

“Keep Holding On”:

The Uses, Continuing Value, and Enduring Power of the Records of the First World War

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¹ The quote in the title comes from Avril Lavigne, “Keep Holding On,” *The Best Damn Thing* (RCA: 2006).

Abstract

Postmodern theory maintains that analyzing the history of archival material can enrich our understanding of archival methods over time and help us understand their effect on society. Examining various records of the First World War, from the perspectives of Britain, Canada, and Australia, from their creation to their uses today, demonstrates the lasting effect that these records have had on the memory of the war, and on our understanding of the past. During the war, records were largely used by governments and individuals for the war's prosecution and the well-being of soldiers and civilians. The interwar period was faced with whether and how to preserve millions of government records as well as the need for governments, in particular, to use them to shape public opinion and international relations. Today personal First World War records such as letters, diaries, and photographs have taken centre stage and are used primarily for education, commemoration, and entertainment. Although these and other First World War records have increased in popularity in Britain, Canada, and Australia, archival institutions remain in the shadows. Nevertheless, the First World War centenary and the interest in the war's records allow an opportunity to address that problem. This thesis aims to provide greater awareness of the varied uses of the war's records across their histories in order to add to their value and thus demonstrate the importance of preserving archival records. It is hoped that this will help to garner much needed political, economic, and societal support for archival institutions.

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To my extraordinary support team: I salute you.

Dedication

To my darling Devon who has listened to my postulating without complaint, has made dinner nearly every night for the past few years, and has had to put up with my nearly constant whining. Without your love and support I would not be where I am today. I could not ask for more than you have given. You are truly a blessing. With all my love,

I dedicate this thesis to you.

Amo te, nunc et semper.

Introduction

“Also Sprach Zarathustra”:¹ The Value of Records and Historical Context

Who controls the past . . . controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.

- George Orwell²

A letter is not a text message nor a ‘like’ on Facebook – in order to write one you have to stop, and think, and feel, and compose not just your letter but yourself. A letter is also not an essay nor a short story. A letter is a page or two long, with a beginning and an end. A letter is private. A letter is everyday. A letter is familiar. A letter is, above all, personal.

- Neil Bartlett and Kate Pullinger³

At its core, George Orwell’s renowned book, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, emphasizes that censorship, manipulation, and propagation of information can be used as a means to control the past, present, and future of society. Whoever controls the flow of information has power over people’s history, and thus their very identity. We can also see these lessons in history: during the Napoleonic Wars, Napoleon Bonaparte understood the importance of controlling information as he swept across Europe appropriating nations’ archives, artifacts, artwork, and books to be organized and categorized for the benefit of his self-proclaimed Napoleonic government.⁴ Various governments over the course of history consulted, selectively published, and destroyed records to justify actions, craft the narratives of social and political events, and alter relations with other governing bodies. If

¹ Richard Strauss, “Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30,” Frankfurt City Orchestra, Museum Society Concert, Frankfurt am Main: 1896.

² George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York: Penguin Books Limited in association with Martin Secker and Warburg, 1980), 31.

³ Neil Bartlett and Kate Pullinger, eds., *Letter to an Unknown Soldier: A New Kind of War Memorial* (London: William Collins, 2014), x.

⁴ Brian M. Owens, “The Archival Manuscript and the Book: Tools of Knowledge and Artifacts of Destruction During the Napoleonic Wars and the War of 1812,” *Library and Archival Security* 25, no. 1 (2012): 5-7, <http://www-tandfonline-com.libproxy.uwinnipeg.ca/toc/wlas20/25/1#.VHD6WMnp-zt>.

the individuals who control archival information have the ability to change identities and memories of the past, then we must understand who is controlling access, how the records are being used, which records are being preserved, and to what purposes and outcomes. Ideally, historical narratives are grounded in, and constructed using, archival materials. These narratives are then made available to the masses through education systems, cultural institutions, oration, colloquialisms, popular culture, and traditions becoming embedded in social consciousness. Archival records play a pivotal role in the construction of historical memory, social identity, and popular culture. To enrich our understanding of archival material, and thus society, we must first analyze the history and significance of archival records.

The records of the First World War (WWI) are ideal candidates to conduct the history of a body of records. WWI was well-recorded and those records were often well-preserved because many individuals saw the necessity to keep their records for posterity. Their one hundred-year history provides a significant and important length of time for study. Furthermore, looking at the records of three nations, Britain, Canada, and Australia, separate in their administration, but ultimately connected under the British flag, we can see how the records were created and treated differently depending on the creators' context, needs, and values. The outset of the centenary of the war makes the timing of their study propitious as the records are being used now more than ever before. Lastly, the First World War changed the very nature of the archival profession in all three nations and, more importantly, it changed the world socially, geographically, and politically in a way that can often be linked back to the records of the war. We would not understand the war in the same way without the efforts of those who fought to preserve

the records. A history of the records of the First World War demonstrates the importance of a record's context of creation and use, and the necessity of maintaining archival institutions to preserve one of the world's most valuable resources: its history.

