in a quick victory. Hay wrote, "The dear old country at large is its dear old self, as usual. It is not worrying one jot about Conscription, or us, or anything like that. The one topic of conversation at present is Charlie Chaplin."<sup>13</sup> Fiction emphasized the heroic image and comforted the readership on the status of the war, but the influx of dead and injured soldiers returning home painted a more sinister narrative.

By February 1915, an average of 360 servicemen returned home disabled each month.<sup>14</sup> Eventually, the British realized they faced a brutal, prolonged war. Once a supreme symbol of manhood, the disabled ex-servicemen turned into an embarrassing reminder of the cost of war.<sup>15</sup> Disabled veterans faced the challenge of reaffirming their masculinity through traditional male roles such as provider. Secure employment and pensions would have allowed the disabled to achieve financial independence and provide for a family. However, this was not the case. Negative perceptions towards veterans and censorship of their stories generated a lack of understanding of their impairments and needs. Employers avoided hiring disabled veterans and fired those discovered with invisible impairments such as psychological disorders. Disabled ex-servicemen A. Gear commented that his employer did not know he received a pension because Gear had lost jobs in the past after they learned of it.<sup>16</sup> Many men attempted to hide their disabilities, preferring to maintain their masculine identities. They jeopardized their economic situation with the façade.<sup>17</sup> Men with visible impairments had fewer opportunities for employment because healthy able-bodied men, even women, received preferential consideration. Disabled persons had to wait until 1944 before the British government passed the Disabled Persons Employment Act that protected the status of employment regardless of impairment.<sup>18</sup>

Phillip Gibbs, an official news correspondent for the British government, followed and observed soldiers in the trenches throughout the war. He developed a deep sense of respect and compassion for them and criticized the British for their lack of empathy. In his book, *Now It Can Be Told*, he remarked on the British's changed attitude towards disabled ex-servicemen. He wrote,

The consumptives, the gassed, the paralyzed were forgotten in institutions where they lay hidden from the public eye. Before the war had been over six months “our heroes,” “our brave boys in the trenches” were without preference in the struggle for existence. Employers of labor gave them no special consideration. In many offices, they were told bluntly (as I know) that they had “wasted” three or four years in the army and could not be of the same value as boys just out of school.<sup>19</sup>

The British advocated, even encouraged, potential recruits to enlist and head to battle. The same ones who advocated the war turned a blind eye to the needs of those who fought. Private Neal complained that “owing to my condition no employer will look at me.”<sup>20</sup> Employers feared their conditions might cause disabled men to take the regular sick time or prolonged hospital stays. Employment was a key factor in establishing financial independence, but it was hard to come by. Without proper opportunities for employment, most disabled veterans could not reaffirm their masculine identity. Many married men turned to their wives for financial support, which shifted the traditional role of provider onto the woman.

Financial difficulties had serious repercussions for the disabled men’s families. Their condition forced many wives unwillingly from their traditional gender roles. Women had to earn incomes as well as care for their household and children, which caused some to develop depression and anxiety.<sup>21</sup> The family dynamic negatively impacted both husbands and wives, but society encouraged disabled men to marry. Kate MacDonald argued that British literature pushed for marriage because the man promised financial support while the woman assumed physical support.<sup>22</sup> Under this mindset, disabled men needed to support wives to reaffirm their masculinity. Realistically, the men had trouble finding jobs to fulfill their marriage obligations, which caused many wives to take on the traditional role of provider. Many disabled veterans turned to the state, then charities, for assistance with job retraining and placement to remove the pressure from their wives. Few veterans had the financial means to support themselves and their families, much less pay for their rehabilitation.

Sir Brunel Cohen had both legs amputated from injuries sustained in the third battle of Ypres. His father was a wealthy businessman. Thus he had resources many lacked. He paid for housing and car modifications that allowed him to reach the second floor and drive independently.<sup>23</sup> Cohen spent the rest of his life advocating for veterans’ rights, but he held the belief disabled men and women had

the responsibility to overcome their impairment. He wrote, "Serious as the disability may be, it often can be, and is, overcome by the affected man or woman."<sup>24</sup> Disabled ex-servicemen had to conquer their impairment and resume normal lives, but public opinion made it difficult to secure much-needed employment.

Veterans with impairments faced a dilemma. Britons expected them to reaffirm their masculinity through financial independence and supporting families. The reluctance of employers to hire disabled veterans made it impossible for them to achieve the traditional masculine identity. Men sought help from the state and charities, but legislation and non-standardized rehabilitation practices added more obstacles to their quest to reaffirm their masculinity.

### **The British Government's Disabled Veterans' Policy**

Queen Elizabeth I established the first national pension scheme for disabled veterans in 1593. It remained in effect until 1679. Under the new system, every county in England had to increase their taxes and county-appointed treasurers provided payments to the pensioners. Physical impairments determined entitlement of pensions while psychological disabilities and poverty had no weight in the decision of payment.<sup>25</sup> Before the introduction of the system, the English government encouraged charities and churches to care for the disabled ex-servicemen, but unrest amongst the soldiers forced them to adopt new legislation. The pension plan encouraged the soldiers to fight hard and loyally for the country as well as prevented maimed veterans from begging on the streets. Even with the scheme, the government continued to encourage charities to provide for the disabled to act as a supplement of resources to the pensions. National and local governments struggled to establish who should control enforcement of the legislation and administration duties and this caused the system to fail.<sup>26</sup>

During the reign of King James II (1633-1701), the government shifted towards a nationally controlled program for disabled veterans. He established two national hospitals: the Chelsea and Greenwich. Deductions from soldiers' wages funded the hospitals, ensuring limited financial responsibility from the Crown. However, disabled veterans faced harsh discipline from hospital staff and remained separated from their families.<sup>27</sup> Eventually, the hospitals closed because they could not accommodate all the disabled veterans. In its place, the government made cash payouts based on length of service, severity of the injury, and personal record. By 1806, officials started to consider "how much the debilitating condition had been caused in and by service."<sup>28</sup> Rank, length of

service, and the severity of the impairment still determined the rate and entitlement of pensions in 1914, but the war created mass confusion on who should handle the pension claims. The British government introduced a new system to meet the challenges.

During the Great War, both the Central and Allied Powers mobilized massive armies that faced the unknown destructive powers of modern warfare. Injured and disabled servicemen returned home throughout the conflict and turned to the state for assistance in readjusting to civilian life. Every day the war produced disabled soldiers in need of help, but the British government had difficulties processing the influx of cases for war pensions. Four separate departments shared responsibility for the disabled: the War Office, the Chelsea Commissioners, the Admiralty Commissioners, and the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation. The War Office handled the cases of army officers and their dependents, in addition to the widows of normal soldiers. Naval officers and sailors turned to the Admiralty for assistance, while enlisted men applied to the Chelsea and Royal Patriotic Corporation.<sup>29</sup> These institutions were separate, yet soldiers and their families had to work with more than one to claim benefits, which generated confusion and frustration. The British government had to completely overhaul the system and create a single centralized institution. They tried to create an efficient pension policy and administrative procedures to meet the demands, but the slow implementation of policy left the disabled mostly ignored for the first two years of the war. Eventually, officials established the Ministry of Pensions in 1916 to handle pension claims and minor rehabilitation efforts.<sup>30</sup> Local War Pensions Committees had the responsibility of determining entitlement and compensation rates for potential pensioners, using complicated rules. The government wanted to minimize its financial responsibility for the veterans making pension claims a controversial topic. Committees routinely denied claimants pensions and rarely overturned their decisions.<sup>31</sup> Without pensions and employment, disabled veterans struggled to reintegrate into society.

Sir John Collie, a medical practitioner, acted as the lead authority for the Ministry of Pensions policy for neurotic ex-servicemen. In his book *Malingering and Feigned Sickness*, he wrote:

Are not the confining of sympathy and benefits to their proper channels, the prevention of improper claims against innocent persons, and the restoration to useful occupation of those who might otherwise become parasites of society, services which deserve well of the community?<sup>32</sup>

The severity of the impairments determined the disability percentages, which determined the pension rate.<sup>33</sup> Medical examiners had an immense influence on whether ex-servicemen would receive a pension, but most doctors like Collie were skeptical on the honesty of the claims. Peter Leese argued that Collie's approach towards mental illness suited the government's agenda of limiting their financial responsibility. This atmosphere of skepticism also appeared with military and government officials. Private Neal was lucky he even received a pension for his arthritis because the army's medical board and Ministry of Pensions viewed the disease as a personal weakness.<sup>34</sup> Lack of understanding of the disabled veterans' needs and impairments created policies that caused more problems than solutions.

Further issues stemmed from the cancellation of allowances and benefits for dependents. Neal's 100% disability rating granted him a treatment allowance, which subsidized his income while hospitalized. The Ministry of Pensions cancelled his allowance without explanation, forcing his family to survive off his pension.<sup>35</sup> Dependents of servicemen had the right to benefits, but policies blocked many from becoming recipients. In the case of Neal, he married and had children after his disease manifested; therefore, the government denied them benefits. If he married before the disease, then his dependents could claim benefits.<sup>36</sup> Approval for pensions and other benefits was a daunting task for many because the process was full of uncertainties.

Aside from monetary assistance, the British government attempted job retraining for those who could not return to their old profession or who had no previous technical training. Initially, the Ministry of Pensions had charge over job retraining until it passed to the Ministry of Labor in 1919.<sup>37</sup> Many disabled veterans added their names to the long waiting lists for retraining, but the government faced administrative and financial problems that limited the number of men permitted into the programs. In 1919, the Ministry of Labor stated it required 80,000 locations to provide technical courses, but ten months later, it had only 15,000. The institution blamed the lack of buildings on the government's financial obstruction.<sup>38</sup> Without established training centers and administrative procedures, the department failed to train a steady flow of men into new occupations. By 1919, the Ministry of Labor had trained only 13,000 with another 20,000 on the waiting list.<sup>39</sup> Although the British government offered technical training, it encouraged charities and private businesses to employ the disabled.