Illustrating a complete history of a group of records is difficult, if not impossible, because of the nearly inexhaustible details of contextual information that can be discovered. Emphasizing the history of the record is one of the many ambitions of archival postmodernists. There have been many informative articles on the worth of postmodernism in archival studies.⁵ In short, postmodernism proposes that archivists and archival material are not neutral, as was once assumed, but are active participants in the creation of historical narratives and social memory. Through their action and inaction, archivists shape the ways in which history is remembered, taught, and cultivated. They give special status to some records over others, and the act of description and exhibition of the records shapes the public's understanding of history. Furthermore, archival descriptions are based on information immediately at hand, and the archivist's own theories, assumptions, biases, and place in their society. Most importantly, archival material communicates information about the actions of its creators.

The context of a record's creation is fundamental to understanding the motivations and functions of its creators. Furthermore, the use and understanding of the

⁵ For example, see the following: Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991); Tom Nesmith, "Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the 'Ghosts' of Archival Theory," *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999); Terry Cook, "Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts," *Archival Science* 1, no. 1 (2000); Verne Harris, *Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa*, 2d ed. (Pretoria, 2000); Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth?: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001); Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *The American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002); Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (2002); and Sue McKemmish, "Are Records Ever Actual?," in Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott, eds., *The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years* (Clayton, 1994).

information in the records is constantly re-negotiated over time depending on the user's context and worldview, as well as the effects of the archival processes. To alleviate tensions caused by the revelation that archivists and archival repositories are not neutral, but rather co-creators of social concepts of history, postmodernists such as Tom Nesmith and Terry Cook have suggested ways to embrace transparency and openness.

Postmodernists maintain a need for accountability and transparency with regard to the transfer of information. One of the best ways to understand the myriad of archival processes and the effects of the record's use is to analyze the record's history.

However, there are several simultaneous theories, particularly neo-Jenkinsonianism and postmodernism, which leads to a divergence in the archival profession. In his article "Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice," Tom Nesmith proposes that the archival profession should reconceptualise the functions archivists perform and the definitions of archival concepts.⁶ Archivists have to update these concepts in light of postmodern ideals about contextualization and a greater emphasis on history and material literacy in order to embrace transparency and inherent biases in the profession. He ultimately suggests that a history of the record is essential for accountability.⁷ The history of any given record should encompass the context of its creation, the functions of the creators, the use made of the record before and after its deposit in an archival repository, the archival processes that the record underwent once deposited, and the uses made of it after its deposit. Context is vital to the history of the records, but it is also nearly boundless. Nevertheless,

⁶ Tom Nesmith, "Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice," *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005): 260,

<http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/419/showToc>.

⁷ Ibid., 267.

looking at the history of records over time, one can demonstrate how the records were used and for what purpose, thus indicating what was important to a society at a particular time and place. The history of a prominent group of records, such as the records of the First World War, helps to determine not only how the records have shaped British, Canadian, and Australian societies, but how those societies, and the inherent biases and customs therein, shaped the collection and retention of the records.

There are many scholarly books and articles on the subject of war, and a growing number on the subject of war records, but there is no comprehensive work that conveys the history of war records in Britain, Canada, and Australia. Many of the authors that I considered look at the initial uses of records, or analyze war records themselves, in light of the prosecution of the war. For example, historian John Naylor's study of the creation of the British Cabinet Secretariat during the war is a gateway to appreciating the administrative record in prosecuting the war and the nature and impact of restrictions on access to the administrative record after the war. Naylor described the trials and tribulations undertaken to create and secure the administrative records of war, as well as highlighted the importance of a history of the records and the records' creators.

Scholars also analyze war records to understand how their use, visibility, and promotion have affected social memory in the three countries. Michael Piggott, a retired archivist once employed by many archives across Australia, including the Australian War Memorial (AWM) archives and the National Archives, discusses the impact of the Australian War Memorial and the war records on an intangible level. He deals particularly with Charles Bean's vision of the AWM as a place of "sacred archiving."⁸

⁸ Michael Piggott, "War, Sacred Archiving, and C.E.W. Bean," in Michael Piggott, *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012), 119.

Robert McIntosh, an archivist at Library and Archives Canada, and historian Jonathan Vance discuss the role of records in the formation of the Canadian memory of WWI.⁹ Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz's article, "Archives, Records, and Power: the Making of Modern Memory," underscores the pivotal role that archival institutions play in the creation of social memory and thus social conditions.¹⁰ As Schwartz and Cook explain, thoroughly and explicitly, archivists and archival records have power over myth-making and memory shaping. They argue that the creation of records and the motivations that are behind them, lead archivists to privilege some records over others through exhibition and digitization; in this way, as Schwartz and Cook conclude, archives have power to change perceptions and history. As they so eloquently note, "[a]rchives then are not some pristine storehouse of historical documentation that has piled up, but a reflection of and often justification for the society that creates them."¹¹ Each society shapes its records and archival institutions, while they in turn shape their society.

Although theories remain largely in the background of my thesis, postmodern theory is at its core. In addition, I analyzed theories such as the Jenkinsonian model of a record's neutrality that was developed in Britain in the years immediately after the war, the record continuum theory that emerged in Australia in the 1990s, and the total archives collecting policies that have been influential in Canada since the 1970s. The still highly influential British archivist Hilary Jenkinson's classic manual on archives offers a key entrée into the archival challenge and issues the war raised. Jenkinson, who was an

⁹ See Robert McIntosh, "The Great War, Archives, and Modern Memory," *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998): 1-31, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/423/showToc> and Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

¹⁰ See Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: the Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (2002): 12, <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/BF02435628>.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

archivist at the Public Record Office, was a leading archival theorist who was prominent during and immediately after WWI. The manual was published in 1922 to address the challenge of coping with the war's massive amount of archival records. Jenkinson's publications provide glimpses into what many thought was important for British post-war society to keep: primarily governmental administrative documents, as selected for preservation not by archivists, but by their creators and primarily for *their* purposes, whose interests were as much legal, political, and diplomatic as they were broadly historical. However, Jenkinson stresses that archivists must remain neutral when describing and organizing records to maintain the inherent truthfulness of the records.¹²

Jenkinson's theories greatly reflected how Britain's war records were preserved after the war, but run counter to the more modern Australian theory of a record's continuum as well as postmodernism in general. The continuum and postmodern theories support the need for greater contextual information about the creation and preservation of records to truly understand the records and the ways in which they are beneficial to local, national, and international communities. Both emphasize that records have histories, or move through a continuum of phases that often reshape and repurpose them. A record's continuum is the life of a record throughout its many uses, interpretations, and re-interpretations, from creation, through to arrival at an archival repository, where it will not die, but rather continue to experience many lives or uses thereafter. This continuum amounts to a record's history, provenances, and contexts.

¹² Jenkinson, like many other archivists of his time, was highly influenced by the *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* of 1898, colloquially known as the Dutch Manual. For more information on European archival practices prior to WWI, refer to the Dutch Manual. In "What is Past is Prologue," Terry Cook outlines the general progression of archival practices since the Dutch Manual. Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (1997): 23, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/viewArticle/12175>.

Lastly, the concept of total archives stresses the importance of preserving records, whether their origin is administrative or personal in nature.¹³ In some national archives, administrative records of government are the only types of records acquired. The total archives concept has expanded Canadian acquisition policy at Library and Archives Canada to encompass private institutional, personal, and administrative records in recognition of the archival, historical, and cultural significance of each type. The concept of total archives is fundamentally a contextualizing approach to archives by demonstrating that context is essential to understanding what constitutes administrative and personal importance. It indicates that personal and institutional records cannot be adequately understood without seeing them in the context provided by the other.

Furthermore, the concept of total archives makes possible archival responses to shifts in public interest between institutional and personal records; this shift is evident in the uses and exhibition of WWI records, particularly private records, since the time of the war. Personal records are increasingly highlighted by archival institutions through exhibits and digitization projects, examined by academics to discover more about social history, and coveted by descendants of soldiers and military history enthusiasts. With the popularity of family history, the general public made its preferences known, and archival institutions are answering this call for personal testimony of the past.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this thesis, the terms “record” and “archive” are used interchangeably and are defined as a collection of meaningful communications in a

¹³ Ibid., 34.

physical medium that conveys the actions of its creators. The meaning and uses of the records, derived from the individuals who use them as well as the institutions that preserve them, evolve over time and space. The definition includes those materials, which are kept permanently, that are held in public and private cultural institutions, including archival repositories, museums, and art galleries. For the building that houses archival material, I have used the terms “archival repository” and “archival institution.” I largely refer to archival repositories, museums, and art galleries as cultural institutions. “Social memory” is the account of past events, experiences, and personalities shared by a particular group, whereas “myth” is the culmination of truth, half-truths, and invention to form an idyllic, often nationalistic, narrative. The “history of the record” is a concept that indicates the importance of understanding the existence of a record or group of records from creation to destruction or placement and use in archives. The concept can be applied to a single record, such as the Treaty of Versailles, or a group of records, such as a collection of personal and administrative records of the First World War. Ideally, the history of a record should include an analysis of the record within the framework of a particular archival institution. However, for this project, it was important to demonstrate the overall relationship between the records at an international level, and show how the records of three different nations were preserved and how they affected social memory differently depending on their context of use.

THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis introduces the concept of the history of a record from three administrations: those in Britain, Canada, and Australia. In 1914, these three nations were linked under the British flag when called to arms to defend the British Empire. The British had administrative control of the war until 1917. Although many administrative directives came from British commanders, Canadians and Australians also created administrative records of war. The study of these three nations, as opposed to other nations that participated in the war, was done because of their administrative relationship and archival differences.

Throughout this thesis, I look at the creation and use of records over time from these three nations, starting with their use in the prosecution of the war and ending with uses that are being made of them today. I primarily look at administrative and personal records created from 1914 to 1918 and demonstrate how vital they were to the war effort, on an administrative and personal level, to the social memory of the war, and how they continue to play a role in the modern popular culture of the three nations.

The first chapter looks at groups of records created during the war that are either administrative or personal. Administrative records include general orders, propaganda, and cartography. Personal reflections were also prominent and come in forms such as letters. Some record types fall under both categories and include diaries and visual representations of the war, such as photography, film, and art. I also note some of the more prominent record creators in the war, namely Sir Maurice Hankey and the British War Cabinet and Sir Max Aitken, also known as Lord Beaverbrook, of the Canadian War

Records Office. It is important to look not only at the records themselves, but also at who created them and for what purpose. The first chapter discusses the initial uses of the records for the war effort. Its purpose is to establish a foundation for the theoretical analysis to follow. I conclude that the records of war were integral for the administration of the war on political and personal scales. Never before had the world seen such carnage on the battlefield, nor had there been so many records created for the purpose of war.

Whereas the first chapter outlines the context of creation, the second chapter looks at their preservation, use, and political manipulation. After the war, amidst the social, political, and economic disorder, the task of preserving the records of war was left to public bodies and self-appointed keepers. Millions of records, both administrative and personal, were created during the war and individuals, some of whom had little to no training in these matters, had to appraise them for their historical value and preserve them for future generations. At the same time, governments wanted to use them to justify actions, write official histories, and appease tense political relationships. The most long-lasting effect of these war records was to sustain the myths born during and immediately after the war. The longstanding conclusion that Canadians enlisted as individuals and left Europe as a nation united continues to this day. Australians encouraged a similar myth, although it has been less emphasized over time. British subjects, by contrast, closer and more physically affected by the war, were disillusioned and largely blamed Edwardian values of excess for the war and incompetent old men for the deaths of millions. This second chapter looks at the uses of records and their effects in the interwar period through a postmodern lens. This was a time of preservation, power struggles, and myth-making.

The third and final chapter looks at the continued uses and effects of records on today's society, particularly in light of the age of technology and the vastness of the Internet. I focus this chapter on public uses of records, rather than academic, and have found that many records invigorate popular culture in movies, novels, plays, and games, whose creators look to the past for inspiration. Genealogy has taken the world by storm, and many individuals in all three of the countries that are the focus of this study are actively seeking links to their past through letters, diaries, and photographs. The centenary of the war, perhaps more than anything else, has aided the resurgence of the popularity of war records. Commemorative art pieces, documentaries, and books have once again brought WWI records into the public eye. More records are available in archives and online, and information about the records is strongly desired. More people are making their own personal records, and administrative bodies are also adding to the collections of war records. As individuals participate in these commemorative projects, they, in turn, make new records about the First World War. The history of WWI is alive and malleable because the records of the war are still available for interpretation, exhibition, and publication.

The importance of WWI records today for understanding the war on an administrative and personal level is without question. Today, the popularity of the war's records is international in scope, and interest in personal records in particular, such as letters and photographs, and the information in administrative records about individuals, is phenomenal. With the help of online resources, especially social media, these records have been saved, shared, viewed, "liked", and recontextualized worldwide. More than at any other time, individuals encounter archival records, or their reproductions, in their

day-to-day lives without thinking about the historical implications of how those records are still available. The general populace needs to understand that without the archival profession they would not have access to the resources they do today. Archives are important, not only for academics, but for the knowledge, study, and entertainment of the masses. Archives are taken for granted and, without support, could be lost to history.