The British government failed to provide adequate social services, pensions, and employment opportunities for the disabled veterans, which fueled outrage amongst the public and ex-servicemen. In October 1919, the Ministry of Pensions released a report highlighting the most common reasons of



discontentment. Leese wrote, "The most important of these was a lack of inter-departmental co-operation, an unsympathetic and unhelpful attitude among staff, and a narrow interpretation of government guidelines on training and grants."<sup>40</sup> Discontent reached its zenith in 1919 when 500 ex-servicemen went on strike demanding guaranteed minimum wages regardless of pensions and allowances. The government agreed to negotiate with the strikers about their benefits but offered no guarantees of change.<sup>41</sup> Sympathetic to their cause, media outlets criticized the Ministry of Pensions for their inadequate support towards ex-servicemen. The *Times* accused the government of displaying "the kind of attitude which views a pensioner as a beggar at the gate."<sup>42</sup>

In response to the public outcry, the government enacted the Royal Warrant in 1919, which made pensions a statutory right, introduced an appeal policy, and increased rates. However, it made clear that the state would hold limited responsibility for the reintegration of the servicemen.<sup>43</sup> Any further assistance would need to come from private organizations and volunteers. Although the Royal Warrant ensured certain rights and policies, it did not fix other grievances as seen in the case of Private Neal. Also, the government passed the voluntary King's Roll policy in 1920, which encouraged private businesses to employ disabled veterans. Under the King's Roll scheme, any employer with 10 or more workers promised that the disabled would make up 5% of their workforce. Employers had the right to use a special seal to show off their participation.<sup>44</sup> The King's Roll sought to address employment issues for disabled veterans, but it was completely voluntary and not enforceable. One Ministry of Pensions Employment Sub-Committee wrote, "So long as the employer is desired to pay the same wages for a disabled man as for an able-bodied man the chances are that the latter will be selected in preference."<sup>45</sup>

Although Britain improved its disabled veterans' policy, it fell behind other European countries such as Belgium and France. Both Belgium and France established a post-war plan for their disabled ex-servicemen before the end of the war. Meanwhile, the British government largely neglected this aspect because they expected charities and philanthropists to handle reintegration issues. In May 1917, British and Belgian officials met in Paris to discuss all matters related to the ex-servicemen, including issues on pensions and rehabilitation practices. France, for example, kept their disabled in the military until the government discharged them into a civilian occupation.<sup>46</sup> Lord Charnwood, an attendee, wrote, "I see no reason to think that we have anything to learn in this particular matter from the French system in so far as it differs from our own."<sup>47</sup> He continued to boast how officials viewed the English system as superior and an example for foreign countries to

imitate.<sup>48</sup> The conference exposed British politicians and doctors to new methods and ideas on how to handle their disabled veterans, but the officials utilized little of the information provided. Charnwood's report expressed the quickness of brushing off foreign methods while promoting their own.

Historian Deborah Cohen wrote, "In the latter half of the 1920s, Germany's first democracy spent almost 20 percent of its annual budget on war victims' pensions; in Britain, by contrast, war pensions occupied less than 7 percent of the annual budget from 1923 onward."<sup>49</sup> Britain's policy stemmed from wanting to avoid full financial responsibility for the disabled. The minister of pensions acknowledged the amount of the pensions was not sufficient for soldiers to return to their standard of living before the war.<sup>50</sup> However, pensions were not intended for ex-servicemen to live off but rather act as a supplement to charities or employment. Sir Griffith Boscawen wrote:

A remark made by me at the end of the proceedings that the most disabled man himself was the ultimate authority seemed to be accepted with most cordial agreement by everybody present. . . . Great approval was also expressed to the arrangement . . . whereby the Local Committee of the area in which a man is discharged will, some time before his actual discharge, try, with the assistance of the doctors and nurses to arouse the man's keenness and intelligence in regard to his own future career.<sup>51</sup>

Officials expected individual servicemen to overcome their impairments and resume a normal life as active members of society. During the Inter-Allied Conference, British officials agreed that young men needed encouragement to seek out and learn new professions, while older and married men with families were harder cases to handle.<sup>52</sup> Regardless, the ex-servicemen had to rely on charities, their means and merit to reintegrate. Politicians added new legislation and schemes based on the desire to "preserve the existing distribution of wealth while maintaining a visible response to public concern."<sup>53</sup> Britain would not pass any meaningful legislation for the disabled until after the Second World War. The inter-war policies had negative consequences for the disabled veterans of the Great War.

Without adequate state support, the disabled and their families turned to private charities. The state's negligence provided an opportunity for philanthropists to assume control of the direction of rehabilitation and reintegration policies. They carried most of the financial and social responsibility

by providing services such as medical treatment, housing, and job training. However, their policies had serious consequences for individual veterans and their families.<sup>54</sup> Veterans struggled for a sense of normalcy while re-establishing their pre-war identities, but certain policies would only add to their problems.

### **Philanthropists in Control of Rehabilitation and Reintegration**

During the inter-war period, private citizens made solving the problems of the disabled ex-servicemen a national project. Public awareness and a sense of responsibility towards their veterans increased as the disabled became a communal rather than state issue. Authors wrote books to raise awareness as in the case of Cecil William Hutt with *The Future of the Disabled Soldier*. He wrote:

It is sad for those left behind to mourn the loss of the soldier killed in the War. But his fight is over; the wounded men, hindered by their injuries, have still to fight the battle of life. . . . Although much has been done, there is yet still need for further effort. Already the disabled soldier is to be seen begging in the streets. We cannot entirely prevent this degradation, yet we can do away with any necessity for it.<sup>55</sup>

Hutt advocated for citizens to tackle the problems of the disabled while providing information to help the public understand their specific issues. In his book, he discussed issues such as employment and treatment options. High profiled disabled veterans such as Sir Brunel Cohen also raised public awareness. In his memoirs, he wrote, “during the thirteen years I was in the House I rarely spoke on subjects unrelated to ex-servicemen, their dependents, and problems.”<sup>56</sup> Finally, many organizations and charities, including the Star and Garter Home, operated on public funding, which required events or articles to promote donations.<sup>57</sup> Philanthropists such as Sir Arthur Pearson stepped up to take charge of the disabled veterans’ plight, but there was no standard approach on how to tackle their problems.

Frank and Lillian Gilbreth were American engineers that promoted a standardized approach to handling the disabled. The married couple studied the motion of the human body, using a series of photos of a movement.<sup>58</sup> Their studies sought to determine the most efficient method of acting, especially anything about the workplace. They wanted to teach the disabled the one best way to perform a task to promote independence and employment capabilities. In their book, *Motion*

*Study for the Handicapped*, they wrote, "It should be noted here that the cripples are only too happy to be helped to be useful, if the re-education is begun soon enough, before they have to contend with the bad advice of the ignorant, though well-meaning, friends, and the difficulties of overcoming habits of idleness."<sup>59</sup> Without a standardized approach, they argued that advice from others could have a negative impact on the veteran's reintegration. Although the Gilbreths were American, British officials knew of their research.<sup>60</sup> Regardless, Great Britain's philanthropists never adopted a standard approach on how to rehabilitate or reintegrate disabled veterans.

During the Great War, no systematic approach to rehabilitation existed; however, doctors and volunteers started to work together to improve the lives of disabled veterans. About 60,500 British soldiers returned home with head or eye injuries that left their face severely disfigured. Roughly 5,000 soldiers had facial reconstructive surgery, but plastic surgery had its limits. Many of the soldiers refused to return home to friends and family because of the seriousness of the deformity. Depression was common.<sup>61</sup> Francis Derwent Wood worked with the London General Hospital to create customized masks for the soldiers. Wood wanted to "re-create their original appearance from remaining features and pre-war photographs, matching the contours of the face and the pigmentation and texture of the patient's skin."<sup>62</sup> Masks humanized the ex-soldiers and provided them an opportunity to become men again. Doctors provided medical services, while volunteers supported them for a life of "usefulness and activity."<sup>63</sup> Larger charities and organizations primarily focused on creating environments to enforce masculine standards,<sup>64</sup> but their policies hampered individual attempts to reaffirm their traditional social roles.

In 1914, Sir Arthur Pearson founded St. Dunstan's, a specialized institution that cared for blind soldiers, and he remained chairman until his death in 1921. Ian Fraser succeeded Pearson and remained chairman for the next forty years. Both men were blind. Pearson wanted "to assist its men to become useful and productive citizens rather than idle and unhappy pensioners, the basic view being that true happiness can only be enjoyed by those who contribute in some way to the work of the world."<sup>65</sup> Approximately 1,833 soldiers became blind due to the conflict and the institution trained or housed 95% of those men. St. Dunstan's taught its members how to live as independent blind men through the introduction of new skills such as Braille, typing, basket weaving, and poultry and vegetable farming.<sup>66</sup> Pearson wanted to make blind ex-servicemen into symbols of "heroism, triumph over adversity and the embodiment of restored masculinity"<sup>67</sup> and remove the stigma of the begging blind man. Blind beggars

symbolized scorn, dishonor, and embarrassment, and onlookers often associated men asking for change on the streets with dogs.<sup>68</sup> His policies reflected his desire to remove the stigma. Pearson avoided any distinguishing marks that set blind men apart from others and argued that dark glasses were a sufficient indicator of blindness. In addition, white sticks marked men as blind, so Pearson dismissed them. In *My Story of St. Dunstan's* by Ian Fraser, he described that the ex-servicemen rejected the proposal that blind men should carry white walking-sticks.<sup>69</sup> They adopted Pearson's view on the walking stick and refused the idea. However, men started to adopt the white walking-stick and discovered how helpful it was for independent mobility. Over time, the white stick became the universal sign of blindness and is still widely used today.<sup>70</sup>

Pearson disliked the image of the blind man on the street with his dog. In 1919, he read an article about how the French-trained guide dogs to assist the blind, and he commented, "a dog at the end of a string was apt to remind me a little too much of the blind beggar with his tapping stick and shuffling gait."<sup>71</sup> Guide dogs had proven to be a useful tool for the blind throughout Europe, but his rejection of the idea prevented the establishment of a training center for guide dogs in Britain.<sup>72</sup> German officials invited Fraser to view their training centers, and he was enthusiastic about potentially bringing it to Britain. When he asked about introducing the guide dogs, Britons rejected his suggestion. As with the white stick, when the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association introduced the dogs on a larger scale, the blind changed their opinion. Fraser wrote, "All the fears proved groundless, and the old enemy of prejudice was gradually defeated."<sup>73</sup> Many of the blind ex-servicemen adopted Pearson's views and rejected methods that other countries proved to be useful for independent mobility.