The history of WWI records confirms not just how vital the records were to the war effort, but, more than that, how often they were used and recontextualized over time for specific purposes. Ideas about the nature of war would be different today without the valiant efforts of individuals such as Max Aitken, Charles Bean, and Hilary Jenkinson, who preserved and raised awareness of the importance of these records. Archivists have a principal role in constructing social memory, as the communicators of vast amounts of historical records. A fuller appreciation of the importance of archival material is essential to the work of building support for the archival profession.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, records are more accessible and visible to the general public through online portals, popular culture, social media, and historical narratives. In light of this popularity, now is the most appropriate time to analyze a history of the records. Postmodernists promote accessibility, communication, visibility, and openness. It is to the benefit of archival institutions to highlight the worth of their collections. Greater contextual information will enrich our understanding of the records and their importance to the societies that archival institutions serve. Although records are used now by the

general public more than ever before, there are still countless individuals who do not realize from where the records come, where they are preserved, why they are still accessible, and what it means for them to be archival. As a student of archival studies, I am constantly confronted by people who do not know what archives are, or the value of the historical record. With the popularity of records on the rise, now is the time to promote the archival institutions that have enabled their preservation. As the history of records shows, archivists do not hold enough socio-political power to ensure proper archiving of records. Furthermore, archives are usually funded much less well than other cultural institutions. They are often the first cultural institution to face cutbacks financially and promotionally. Being vital cultural institutions, ones that store and influence nations' histories, they should be given more support. A history of the records of the First World War can illustrate their importance and expose the lack of support for archival institutions.

It is necessary to help the general public understand the importance of archival repositories and the versatility of records. It will be a constant endeavour to break common misconceptions that archives are neutral, solely academic, and simply storehouses of information. WWI records are particularly helpful because of their enduring value over time and their immediacy in public thought in light of the centenary. As cultural institutions support the community, they rely on the community to support them too. It is a symbiotic relationship, and while museums and art galleries are unmistakably supported by governments, communities, and the general public, now the plight of archival institutions needs to be recognized. Archival records often make up the fabric of social memory and historical narrative and therefore archival institutions need

the support of the general public. Only together can we ensure not just the survival, but the invigoration of the archival world. The history of the records of the First World War helps to enrich our understanding of an important era in world history, demonstrates the value of preserving the records, and encourages the betterment of the archival profession.

Chapter 1

“In Flanders Fields”¹

The Centrality of War Records to the Prosecution of the War and the Lives of Soldiers and Civilians

When a civilisation such as that of the modern world is suddenly thrust into the cauldron of a desperate war, it knows enough of the value of the past to have no excuse for failing to record the present. It has, or should have, the imagination to realise how priceless the documents of the War will be to the remote future, for it knows what it would give for operation orders of the Battle of Hastings or a private Diary of William the Conqueror.

- Canadian War Records Office²

Many describe the First World War as the first modern war due to advancements in technology and new methods of fighting. What many scholars and citizens alike do not realize, however, is that it was the first modern war in terms of the need to generate an extensive amount of documentation in many different media. More than any preceding war, records in WWI were a vital concern for governments, historians, and for the individuals who recognized the war for what it was: a turning point in world history. Without this recognition from several key figures, historians today would not have access to as much, or as complete, information as they do. This chapter will outline the creation and intended use of war records by Britain, Canada and Australia. It will also demonstrate the desire to witness, record, and share information between soldiers and civilians alike. Personal records, like diaries and letters, helped the war effort by raising soldiers' morale and providing a medium for soldiers and their families to escape the harsh reality of life at the front. It takes more than machinery and orders to fight a war; without a motivated fighting force, a government would be hard-pressed to defeat the

¹ John A. McCrae, “In Flanders Fields,” *Punch or the London Charivari*, (8 December 1915), 468.

² Canadian War Records Office Report, 11 January 1917, quoted in McIntosh, 6.

enemy. Records were needed to administer the war on physical and psychological levels. Context is vital to understanding the history of the records, and it begins with their creation. They were created by governments and individuals in order to prosecute the war, but they were kept because they were necessary to understand the war and the individuals who were affected by it.

Each nation had a different story to tell, but they had commonalities: they had to create, implement, master, organize, and preserve an inordinate number of records, both official and personal, in order to conduct the war from beginning to end. The sheer scale of war records, their creation, uses, and subsequent safeguarding, are among the many things that differentiate the First World War from former wars. WWI set the precedent for how subsequent governments handled their war records thereafter, and changed the face of warfare from an archival point of view; this war particularly affected records that pertained to international relations, bureaucracy, propaganda, and art. An ever-increasing number of war records would beleaguer record-keepers and historians for years to come.

During the war, records were created, collected, preserved, disseminated, re-written, copied, and published, making the history of the records complicated. WWI records are vast in number, particularly the administrative records. Looking at every individual type of war record, the context of each, and how it was used in the First World War, is beyond the scope of anything less than a full-length book. For this reason, I have chosen to focus on key examples of administrative and personal records of the war. The administrative records were vital to the prosecution of the war on a governmental level. A war, however, is fought by individuals and therefore personal records were also created, used, and preserved. Personal records gained enduring value because of the records'

emotive power during the war; after the war, the records were sought out and preserved for the history they captured.

I have chosen these records in particular because they are often more popular with, and attractive to, the general public today, and will therefore be more important in later chapters. If there are any types of war records that pique the interest of the general public the most, it is the personal, rather than the administrative. According to archivist Hilary Jenkinson, only the administrative records properly managed were the only truly archival records that should be preserved for posterity. War records contain significant information that continues to be interpreted and re-interpreted over time. Without context, however, many records may be incomprehensible facts and figures. In this chapter, I will describe some of the different types of records, and who created them, and I conclude that context is necessary to understanding the history of the records and their importance to us today.

For the history of these records, it is important to note how they were used and came into being, thus an analysis of both the records' creators and keepers is important. While the records themselves play a crucial role in the formation of historical memory, the credit for their creation and preservation often falls by the wayside. There are key figures that had a part in creating and maintaining administrative records for future use. Without these individuals, present historians would most certainly not have access to the amount of government information that they do, and commemorations, like the centenary of the war, would not be as extensive. The roles that Sir Maurice Hankey of Britain, and Sir Max Aitken and Dominion Archivist Sir Arthur Doughty of Canada, played in the creation and implementation of war records are particularly noteworthy; without their

efforts to document various aspects of the war, we would know significantly less than we do today.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

WWI was by no means the first war in which records were created to administer its prosecution, nor would it be the last to produce excessive numbers of them; it was, however, the first war to require extensive administrative keeping of records for the war effort than ever before. As late as the second Boer War (1899-1902), also known as the South African War, the British were criticized for their lack of coordination and communication between the government and the military, despite the various types of records created during the war.³

Administrative records are the lifeblood of military operations. Due to the nature of the war, millions of administrative documents were needed on a day-to-day basis, both on the part of military administration and on national and international levels, including, but not limited to, dispatches, Orders of the Day, commands, correspondence, information about supply lines, service support, intelligence, medical files, personnel files, laws, and, ultimately, five peace treaties that put an end to the war.⁴ Records, as

³ Brian Masschaele, "Memos and Minutes: Arnold Heeney, the Cabinet War Committee, and the Establishment of a Canadian Cabinet Secretariat During the Second World War," *Archivaria* 46 (Fall, 1998): 149, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/423/showToc>. The types of documents created during the war include official records such as sermons, pamphlets, souvenir booklets, programmes for patriotic benefit concerts, calendars, menus, song lyrics, poetry, handbills, photographs, the reports of charitable works, the Department of Militia and Defence's official reports, as well as personal documents such as private papers, letters, diaries, and memoirs. Carman Miller, "Research Resources on Canada and the South Africa War," *Archivaria* 26 (1988): 117-119. <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/385>.

⁴ The five treaties include: The Treaty of Versailles, Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Neuilly-sur-Seine, Treaty of Trianon, and the Treaty of Sèvres.

forms of communication, were created for the coordination and conduct of the war to the specifications of the individuals in charge, and upon the needs of those fighting.

Sir Maurice Hankey and the British War Cabinet

As a key example of the new role for administrative records during WWI, I focus here on the British experience with cabinet records. The Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) was established by Great Britain in 1902, largely because of the administrative blunders of the Boer War. The CID was tasked with maintaining a record of its proceedings to establish a clear line of communication between the government and the military. In 1912, Maurice Hankey became the Chief Secretary of the CID and helped to revolutionize bureaucratic recordkeeping in Britain thereafter.⁵ By the end of the war, Hankey was credited by King George V with contributing to the war effort more than anyone else.⁶

As Chief Secretary of the CID, Hankey established a recordkeeping and communication system known as the “War Book,” which outlined the actions that each government department needed to accomplish in case of war; Hankey said that the War Book was his greatest accomplishment, despite the many others yet to come.⁷ Because of the promise Hankey demonstrated in the CID, Prime Minister David Lloyd George appointed him British Cabinet Secretary in 1916. His mandate was to establish, for the first time in cabinet history, a Cabinet Secretariat responsible for documenting cabinet

⁵ Masschaele, 149.

⁶ Ibid., 151.