As chairman, Fraser endlessly promoted the needs of blind ex-servicemen and sought new employment opportunities for them. St. Dunstan's provided many of the blind veterans with training in new skills such as basket weaving and poultry farming. It then sent them to their families to work from home. In his memoirs, Fraser explained that he encouraged the men to make at least two different items they could sell locally. He wrote, "Although we encouraged the men to regard it as a paying hobby rather than a full-time occupation, we did our best to make it as profitable as possible."<sup>74</sup> St. Dunstan's provided the men with the materials to make their items, which increased the items' profitability for the crafter. Although Fraser remarked the handicrafts was a hobby and not a job, both St. Dunstan's and the blind did regard it as employment. Fraser wrote, "During the depression one of the main tasks of aftercare was to help men to remain fully employed."<sup>75</sup> St. Dunstan's purchased

leftover stock from the men, even though the cost was immense. Blind veterans received tremendous support from the institution, but Fraser admitted problems with the handicrafts and farming—they produced low incomes. Factories could mass produce items such as baskets and carpets for lower prices compared to the hand-made items and this created tough competition. Prospective farmers had to deal with the initial high costs for the farm, and they could expect little to no income for the first few years.<sup>76</sup> It was a difficult industry to earn a living.

Pearson's policies attempted to shape the masculine image of the blind ex-servicemen by discouraging the white walking-stick and the service dog. They created an undignified image. On the other hand, he encouraged sports and fitness to restore a sense of masculinity within the ex-servicemen. Blind veterans competed in various sports such as rowing and running, which allowed them to show off their strength and health.<sup>77</sup> Many of the soldiers were young men that skipped technical training to serve in the military and could not apply military skills to the civilian world. Pearson's policies included occupational training for jobs that were almost obsolete and provided little to no income. Without secure employment, the disabled ex-servicemen could not provide for a family or achieve financial independence.

Many families of severely disabled veterans could not afford round-the-clock medical care, which forced the men to live in specialized institutions such as the Star and Garter Home for Disabled Soldiers and Sailors. Originally, the Star and Garter Home was established in 1916, while its modernized facility opened in 1924 with the aid of public and private funding. The institution was one of the first charities to house disabled ex-servicemen with a wide range of impairments. Unlike St. Dunstan's, it focused on accommodating the men's medical needs rather than programs such as occupational training.<sup>78</sup> Nurses ensured bedridden veterans received daily medical attention such as cleaning open sores and performing enemas.<sup>79</sup> To maintain morale, the Star and Garter Home offered its residents various forms of entertainment such as sporting events and concerts. In return, men had to conform to the institution's policies. For instance, Sergeant Charles Whittaker was thirty-four years old, and he married before the start of the war. A bullet shattered his collarbone in the first battle of Ypres, which left both legs and his left arm paralyzed. His small pension was insufficient to offer much support to the family.<sup>80</sup> Institutional living encouraged the men to live separately from their families. On the broad spectrum, British society urged disabled veterans to marry, but institutional policy indirectly discouraged it. Men had to renegotiate their masculine identities within the institutional environment.

Historian Deborah Cohen wrote, "The British disabled measured their

manhood by fortitude in the face of adversity. The most manly veteran was the one who suffered without complaint.”<sup>81</sup> The Star and Garter Home expected their residents to act cheerful and grateful for the charity provided.<sup>82</sup> Pictures and articles carefully depicted the residents in good cheer. The *West London Observer* stated,

Lord Beatty . . . expressed the opinion that establishments in providing such concerts were rendering a splendid service by bringing joy and pleasure to those who were unfortunately still confined to hospital owing to wounds received in the Great War. Many of the men could only smile their pleasure, as they could move neither hand nor foot.<sup>83</sup>

The narrative around the Star and Garter Home remained a positive one because the Home concealed cases of suicide, mental deterioration, and loneliness. Many residents turned to alcohol to handle their conditions and wasted their pensions at the local pubs.<sup>84</sup> The home forced the men to the “stigmatizing position of charity,”<sup>85</sup> which isolated them from the rest of the world. Their policies also coerced men to accept their definition of disabled masculinity, which included “cheerful endurance, the willingness to work towards recovery, and asexuality.”<sup>86</sup> Men who challenged or complained against the institution risked expulsion.<sup>87</sup>

State negligence allowed volunteers rather than paid professionals to control rehabilitation and reintegration programs, and disabled veterans and their families heavily relied on these institutions for assistance. Without secure legislation, veterans were at the mercy of wavering social support. While the war was over for the public, ex-servicemen continued to experience the war either through memories or impairments. John Galsworthy tirelessly promoted the needs of the disabled veterans through his writings. He predicted the public’s sense of responsibility towards the veterans would “evaporate when the war is over, and we are no longer in danger, and moreover, have become troubled by a new crop of economic difficulties . . . human memory is very short and human gratitude not too long.”<sup>88</sup> Ironically, Galsworthy abruptly stopped advocating for disabled veterans. He wrote no additional pieces from 1921 to his death in 1933.<sup>89</sup> The war faded from public memory as did the disabled. Philanthropists were aging or dead, and the younger generation knew little of the veterans.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, the country braced itself mentally for the possibility of another war with the rise of Hitler. Veterans then started to demand legal rights rather than more charity. With the influx of disabled veterans from the Second World War, the State started to

assume financial and social responsibility. New laws that guaranteed disabled ex-servicemen pensions, employment, and medical care passed throughout the war. In 1946, the National Insurance Act ensured a subsistence income for the severely disabled who could not work, while the National Health Service of 1948 ensured tax-paid medical care for all citizens.<sup>91</sup> Legal support provided the veterans more individual choices that allowed the men freedom to re-create their identities as they saw fit.

## Conclusion

Britain had a long history of neglecting their disabled veterans, but Prime Minister David Lloyd George promised to change this and make their country a land “fit for heroes.” His promises rang hollow as ex-servicemen returned home to political, social, and economic uncertainty. The British government pushed most of the financial and social responsibility onto volunteer organizations that understood little of what the ex-servicemen needed. Volunteers controlled the direction of rehabilitation and reintegration policies. Ex-servicemen received tremendous support from these organizations, but their policies created additional challenges for the men in assuming traditional masculine roles. Policies redefined masculinity for the disabled, even though society had a conflicting ideal of manliness.

Society encouraged the disabled ex-servicemen not to let their impairments define who they were but rather adapt and overcome them. Many eagerly wanted to achieve financial independence to purchase their own homes and support their families. However, employers dismissed the disabled and refused to hire them. Men with impairments could not compete with able-bodied men. Without adequate pensions and employment, the disabled became heavily reliant on charities for medical care, housing, and other social needs. These charities renegotiated the disabled veterans’ masculine identities. Institutions such as the Star and Garter Home wanted the disabled to live apart from their families, remain unemployed, and act grateful for the charity provided. The blind men of St. Dunstan’s had more autonomy, but they offered occupational training for jobs with no hope of a secure income. St. Dunstan’s also shunned treatments that could give the blind independent mobility. In both cases, the disabled ex-servicemen remained in a situation that did not allow men to establish their own male identity.

Without state support and rights, the veterans and their families had to turn to charities as grateful recipients or face expulsion. This forced them to conform. Their reliance on charities made them vulnerable as philanthropists died



off and the younger generation became unaware of their existence. The Second World War created a new influx and awareness of disabled ex-servicemen, but instead of neglecting them, the government enacted multiple laws that ensured health care, employment, and pensions. It created flexibility and stability for the disabled, but mostly importantly, the chance to create their own masculine identity.

## Notes

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James Holland. *Big Week: The Biggest Air Battle of World War II*.  
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Book Review

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Robert Smith, PhD

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There are perhaps three or even four types of historians. The overly popular ones like a Bill O'Reilly who churns books out. The historical fiction "historians" like Sharon Kay Penman or Jeff Shaara who bring to life periods of history via fiction. The very narrow academic historians who provide good reads but never seem to enter the consciousness of the public. And then there is the last type, the ones who combine the best of the first two categories. They weave history with a bit more of a personal angle. James Holland falls into the latter category. His World War II Trilogy has met with general acclaim. Having reviewed the first two published volumes, it is apparent that he continues to mine WWII history with his soon-to-be published *Big Week: The Biggest Air Battle of World War II*. This review is of an uncorrected proof copy of *Big Week*.



Everyone knows about the Strategic Air Campaign but seemingly, the Big Week has escaped public consciousness. Kenney's *Pointblank Directive* was among a handful of modern books to cover this campaign. However, Holland's story line never strays far from the Big Week and how the US Army Air Force, Royal Air Force, and the Luftwaffe all reached that culmination point in the last week of February 1944. Holland deftly emphasizes how the USAAF leadership understood its fortunes were at a watershed moment. If the war was to be won, and a successful invasion of Europe launched, the Luftwaffe had to be defeated. This meant no less than the reversal of the air war, which was going badly for the

Allies.

There are several themes of note that Holland stresses throughout the book. The most prevalent theme is how the fortunes of war change, albeit not fully seen at first by the participants. Holland is at his best when he speaks to the war in the skies by using personal accounts from both the USAAF and the Luftwaffe. For the USAAF, we get the accounts of both fighter pilots and bomber crews. Knowing one's friend are aboard, the horror of reading a story where a B-17 collides with another bomber, begins to sway back and forth out of control, flip over, and break in half is simply beyond the imagination of today's reader of whom very few have ever served. The Luftwaffe narratives are solely the product of the fighter pilots whose mission it was to defeat the American bomber streams. One begins to understand the ascendancy of the Allies as they had two trained pilots for every fighter plane. They had a limited number of missions to fly and generally got a pass every weekend. Contrast that with the Luftwaffe pilots who flew until they died or were incapacitated by wounds. The ongoing missions of Heinz Knoke are simply amazing. Knoke was in the air multiple times during the day to do battle; he was shot down, but pulled early from the hospital because the need for experienced veterans is so great.

Holland adroitly ties the personal narratives in with the bigger picture. Holland ensures that the reader understands the Germans frittered away any technological advances they had due in large part to both political infighting among the Nazi leadership and a failure to understand the vast potential of the United States. The old quip attributed to Goering that the Americans only knew how to make razor blades and refrigerators was proven so untrue. The Luftwaffe's airframes were now no longer superior to the Allies, and in fact with the ME-109 fighter, had gone as far in terms of advancements as the airframe could go. Worse was the difference in training flight hours between the Luftwaffe pilots and the Americans highlighted by Holland. Luftwaffe pilots were lucky to get one hundred fifty hours before being committed to combat whereas Americans received three hundred or more. The Third Reich, though producing many fighter airplanes, realized a perpetual fuel shortage and could not train pilots to fly those increasing numbers of planes in anything roughly approaching tactical skill parity in combat.

The Americans had difficulties as well. Over twelve thousand Americans died during the course of flight training—and to think modern planes like the F-35 have issues! One of the main bomber escorts, the P-38 saw at one point, forty percent of the planes down for maintenance due to engine issues related to flying in the atmospherics of Europe. Glenn Miller, the famous orchestra leader, simply vanished between England and France in his plane. Even Jimmy Stewart, the



USAAF Boeing B-17s attacking oil installations in Germany.

American icon of the screen, went into harm's way. By December 1943, the USAAF was on its heels, fought, and defeated in round one by the Luftwaffe. Yet whereas the Luftwaffe could only hope they got the ME-262 jet fighter's teething problems solved, the Americans now had the killer fighter plane—the P-51 Mustang. On that platform, the RAF mounted the Merlin Rolls-Royce engine, and with the new American fighter doctrine of going after the Luftwaffe's fighters versus the previous tactic of protecting the bombers, the Luftwaffe's prospects became bleak. Add on the addition of drop tanks that increased the American fighter escorts range, and as Holland relates, the writing was on the wall.

All the prelude leading up to the Big Week—day-by-day air battles—truly establishes the why of how the campaign was fought and why it mattered. Consider on the actual morning of the D-Day invasion that only two Luftwaffe fighters attacked the beachheads. Would that have been the same case had the Big Week failed? What Holland doesn't come out and say, but the discerning reader will pick up, is that the bombers were in a sense bait, like a red flag to a bull, goading the Luftwaffe to either have their cities, industries, and transportation nodes bombed or come up and fight. The Big Week clearly established that from here on out, the Luftwaffe was in a strategic cul-de-sac, from training, to technology, to platforms.

Now an air campaign does not really allow for grand sweeping maps or ones of tactical disposition because the air is a three dimensional battlefield that

rapidly devolves into aerial chaos. A partial listing of what the *Big Week* includes in terms of maps and diagrams is a breakdown of the key primary aerial platforms with a picture, the location of both 8th Air Force bases in England, the day and night Luftwaffe bases, target, and Allied Fighter escort ranges, and a personal favorite that always astounds modern-day US Air Force Students, the Combat Box Formation.



USAAF Attack on the marshalling yards at Leipzig.

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The *Big Week* is that rare history work that cuts across many demographic and knowledge lines. It has just enough to satisfy those with a greater knowledge base. But because Holland's organization, style, and methodology draw in the more casual reader, it excels at introducing the subject to those with less knowledge on it. This work is hardly one of those standard strategic bombing campaign books that would fly over the same historical target set and cut little new ground. Instead, *Big Week* is a satisfying book, rich in detail that stays on topic. Holland painted a vivid picture of the Big Week and provided just enough attention to the other lesser, but important issue to the week that broke the back of the Luftwaffe's fighter arm.

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Robert Morgan and Ron Powers. *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle, Memoir of a WW II Bomber Pilot*. New York: Dutton, 2001.

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## Book Review

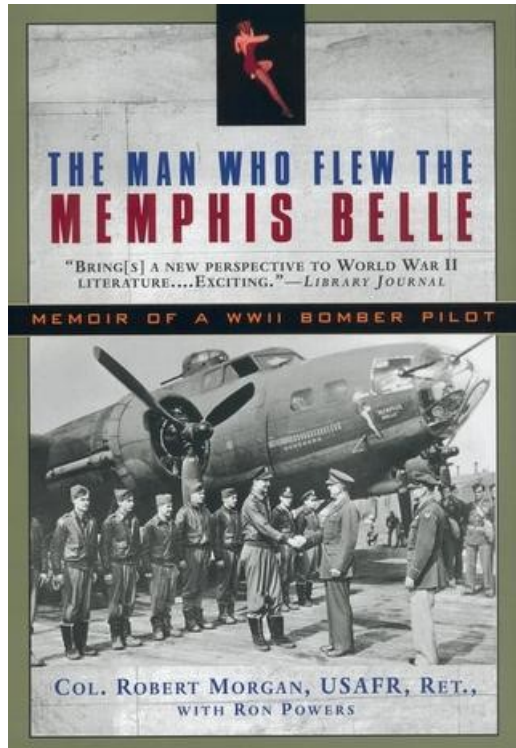
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Michael R Majerczyk

In the early part of the air campaign against Germany, 1942, the 91st Bomb Group, part of the 324th Bomb Squadron and Eighth Air Force suffered eighty percent losses. Daytime bombing raids provided visible targets for German ground defenses and the absence of long-range fighter escort meant the B-17s and B-24s had to defend against German Messerschmitt 109s and Focke-Wulf 190s on their own. To boost morale, the Army Air Force offered an incentive. If a crew could complete twenty-five missions, for them, the war was over (p. 8). The Army Air Force recognized the crew of the B-17 *Memphis Belle*, piloted by Capt. Robert Morgan, as the first to complete twenty-five missions

over Europe, and return to the United States. In addition to his service in Europe, Morgan flew twenty-six missions in a B-29 over Japan. Because Morgan described both tours of duty, the reader can compare the attributes of both the B-17 and B-29 and contrast the difficulties pilots had to face in both the Pacific and European theaters.

Ron Powers co-authored *The Man Who Flew the Memphis Belle*. Powers, together with James Bradley also co-authored *Flags of our Fathers*. The first two



chapters described Morgan's childhood and experiences in Biltmore Forest, North Carolina. Some social elites lived there and among them were the Vanderbilts who befriended his family. Fast cars, bathtub gin, and beautiful women kept the young playboy busy, and were it not for his family's high society connections he might have found himself spending weekends in jail rather than speeding down to Asheville, NC in his father's Buick Century (p. 41). Nevertheless, the events of 1940 such as the British evacuation at Dunkirk in May, the fall of France in June, and the Battle of Britain that began in July, led Morgan to believe that America would soon enter the war. In November 1940, Morgan applied to the Army Air Corps (p. 42). Military life did not destroy his irreverent mannerism, and that may be why he was able to assemble such a strong B-17 crew. A biography of each of the eleven crewmembers of the *Memphis Belle* allows the reader to analyze their personalities and responsibilities in and out of combat. They all receive praise, but three members of his crew earned additional press. First, co-pilot Capt. Jim Verinis, for his piloting skills, and for returning from London with what became the crew's mascot; a black Scottish terrier he named Stuka after the terrifying German dive-bomber. Second, bombardier Captain Vince B. Evans, received great praise for effectively employing the Norden bombsight. He also served as a bombardier in the *Dauntless Dotty*, Morgan's B-29. Lastly, tail gunner S/Sgt. John P. Quinlan received recognition for consistent accuracy with his twin .50 caliber machine guns he named Pete and Re-peat (p. 107).

Morgan described each of the *Memphis Belle*'s twenty-five missions, some in greater detail than others. For example, the first mission, bombing the U-Boat pens at Brest on 7 November 1942, was uneventful compared to the third mission, bombing the U-Boat pens at St. Nazaire on 17 November 1942. At St. Nazaire, the Luftwaffe was ready for them and sent up over one-hundred fighters (p. 122). Indeed, the Messerschmitt 109s play a large role in the fighter attacks, but it was the Focke-Wulf 190s that the crew of the *Memphis Belle* respected the most. Morgan described how his crew countered the Fw 190s and how a tight formation was critical to success. By the end of the third mission, the action becomes intense because by this time the Army Air Force eliminated evasive action as a means of escape. As such, the bombing raids became more effective and deadly for both sides.

As the Luftwaffe started to suffer losses, their pilots became noticeably less skilled and desperate. For example, the Germans used Ju-88s to bomb B-17 formations from above (p. 168). The fanaticism increased as the bombing runs crept deeper into German-occupied territory and Germany itself. Nevertheless, the *Memphis Belle* completed its twenty-fifth mission on 17 May 1942, and returned

home for a thirty-one city, three-month public relations tour that included a reunion with Morgan's sweetheart Margaret Polk for whom the *Memphis Belle* takes its name.

With the public relations tour over, Morgan turned to service in the Pacific flying a B-29. He first became aware of the B-29 on the tour's stop in Wichita, Kansas. Brigadier General Kenneth B. Wolfe introduced him to the still-secret bomber, and provided him with the contacts necessary to secure an assignment flying it. Chapters 18 through 21 cover his service in the Pacific, and because of Morgan's earlier description of his service in Europe, readers can contrast the attributes of B-17 and B-29 as well as the European and Pacific bombing campaigns. For example, the weather is quite different and that brought new challenges. Rather than fog and clouds, Morgan and the crew of the *Dauntless Doty* had to combat the relentless crosswinds that the Japanese called the "Divine Winds." These winds consistently pushed their bombs off target. Furthermore, the flights were longer. Tokyo is fifteen-hundred miles from Saipan (p. 287). That is nearly four times the length of the *Memphis Belle's* twenty-first mission; bombing the Focke-Wulf factory in Bremen, Germany. And, while Morgan no longer had to contend with the hated Fw 190s, he now had to counter swarms of A6M Zeros. And indeed, the famous durability of the B-17 becomes clear when a B-29 tried to ditch and comes apart killing the crew that included his friend Waddy Young (p. 295). Furthermore, the reliability of the B-17s Wright R-1820s engines compared favorably to the B-29's Wright R-3350s that were prone to overheat.

Oddly, though the B-29 was a high altitude, long-range bomber, it was at a low altitude where it began to inflict heavy damage to Japanese cities. To counter the crosswinds, on 9 March 1945, three-hundred B-29s set out to firebomb Tokyo at an altitude of 5,000 to 7,500 feet, close enough to smell the burning bodies below (p. 311). The napalm and magnesium had done their job and Morgan's retelling of that night is perhaps the most chilling in the entire book.