⁷ John F. Naylor, *A Man and an Institution: Sir Maurice Hankey, the Cabinet Secretariat, and the Custody of Cabinet Secrecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 24.

decisions and managing cabinet records.⁸ The government concluded that it could not conduct a war on the vast scale of WWI without much better documentation and records management. The secretariat ensured that government decisions and policies could be communicated to the military as well as different agencies in the government, and vice versa.⁹ Former Prime Minister H.H. Asquith questioned the need for the secretariat position. He thought that a record of proceedings would undermine the solidarity of cabinet members as well as the secrecy in which they governed.¹⁰ However, Lloyd George understood the importance of recording the proceedings even if just to clarify the cabinet's decisions.¹¹ War would not allow for indecision and inactivity.

As Cabinet Secretary, Hankey was required to record proceedings, transmit relevant extracts from meetings to departments, prepare agendas and submit them to attending ministers, arrange for non-war cabinet members to discuss items from the agendas, receive papers from departments, and circulate them to the War Cabinet and other officials.¹² Hankey devised an elaborate system to make and implement decisions efficiently and secretly.¹³ Leo Amery, politician and journalist, nicely summed up the differences between the old and new system under Hankey, when he stated,

We have in fact swept away altogether the old system which you saw working at the very height of its inefficiency . . . gentlemen assembling without any purpose and without any idea of what they were going to talk about, and eventually dispersing for lunch without any idea of what they had really discussed or decided. . . . Under the new system the Cabinet has a definite agenda; . . . full Minutes are taken, more particularly of the actual decisions arrived at; these are circulated the same day and unless they are corrected by one of the Cabinet Ministers concerned, the Secretariat assumes that the decisions hold good and

⁸ Masschaele, 149-150.

⁹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁰ Ibid., 150.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

makes it its business to see that the Departments are informed of the decisions and carry them out.¹⁴

The most important aspect of Hankey's position, at least according to him, was that he was non-partisan, so he could focus on the operation of government administration, rather than being swayed by political machinations. Hankey also worked closely with Britain's allies and attended nearly all of the meetings of the many inter-allied organizations in which Britain played a role.¹⁵ He ensured an efficient system that led to orders and action. He also created, maintained, and preserved important records needed to fight the war that the public has access to today. Being the creator of the modern cabinet recordkeeping in Britain is Hankey's lasting legacy.

The War Cabinet had to coordinate British forces with those of its dominions, as well as represent its dominions on an international level. In WWI, Britain had an army, air force, navy, and merchant navy, as well as marines and medical personnel. For each of these divisions, officials created service records, pension records, war diaries, unit movements and tactics, communiqués, propaganda, casualty forms, medal cards, pay allowances, and much more.¹⁶ They had to look after both the British troops, and administer the forces of their dominions on a high level. The cabinet papers created constitute one of the most well-preserved and documented collection of British

¹⁴ Quoted in Naylor, 29.

¹⁵ Carl L. Lokke, "A Sketch of the Interallied Organizations of the First World War Period and Their Records," *The American Archivist* 7, no. 4 (October, 1944): 225, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40288402>.

¹⁶ For some examples, see: The National Archives, "Digitised First World War records," The National Archives, accessed 19 July 2015, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/centenary-digitised-records/>. One notable example of administrative documentation was the distribution of thousands of courts martial throughout the war. British, Dominion, and Imperial soldiers were tried for a variety of reasons from offences as severe as murder and desertion, to sleeping on duty. Approximately three thousand men were sentenced to death throughout the war, although, fortunately, only a little more than three hundred of these sentences were carried out. The National Archives, "Service Records."

administrative records. By far, British officials created the majority of the administrative records produced during WWI by the three countries that are the subject of this study.¹⁷

Along with Britain, Canada and Australia also had to maintain strict and accurate administrative records for they too had units to control, oversee, and keep safe. In Australia, for example, some administrative records that may be found in archives today include headquarter registries, Military district records, Commissioner's Office files, records that pertain to security of soldiers and civilians, operation files, POW records, nominal rolls, and war diaries.¹⁸ Every type of record had to be created, sometimes in the midst of battle, put into action, and then either preserved for future use and accountability, or culled. The Canadian military officials created similar administrative records.

Aside from the war itself, the three nations also had to keep the home fronts stabilized at national and local levels. War bonds, ration books, and propaganda posters, as well as records that allow for enlistment, volunteers, training, and transportation are just a few of the examples of administrative records used at home to help the war effort. This does not include the day-to-day administration of the nations politically and economically.

Although leaders conducting other wars made use of administrative documentation, WWI leaders magnified the volume several times over, particularly

¹⁷ British personnel records alone outnumber both the Canadian and Australian forces. The BEF numbered approximately 3,000,000 servicemen compared to approximately 600,000 servicemen in the CEF and 300,000 in the AIF. See Government of Canada, "Lest We Forget Information Package First World War," Library and Archives Canada, accessed 3 January 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/lest-we-forget/Documents/First-World-War-Information-Package.pdf> and Australian War Memorial, "First World War Nominal Roll Introduction," Australian War Memorial, accessed 3 January 2017, https://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/nominal_rolls/first_world_war/introduction/.