The last section of the book discusses his life and career after the war, and also the story of how the *Memphis Belle* survived. The Mayor of Memphis was the first to keep it from the scrapyard, then the Memphis American Legion Post No. 1 found a home for her at the Memphis National Guard Armory in 1950. Later, the *Memphis Belle* found a champion in Frank Donofrio who was instrumental in organizing the Memphis Belle Association, which, through donations, constructed a pavilion for the *Memphis Belle* at Mud Island in 1987. Even so, this was not the last trip for the *Memphis Belle*. The famous B-17 is now on display in the WWII hanger of the National Museum of the United States Air

Force in Dayton, Ohio.

If one is expecting a formal tone, they will not find it in this book. Morgan's tone becomes serious when he describes his bombing missions and the loss of his friends and family, but outside of this, his tone is informal. Furthermore, an error designated the Stuka dive-bomber as the Junkers 88 rather than the Junkers 87, and this creates confusion for the reader (p. 170). Though the book does include an appendix and bibliography, it does not include an index. Nevertheless, the reader will find information relevant to research in the bombing campaigns of both the European and Pacific theatres and the attributes of both the B-17 and B-29.



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Anne Midgley. *Charles Hulett, Continental Army Drummer: A Revolutionary Life Reexamined*. Self-Published, Lulu. 2018.

## Book Review

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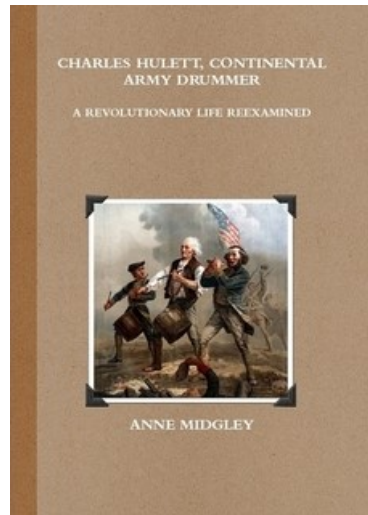
Tormod B. Engvig

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In *Charles Hulett, Continental Army Drummer: A Revolutionary Life Reexamined*, author Anne Midgley explores the life of an eighteenth century American from the colony of New Jersey. *Charles Hulett* is based on the author's master's thesis, and as the title suggests is a micro-history, tracing the experiences of a private soldier during the American War of Independence. The book is divided into three chapters: the first describes Hulett's community and home colony of New Jersey on the eve of war, the second deals with Hulett's service in the Northern Campaign between 1776 and 1779, and the third covers his service in the Southern Campaign between 1780 and 1781. The 145-page book contains an extensive bibliography, which is to be expected of an academic work with master's thesis roots.

Midgley uses Hulett's experience as the medium through which to explore several central themes. What makes the book noteworthy is her placement of Hulett's history in a cultural, military, and geographic context. This is significant first and foremost because Hulett saw service on both sides of the rebel-loyalist conflict. He began his service with the New Jersey Militia and Continental Army, but later switched sides and joined the British Provincial Corps. Hulett was then captured in South Carolina, and ended the War of Independence back in Continental Army uniform.

Charles Hulett was born in the British colony of New Jersey in 1760. Hulett grew up in a religiously and culturally diverse community. As Midgley emphasizes, the Dutch who originally settled the area were remarkably tolerant for the time, and this liberal outlook mostly prevailed under British rule. By the



onset of the War for Independence, New Jersey was home to a slew of protestant denominations, from Anglicans to Quakers. Due in no small part to this cultural diversity, Hulett's home county of Monmouth was quite evenly split in its loyalties when the conflict flared up in earnest. Without a doubt, the makeup of Monmouth County was a contributory factor to Hulett's apparent propensity for switching sides (p. 32, 34–35, 40).

New Jersey, like the other colonies, had a militia system in place at the start of the war. The New Jersey Militia, which Charles Hulett joined in 1776 at the age of sixteen, consisted of local units tasked with defending their counties. Additionally, state levies were sometimes formed from county militia in order to satisfy defensive requirements not covered by the local units or by the national Continental Army. It was as a New Jersey Levy artilleryman that Hulett found himself on the field of battle at Princeton in January 1777. As Midgley makes clear, Hulett did not appear to possess any particular ideological commitment to the rebel cause, but was rather swept up by the turn of events: "By 1777, the men in the ranks of the New Jersey Continental Line did not resemble the Patriot image of the idealistic yeoman, but rather, they came from the poorer members of society, much like the members of the British Army" (p. 42–47, 62).

By any measurable standard, Hulett's first experience of eighteenth century warfare appears harrowing. His unit was engaged in close-quarter fighting with British troops, who bayoneted his commander to death. After Princeton, Midgley considers it likely that Hulett participated in the January-March 1777 "Forage Wars" against the British. Contrary to family oral history, however, Hulett was most likely not among the New Jersey troops who later fought at the Battles of Brandywine Creek and Germantown in September and October 1777. In March 1778, Hulett's service as a New Jersey Levy ended as he was conscripted as a drummer into the Continental Army, which was badly in need of men after the previous winter's privations (p. 58–59, 61–62).

1778 was the year the rebellion became part of a global conflict. It was also an eventful year for Charles Hulett, and it is where Midgley's narrative in particular shines. Her research contradicts the established Hulett history; no doubt eager to show that Charles was loyal to the rebel cause, his pension claim maintains that he was captured at the June 1778 Battle of Monmouth Courthouse, and only enlisted with British forces as a way to escape the hardship of imprisonment in the West Indies. Midgley's narrative refutes this claim. She illustrates, given the details of the British expedition to the West Indies after Monmouth, that Hulett could not have accompanied British forces abroad, nor did the troops sent there return to the American mainland. Indeed, Midgley's research

produces a more nuanced picture of the real Charles Hulett (p. 66–67, 74).

Midgley suggests that it was most likely Hulett's experiences in the Continental Army and difficulties at home which convinced him join the British provincial forces. Ill will between his commanders, demotion from drummer to ordinary private, and a commensurate pay decrease, all contributed to a sense of disillusionment with the rebel cause. Records suggest that a number of Hulett family members were active loyalists, and this may have had a further effect on Charles's change of allegiance. In any case, Hulett was never captured by the British, and one year after his discharge from the Continental Army in early 1779 he joined the New Jersey Volunteers of the British Provincial Corps. As Midgley states: "For many, the war became a matter of personal survival, and it is certain that Hulett weighed practical considerations like the perceived ability of the British provincial corps to feed, clothe, and pay its men against his experience with the Continental Army" (p. 85–86).

It is likely that Hulett soon saw action in the June 1780 battles at Connecticut Farms and Springfield, the last significant engagements in the northern states. Hulett, as a loyalist soldier, may even have aimed his rifle at his former militia comrades. In August, Hulett transferred to the Provincial Light Infantry, which was soon sent to help suppress the rebellion in South Carolina. In September 1781, Hulett's unit fought at the Battle of Eutaw Springs, a pyrrhic British victory that decimated the Provincial Light Infantry, and ended in Hulett's capture. As Midgley indicates, it is likely that Hulett rejoined the rebel ranks after facing the choice of remaining a prisoner of war or switching sides. In any case, Hulett next appears in the historical record only after the end of the War for Independence, on his wedding day in January 1787 (p. 87–88, 92, 102).

As noted, what makes *Charles Hulett* significant is the author's ability to weave a minor player's story into the larger context of the War in the American Colonies. Midgley focuses not only on the colonies, but places Hulett's service, and by extension the American War, in a global context. In so doing, she makes the point that the War of Independence was one aspect of a much wider conflict, itself a continuation of the unfinished power struggle between the European great powers, especially Great Britain and France, after the Seven Year's War. Another central theme of the book is that the War of Independence was not just part of a larger world war, but also America's first civil war. It split local communities apart as neighbors, friends, and even family took sides, whether as rebels or as loyalists. While some communities were fairly united in allegiance or in opposition to Great Britain, many others were deeply divided in their loyalties. More than simply the radical Whig view of a black and white struggle of plucky

underdogs against an overbearing goliath, America's first civil war pitted colonists against each other in a brutal, internecine conflict. Midgley uses the wartime career of Hulett as a convincing example of this interpretation, as he fought for both sides in the war and was a member of a religiously and culturally diverse community that was, at best, ambivalent about its relationship vis-à-vis the British Empire. Ultimately, she illustrates how the real losers of the American War of Independence were the American loyalists, who in many cases lost everything and ended up as refugees abroad. Although the victors branded them as traitors, most of them simply desired to remain loyal citizens of their legitimate government (p. 102–3).

Midgley's book contains another major theme: for the average individual like Hulett, allegiance to the British crown or to the Continental Congress rarely hinged on the esoteric ideals of the enlightenment. Instead, loyalty turned on the mundane or self-centered—one might say pre-nationalist—motives more common to soldiers of the European dynastic struggles of the period. As indicated, these concerns included whether or not an army was able to feed, pay, and clothe its soldiers, or the attitudes of friends, family, and neighbors within the local community. Hulett is representative of the no doubt numerous colonists who switched sides in the war as the situation personally warranted. In other words, ordinary individuals with ordinary concerns, caught up in extraordinary circumstances over which they had little control. *Charles Hulett, Continental Army Drummer* is an excellent book, and offers an interesting and refreshing perspective on the American War for Independence. It should be of interest to any student of American history, Anglo-American relations, or eighteenth century warfare.

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Anne Applebaum. *Gulag: A History*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004.

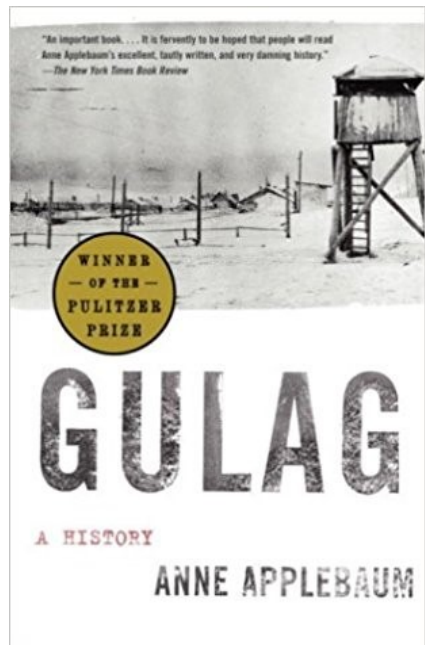
## Book Review

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Bill Hanson

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When confronting evil in the world, it is important to look at it with an unblinking eye and to bear witness of what has happened. Anne Applebaum does an important service to the world by bearing witness in *Gulag: A History*. Drawing on extensive Soviet archival information, interviews with prisoners, emigres, guards, and administrators, and memoirs, Applebaum provides a comprehensive look at the breadth and depth of the Stalinist system of work and punishment camps. The Soviet government officially called the camps *Glavnoe Upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh LAGerei* (Main Administration of Corrective Labor Camps). These camps came to be collectively known by their Russian acronym: GULAG. It is a sobering tale of what happens when state imperatives, paranoid leadership, draconian laws, uncaring bureaucracy, and incompetence all come together.



The Soviet Union faced daunting challenges from the beginning. One of the first was to develop the resources in the vast lands east of the Urals. Siberia's harsh climate, vast distances, and lack of infrastructure made it difficult to convince anyone to settle there. At the same time, the demands of jump-starting industrialization across the Soviet Union required not only settlers and workers, but highly educated specialists such as engineers, geologists, aircraft designers, and even nuclear physicists as well.

Along with the need to jump-start the Soviet economy was the need to enforce security and control. The Soviet Union, like its Russian core, was a vast state with an ethnically and religiously diverse population. The conclusion of organized counter-Soviet resistance left many areas restive, further increasing the centripetal forces. Such a state, in the Russian view, demands a *vozhd*—a strongman leader, or master. Joseph Stalin held that appellation, while neither his predecessor Lenin, nor those who followed were referred to by that term. As an interesting aside, now that Vladimir Putin has won his fourth election as Russian president, the head of RT television now refers to him as *vozhd*, along with ordinary Russians recently interviewed by the BBC.

Stalin needed manpower; enemies of the state needed to be controlled or eliminated, and the result became the Gulag. Eventually, the Soviet security apparatus arrested millions on one pretext or another and sent them to first build a network of labor camps and then live, work, and perhaps die in them. Another part of Stalin's design was forced resettlement—both to fill empty lands and to ensure that no region was able to become the focal point for revolution. Accordingly, Stalin ordered the relocation of Ukrainian Kulaks, Chechens, Poles, Balts, Tatars, Soviet Germans, and members of many other minorities, who often came to labor in the camps as well. Applebaum skillfully weaves together these disparate elements to show how they combined to form this monstrous system.

To Stalin and his security *apparatus*, potential enemies were the same as actual enemies, and were treated as such. Orders went out under Stalin's hand, setting out quotas for numbers of "enemies" of each group to be arrested and sent to the camps. Some were arrested for as little as telling a joke about Stalin—or laughing at one. Some were arrested after being labeled state enemies by their neighbors, who themselves were desperate to do anything to stay out of the camps. Some were arrested because they had technical or medical skills needed for one project or another. Some were arrested simply for being members of the wrong group. Some were arrested for no reason at all. Some were arrested because they actually were criminals or those working against the state; per Applebaum, the last category was the smallest.

While reading Applebaum's accounts, one is struck by the slipshod management of the camps. This reviewer is reminded of a saying he frequently heard from those in Russia about the Soviet period: "We pretended to work, and they pretended to pay us." The Soviets created detailed regulations and standards for the camps, and the camp administrators and inspectors faithfully submitted detailed reports of conditions in the camps, which extensively documented failures to comply with regulations and standards. Applebaum notes that these reports were

almost always ignored, and skillfully uses them to illustrate conditions and common practices across the Gulag.

This history illuminates the extensive and multi-faceted nature of the Gulag. Camps existed for a huge range of purposes—from building roads and canals, to mining and forestry, to both heavy and light manufacturing, to building nuclear power plants, and even to designing aircraft and rockets.

Applebaum spends most of the book chronicling the fate of the *zeks*—a pronunciation of *z/k*, which was the abbreviation for the Russian *zaključónnyj*—prisoners. In the camps, many *zeks* were in fact less than prisoners. Instead, they were not even considered citizens, and sometimes not even people. This is in line with the well-known principle in wartime propaganda of painting enemies as somehow less than human, except here, the principle was applied to Soviet citizens who often did nothing wrong, and as mentioned above, were arrested simply due to their ethnicity, their location, or even because they possessed needed expertise. This is a difficult part of the book to read, not because of any lack of skill on Applebaum's part, but because the descriptions are both horrific and seemingly endless.

Another difficult part is Applebaum's accounting of how the *zeks* reacted to their status. Some resisted in ways large and small, some fell in with criminal gangs, some prostituted themselves, some became collaborators, and a few became guards or administrators themselves. Most tragic, are those innocents who convinced themselves that they had indeed committed the crimes for which they were falsely arrested.

Applebaum makes the point that even compared to the Nazi concentration camps, the Soviet treatment of the *zeks* was an entirely different level of depravity. It is impossible to briefly summarize the horrific things done to them—suffice it to say that if it can be imagined, it happened, along with much worse. We are shown how the *zeks*—men, women, and even children lived, and mostly died—either purposefully worked to death, as happened in the infamous Kolyma mines, by their own hand, by accident, or by inches from starvation and disease. Hannah Arendt famously coined the phrase, “the banality of evil.” Applebaum shows us the indifference of evil.

Anne Applebaum's account was justly awarded the Pulitzer Prize, but one curious omission is the impact of World War II on life in the camps. There are bits and minor mentions, but it is hard to square the seeming lack of effect in this book with the privations and struggle that the rest of the Soviet Union went through. In the end, this is a minor quibble, which does nothing to subtract from the value of the book.

## Afterword

Every once in a while, we are confronted with the existence of things we do not wish were true. Similarly, we are sometimes tempted to believe in a sort of “moral equivalency” between the two sides in the Cold War—a belief that is quickly proved false by exposure to what happened within the Soviet Union. For me, it was my first visit to Vilnius, Lithuania right after the fall of the Soviet Union. There, I toured the former KGB prison while former inmates described matter-of-factly the horrific treatment they had received in rooms that still had bloodstains on the walls and floors. Anne Applebaum does us a similar service on a much larger scale in her book, *Gulag: A History*.



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Adam Makos and Larry Alexander. *A Higher Call*. New York: Berkley Caliber, 2012.

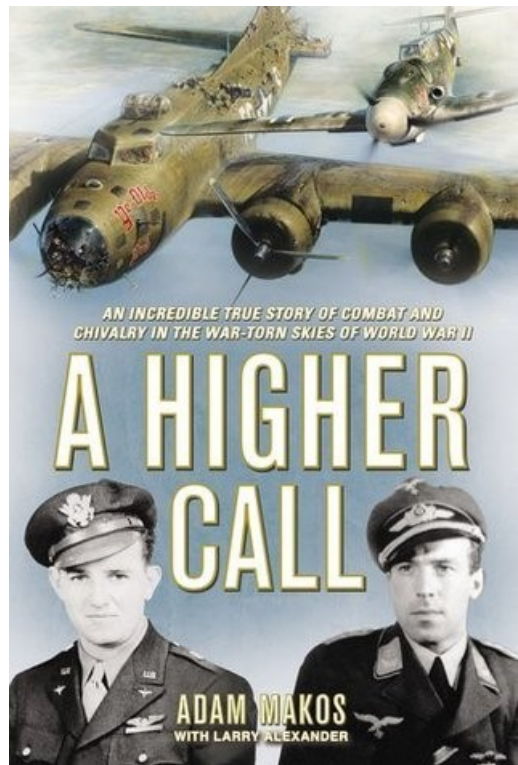
Book Review

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Michael R Majerczyk

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*A Higher Call* is a story about German fighter ace Franz Stigler and the pilot of the B-17 *Ye Old Pub*, Charlie Brown. When Stigler approached the wounded B-17 in his Messerschmitt 109, 20 December 1943, the amount of damage it sustained shocked him. *Ye Old Pub* was missing thirteen feet of its left horizontal stabilizer (p.189). Much of the vertical stabilizer was missing. Twenty-millimeter cannon fire tore gaping holes in the fuselage and destroyed the tail gunner position. Stigler could see the *Pub's* tail gunner Hugh Eckenrode dead at his station and wounded crewmembers lying on the floor. Nevertheless, Brown kept *Ye Old Pub* in the air. Stigler



decided downing this B-17 would not be a victory, but something he would have on his conscience the rest of his life (p. 202). For him, it was nothing less than shooting a man floating to earth in a parachute. Rather than leave the dying plane to the German flak crews only a few miles ahead, he did something extraordinary. When he could not convince Brown to surrender, he flew formation with the *Ye Old Pub* and guided it out of Germany. He parted with a salute. Both men would not forget the incident. Stigler would wonder if the crew made it back to England

while Brown wondered who the pilot was and why he let them escape. Both men searched, and with much effort, found one another in 1990. Thereafter, they enjoyed a friendship that lasted until 2008, the year both men died. To answer his research question, “*Can good men be found on both sides of a bad war?*” Adam Makos analyzes the incident largely from Franz Stigler’s perspective. Because of this, the readers must ask themselves the same question and confront their own bias. Co-writing with Makos is Larry Alexander, the author of *The Life of Major Dick Winters*, *The Man Who Led The Band of Brothers*.

In 1937, while still a civilian, Stigler began training military pilots in long distance instrument flying. And in 1938, now a corporal, he trained pilots at an officer’s school in Dresden. Amongst his students were his brother August and future ace Gerhard Barkhorn (p. 32). When his brother August died during take-off in a Ju-88 in 1940, Stigler looked for someone to blame, perhaps himself, those who manufactured the plane, or the British. One thing he was certain, his grief had turned to anger and he was going to get revenge. He believed he could best do this as a fighter pilot.

Stigler’s tour as a fighter pilot of a Me-109F began in Libya defending the skies for the Afrika Korps. As such, the reader is privy to the members of this fighter wing JG-27, their personalities and “the code.” Squadron leader, Lieutenant Gustav Roedel made clear to Stigler after his first mission, “If I ever see or hear of you shooting at a man in a parachute, I will shoot you down myself” (p. 54). “*You fight by the rules to keep our humanity*” (p. 54). Makos drives at his research question by documenting honorable acts by German pilots. For example, German Ace, Lieutenant Hans-Joachim Marseille shot down a British pilot who suffered serious burns in the crash. The Germans captured him, and after learning the needed information, at great risk, Marseille flew to England to drop a note over his airfield to let his friends know he was alive and receiving medical attention (p. 66). Furthermore, there were instances where German pilots visited a crash site to see if there were survivors. The reason for this was that they did not want the pilots to fall into the hands of the Gestapo or the SS (p. 219).

The Battle of El Alamein forced a German withdrawal and as such Stigler served in Sicily where he battled with P-38s, P-40s, and B-17s before returning to Germany in 1943. Thus, the reader can analyze the tactics Stigler used to counter these planes and to devise an effective strategy against a formation of B-17s. By the time Stigler and Brown met on 20 December 1943, the German had an effective strategy. They attacked the fringe on the lowest part of the formation. B-17 crews called this spot “Purple Heart Corner” and is precisely the spot in the formation *Ye Old Pub* occupied (p. 162). Makos’s

descriptive powers are reminiscent of Alexander Dumas's *The Three Musketeers* or Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and this plays on the readers emotions. For example, "Sealing the canopy, Franz relaxed within the familiar aroma of oil, gun power, and sweat-drenched leather. Franz rapidly cycled his black rosary beads through his fingers" (p. 249). "He ran his gloved hand across the ceiling. White flakes cascaded like snow inside the cockpit," is another example (p. 175). As the action increases, passages such as, "When Jennings sat up he saw Russian holding his left thigh skyward, groaning through his mask. His lower leg hung by just a few strips of tendon. The stump of his thigh gushed blood," magnify an already tense moment (p. 186).

Stigler and his comrades absolutely despised "The Party," especially Hermann Goering who consistently squandered aircraft such as the Me-262 and publicly accused Luftwaffe pilots as cowards thereby making them the scapegoats of the Allied bombing campaign. On 19 January 1945, the day of "The fighter Pilots' Mutiny," General Adolf Galland led a group of pilots to convince Goering to step down. Among those in attendance was Stigler's mentor, Gustav Roedel, who wanted to kill Goering that day (p. 273). Galland suggested that someone just as bad would take his place making the action meaningless. Goering recognized the challenge to his authority right away and suggested he would have all of the pilots shot. Rather than take the time to build a case against the mutineers, he decided to let them continue to fly where he believed they would surely die. Presumably, he could then make up any story about them he wished. And that is how fighter wing JV-44 "The Squadron of Experts" came into being. Galland created an elite squadron of pilots to fly the Me-262 against formation of B-24, B-17, and P-51 fighters. For enthusiasts of the Me-262, Stigler provided first-hand accounts of its strengths and faults on the ground and in combat. One of them was its propensity to catch fire demonstrated in a horrifying retelling of a mishap on the runway that caused Johannes Steinhoff's Me-262 to burst into flames. He survived, but suffered burns over much of his body. By this time, Makos's use of pathos has disarmed the reader and rather than suspicion of Stigler and his friends, there is empathy. The comradeship, sense of honor, and duty Charlie Brown and his crew felt, is comparable to Stigler and the German pilots in this story.

The last section of the book discusses how Stigler and Brown searched for one another. For fear that bomber crews would fail to fire on approaching enemy aircraft, at the time of the incident, the United States Army Air Force forbid Brown and his crew to discuss the incident with anyone. Moreover, if Stigler was found out, he would surely have faced a firing squad. The search did

not begin in earnest until 1985. Stigler was now living in Vancouver, Canada. Hearing of Stigler through air show circuits, Boeing invited Stigler to the fiftieth anniversary of the B-17. In the same year, Brown told the story to his friends in the 379th Bombers Association who urged him to look for the German pilot (p. 357). Here the reader recognizes what pilots call the “brotherhood of aviators.” Stigler became something of a celebrity amongst his old enemies. In addition to the guest appearance for the fiftieth anniversary of the B-17, he was a guest of the American Fighter Aces. Just as unlikely, Brown solicited and received the help of Adolf Galland who ultimately allowed the two to connect.

Makos included the letters between the two men and they serve as excellent primary source material as do his numerous quotes taken from Stigler and Brown from interviews conducted over a four-year period. In addition, Makos used subtitles that include the time and date to help readers maintain awareness and this is especially helpful when the story switches from Stigler to Brown. Also included, are excellent period images of the planes and personalities involved in the story. Thus, the book is accessible to all readers whatever their knowledge of WWII. For the researcher, Makos included endnotes, a substantial bibliography, and a list of museums and organizations where one can view the aircraft discussed in the book.

*A Higher Call* reads fast but is more formal in tone than a novel. Nevertheless, it is difficult to keep track of the military rank of both Stigler and Brown. Most often, Makos refers to both men by their first names, Franz and Charlie. Furthermore, the book does not include an index so taking good notes is necessary. For readers accustomed to a “good versus evil” story, they will not find it in this book. The reader will have to rely on their own world-view and experiences to decide the parameters of what an enemy is. Concerning Makos’s research question “*Can good men be found on both sides of a bad war?*”—his argument drives at yes.

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N. Jack “Dusty” Kleiss, Timothy J. Orr and Laura Lawfer Orr. *Never Call Me a Hero: A Legendary Dive-Bomber Pilot Remembers the Battle of Midway*. New York: Harper Collings, 2017.

## Book Review

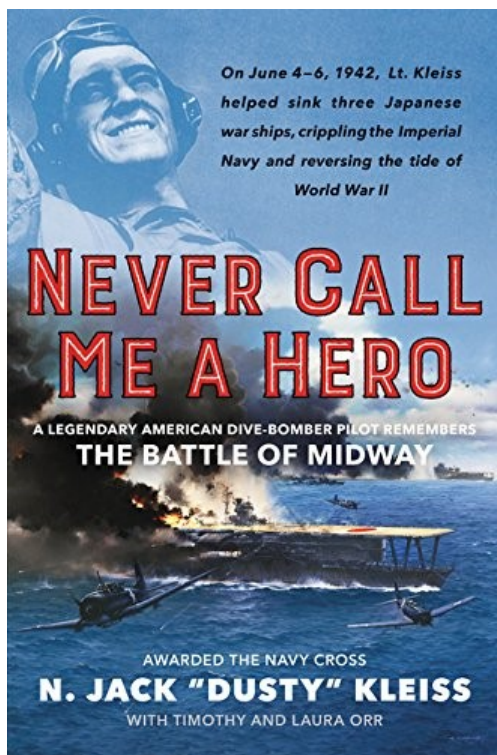
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Michael R Majerczyk

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Captain Norman Jack “Dusty” Kleiss of the United States Navy piloted an SBD Dauntless dive-bomber at the Battle of Midway, June 4, 1942. He was a member of Scouting Six and attached to the USS *Enterprise*. During his time on *Enterprise*, he lost close friends. For example, on May 20, 1942, a mishap on take-off caused ENS William P. West’s SBD to stall and fall into the ocean. As he tried to escape the sinking SBD, his boot tangled in the antenna wire and the sinking plane drowned him. Kleiss witnessed the entire event. In another incident, his friends ENS Frank Woodrow O’Flaherty and AMM I/C Bruno Frank ran out of fuel over the Pacific and ditched their SBD.

The Japanese captured them. After interrogation, they tied weights to their feet and threw them overboard (p. 235). To suppress what he had experienced, he distanced himself from Midway the remainder of his naval career. He retired in 1962 (p. xiv). As the public’s interest in the Battle of Midway grew, so did the interest in his stories. He told them, but focused on the actions of his fallen friends. He waited until the end of his life, a life that spanned one hundred years, to tell his story.



Because it is a story of Kleiss's life rather than a battle narrative, *Never Call Me a Hero* offers something for the researcher, the aviation enthusiast, the student of the war in the South-Pacific, and the romantic.

Kleiss was a meticulous record-keeper; he kept his log book, action reports, his diary and letters (p. xv). His good record keeping provided a valuable collection of primary sources for him and his co-writers Timothy J. Orr and Laura Lawfer Orr. Timothy J. Orr is an Associate Professor of Military History at Old Dominion University and Laura Lawfer Orr is the deputy education director at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. The book begins with his childhood in Coffeyville, Kansas, the town where the Dalton Gang met their demise in 1892. The stories of his childhood adventures make it clear he was a daredevil from the beginning, and his account of his time at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, is telling of what life was like for an ambitious midshipman in the 1930s. The hazing, the constant studying, and the obligatory two years of service in the surface fleet that included cruises on the cruiser USS *Vincennes*, and the destroyers USS *Goff* and *Yarnall* help shape the soon to be naval aviator (p.60).

Kleiss's flight training as a dive-bomber provides a glimpse at the stubborn resistance to change, and the suspicion those that embraced change received. Torpedo planes and dive-bombers threatened to make the battleship obsolete—something certain admirals did not wish to consider. Because of this, pilots had to demonstrate their determination—more than most. Kleiss described this attitude when he began training in the SBD at Ford Island once the Navy transferred him to the USS *Enterprise* (p. 88).

Aviation enthusiasts can expect a thorough review of the SBD Dauntless's capabilities as well as some of its lesser-known peculiarities. For example, the possibility exists of the forward guns firing at full auto when the pilot switched off the safety. Thus, the rule was to switch the safety off only seconds before firing or risk losing all one's fifty-caliber ammunition (p. 131). The SBD-2 had flotation bags that would unexpectedly inflate during flight and cause the plane to crash. Furthermore, each squadron had their own style of dive bombing. Scouting Six, for instance, preferred to initiate a dive at seventy-five degrees rather than the standard sixty-five degrees (p.135). Perhaps the most famous feature of the SBD was its perforated braking flaps. Kleiss discussed their effectiveness and their dependability. For example, he once put his SBD into a dive to escape Japanese fighters. When his attackers followed, he opened both flaps. His SBD slowed so fast that the three attacking Japanese fighters flew past him (p.143). Because Kleiss flew both the SBD-2 and the SBD-3, the reader is

privity to the differences and how the differences influenced the success of a mission. One difference was the new self-sealing fuel tanks on the SBD-3. They compared favorably against SBD-2 unprotected tanks that often caught fire when hit (p. 154).

Kleiss described his involvement in the Battle of the Marshall Islands, Wake, and Marcus Islands and finally, the Battle of Midway. In the chapter on the Battle of the Marshall Islands, he recalled his four-part dive-bombing technique, and how it earned him a hit on the Japanese cruiser *Katori*. For the air raids over Wake and Marcus Islands, Kleiss flew the SBD-3, and it included the YE-ZB homing radio that allowed pilots to lock in on their home carriers. Each carrier had a different code transmitted in Morse code. By listening for the code, the pilot could then determine the correct direction of his ship. He used all his experience and the advances in technology at Midway.

For students of the Battle of Midway, Kleiss provided a thrilling and detailed account of the morning battle and his hit on *Kaga* (p. 202). And for the afternoon attack and his hit on *Hiryu*, he provided the same powerful narrative (p.220). One attribute that sets this account of Midway from others, such as Stephen L. Moore's *Pacific Payback*, is the criticism LCDR Clarence Wade McClusky received. McClusky's unsuccessful attack on his initial dive on *Kaga* could have been disastrous because trailing pilots, only seconds behind, made adjustments based on their leader's hit or miss. McClusky's miss was so wide that those who followed him in the dive might not have been able to get back on target. Nevertheless, because fuel was a concern before the squadrons left *Enterprise*, McClusky received a stern reproach for his decision to fly at 190 knots rather than the standard cruising speed of 160 knots (p. 195). His decision may well be why some pilots had to ditch their planes. Furthermore, Kleiss described how one's placement in the formation affected fuel consumption. Those in the rear of the formation used more fuel because they had to match their leader's flight path—every alteration used fuel. McClusky, a fighter pilot, may not have considered this. Nevertheless, this criticism is minor compared to that which the Admirals received for arming the TBD Devastators with Mark-13 torpedoes. The Mark-13s had proved completely ineffective at the Marshall Islands as well as Wake and Marcus Islands. Nevertheless, before the morning attack, the Devastators had Mark-13s attached. Stunned, Kleiss looked for his best friend on *Enterprise*, Tom Eversole, of Torpedo Six. In a heart-breaking account, he wished Tom luck and said goodbye; both men knew most of Torpedo Six would not be returning (p. 186). Kleiss was so shocked at the decision to use Mark-13s that he suggested someone aboard the *Enterprise* altered the action reports to hide the Mark-13's

ineffectiveness (p. 149). It is these types of arguments, and a straightforward, honest tone, that makes this telling of Midway fresh and vibrant.

Kleiss weaved in letters to and from his sweetheart Eunice Marie Mochaon, whom he nicknamed Jean. He often wrote letters just before leaving on a mission and the one he wrote the day before Midway is especially touching (p. 181). Through these letters and the description of his courtship, the reader is privy to the family obligations both had to consider before marriage. Mochaon's parents were French-Canadian and practicing Catholics while Kleiss's father John was a stern Methodist and did not want his son marrying a Catholic girl. Even so, it is apparent his father was not always so harsh. A good example of this was when his father got behind the wheel of his son's new 1940 Ford Coupe on the open road, "This Ford has more power to it than my Mercury!" (p. 69).

Though Kleiss does reference other works in the text such as Clearance Dickenson's serialized memoir, "I Fly for Vengeance," the book is missing a bibliography or works cited page. Furthermore, of the three maps included in the book, the second and third maps are difficult to read in greyscale. Nevertheless, the book is accessible to those who know little about the Battle of Midway, but at the same time provides a first-hand account for those who do. The book is more than a battle narrative; it is an account of Kleiss's life. As such, it includes his great deeds as well as his missteps. And with the modesty his generation is known for, Kleiss makes one request, "Dear reader, please be generous to me, but never call me a hero. During the Pacific War, I did my job and that's it" (p. xvii).



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Benn Steil. *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018.

Book Review

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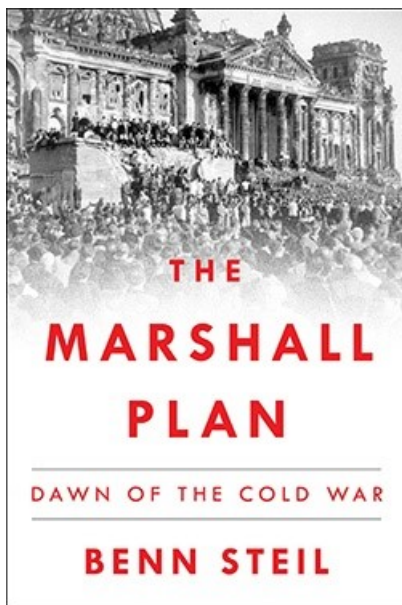
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States do not make foreign policy; people do. The elected and non-elected officials of the bureaucracy make the decisions that determine American foreign policy. In *The Marshall Plan: Dawn of the Cold War*, Benn Steil reviews new material from American, Russian, German, and Czech sources and reveals a chronology of the speeches, meetings, and conversations that made up the most famous nation-building event of all. Starting with 1944 and ending in 1949, the reader will learn the stories of George C. Marshall, Dean Acheson, George F. Kennan, Lucius D. Clay, Henry Stimson, and Arthur Vandenberg, among others. Steil notes that American bureaucratic wrangling and opposition in Europe almost prevented the Marshall Plan from happening. However, without the Plan, the Cold War might not have started or ended the way it did.

He organizes the book with a semi-chronological structure but readers should keep the cast of characters bookmarked, as they will want to refer to them. Steil introduces some people without providing a biography until many pages later. This makes the book somewhat structurally repetitive and complex. Indeed, the book takes some commitment; it is not a casual read.

All told, eighteen countries spent thirteen billion dollars to build up the European ideological defense through economic recovery and cooperation. Recall that the Plan was available to all countries except for the Soviet Union. Thus, the Marshall Plan set up the European cooperation that encouraged the North Atlantic



Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). Without those very practical, cooperative endeavors, trade wars, currency devaluations, personal resentments, and perhaps even the demand for reparations from Germany could have pulled apart the growing coalition against Communism.

Again, some events take on a mythological quality that obscures their origins. One might be tempted to think of the Marshall Plan as a grand humanitarian gesture after World War II, but it has more realistic origins than that. As Steil points out, the hard-boiled realists used the Marshall Plan to contain the expansionism of Josef Stalin. Without it, the communist ideology in France, Italy, and elsewhere could have grown on the economic frustrations of the citizens and of the farmers and industrialists, in particular.

So, why did the Marshall Plan become a myth that is invoked to apply to any nation-building situation? Its success made tolerable—at least to outside observers benefiting from the distance of time—the geopolitical tradeoff between freedom in the West and Soviet power in the East. That tradeoff made the Plan an essential basis for the Cold War. The Plan was a success for at least six reasons.

First, it was a grand strategy from the White House—known as the Truman Doctrine. Steil gives us the background for the famous March 12, 1947 speech before Congress and includes it in an appendix. The request for economic assistance for Turkey and Greece became the justification for a broader policy even if Congress and the wider audience did not know it was coming. The speech asserted that the economic recovery of Europe was the key to a peaceful future. Without public speeches advocating the Plan, the public might not have supported the next step: the Cold War.

Second, a prescient and relatable article published in the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Affairs* by George Kennan, under the alias “Mr. X” justified the policy of containment and a certain about-face when it came to cooperation with the Soviets. The article provided a kind of end-run around the legacy of Yalta when FDR promised to cooperate with Stalin. Cooperation with the Soviets on Eastern Europe was not going to be possible.

Third, the framers of the Marshall Plan had the cooperation—albeit reluctant—from Europe. Italian and French governments promised to bolster non-communist candidates in return for aid. When the Soviets and those states in their sphere rejected Marshall Plan aid, it justified the rejection of any and all communists in Western Europe as well, thus providing more fodder for the ideological war between the two Great Powers.

Fourth, it relied upon the capitalistic underpinnings of all aid. Remember, the Plan was indeed to rebuild Europe after nearly unfathomable devastation.

Populations were starving, but economic aid needed to go beyond immediate recovery. It needed to develop and modernize Europe to create trade. By investing in West Germany's industrial capacity, the Plan ignored crippling calls by the Soviets for reparations on Germany and focused on the capital—physical and mental—needed for the future.

Fifth, it provided physical security that protected freedom and growing democracy through NATO and the American nuclear umbrella of Europe. NATO is a collective security arrangement that strengthened the collective economic arrangements within Europe. Removing physical vulnerability encouraged Western cooperation, which helped to set up the Cold War too.

Finally, the Marshall Plan bolstered cooperation within Europe. Marshall and others firmly believed that the union of the Western European states was necessary to counteract the Soviet influence. Economic recovery could not move forward without German industry or German cooperation with its neighbors. The economy was interlinked—for both the purposes of immediate recovery and defense against the Soviets.

Those variables may not apply universally; like a recipe handed down by a grandmother, some ingredients are not always available. Without the context of the wider ideological war, the Plan does not get the material or public support it needs. Indeed, witness the public debates over more recent recovery plans. Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria come to mind as places that may not have the fertile ground that the Marshall Plan sowed.

Steil's book has an astounding sum of facts, numbers, and inside conversations that bring the reader behind the scenes of the decision-making. It is a unique set of data and an interesting test case for principles like misperceptions, bureaucratic politics, rational actor model, personalities, changing grand theories, reluctance to accept new information, and even devil's advocate in groupthink. However, his book suffers from a few drawbacks. Although the list of characters is helpful, keep an atlas handy; the book would benefit from more maps.

Steil contends that the recipe for a successful foreign policy strategy like the Marshall Plan is based on a healthy dose of realism in addition to the idealistic dream and cooperative goals. Remember, the Plan was not a miracle. It bolstered the recovery that was already there, but it was definitely important. Without the practical goals of the Marshall Plan, the visionary cooperation, recovery, and leadership that the post-World War II world needed may not have existed. Steil reminds us that lofty American foreign policy has to be both visionary AND practical.



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