¹⁸ Australian War Memorial, "First World War (1914-1918)," Australian War Memorial, accessed 19 July 2015, <https://www.awm.gov.au/research/guides/first/>.

because of the transnational nature of the war. There was also a greater emphasis on records pertaining to international relations because of the scale of the First World War. Between 1914 and 1920, there were nearly five hundred international meetings required to maintain the war, and later peace, on such a massive scale.¹⁹ Although each nation that participated in these meetings maintained their own records, some inter-allied organizations, such as the Supreme War Council, had a policy to ensure that each nation ended up with the same official records.²⁰ In contrast, the Interallied Rhineland High Commission's complete official records reside in the Archives nationales in Paris only.²¹ Although the nations could not always agree on where the records were kept and who should be controlling them, the war was an international effort that required trust and coordination, particularly on the battlefields.

Cartography

Each nation had to coordinate the location of fighting forces, reserve, communication, medical support, and combat service support with one another. Because of this level of interaction with other allies, cartography became a vital administrative record created for warfare. Historically, it was the officer's duty to command the direction of his fighting force against the enemy on a field of battle, and studied maps to do so. Rather than an accurate depiction of a three-dimensional space, a map is an estimated representation that has been scaled down and contorted onto a two-dimensional

¹⁹ Lokke, 225.

²⁰ Ibid., 227.

²¹ Ibid., 232.

plane.²² Because of the daily change in terrain and occupied territory of trench warfare, maps were needed more regularly in WWI than in previous wars.²³ The volume of map creation suggests that maps were an essential part of the war effort.

At the beginning of WWI, small-scale maps were produced by the Ordnance Survey, based on pre-existing maps of Belgium and France.²⁴ The British were sadly underprepared for the variety and quantity of maps needed by allied troops during WWI.²⁵ It took only a few months, however, for Ordnance to recognize the need for large-scale, accurate maps to be produced and distributed on a massive scale.²⁶ The introduction of trench warfare, however, changed how maps were used and thus produced. The British explored every means available to produce maps accurately. In order to gain information on enemy-held territory, the British produced and studied aerial photography.²⁷ British maps were far superior to German maps, both in regard to the British troop's own lines as well as the German troop's lines, as evidenced by maps taken from captured or killed German soldiers.²⁸

At the beginning of the war, maps were entrusted only to officers, with minimal indication of British lines, but soldiers would create their own visual representations of trenches to help navigate the serpentine walkways.²⁹ As the war progressed, however, it

²² Although many military maps did include elevation information to approximate three-dimensionality, they were representations that had to be interpreted nonetheless.

²³ Jeffrey S. Murray, "British-Canadian Military Cartography on the Western Front, 1914-1918," *Archivaria* 26 (1988): 52, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/385>.

²⁴ Ibid., 53. The Ordnance Survey was a mapping agency for the British military. For more information on the Ordnance Survey's role in WWI, see Ordnance Survey, "Our Role in World War One," Ordnance Survey, accessed 28 March 2015, <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/blog/2014/02/our-role-in-world-war-one/>. It is important to note that Canadian and Australian units relied heavily on the British Ordnance Survey for accurate maps. Murray, 63.

²⁵ Ibid., 52.

²⁶ Ibid., 53.

²⁷ Ibid., 54.

²⁸ Ibid., 56.

²⁹ Ibid., 57.

became apparent to the Ordnance Survey that soldiers should have access to information about the trenches. Because of the nature of trench warfare, maps were necessary for the common soldier to navigate the lines and follow orders. In an unprecedented move, regular militia were given access to detailed maps, despite the danger of the information falling into enemy hands.³⁰ By the end of the war, the Ordnance Survey produced approximately thirty-two million maps, many of which were kept as souvenirs during and after the war.³¹

In historical writing, maps are often used as examples of topographical information to demonstrate regions, distances, and boundaries. They are rarely, however, taken as a record of the war in their own right. During the war, maps changed often, especially those that depicted the trenches. Maps are an excellent indicator of the complexities of war, and with millions created during WWI, the number of maps produced demonstrates their necessity to the war effort.

Propaganda

Propaganda too came to be a very important administrative record of war, despite its modest beginnings. Propaganda was a tool for different institutions in British, Canadian, and Australian societies before the war, but with the new demands of “total war” it became necessary for governments to increase military and civilian morale,

³⁰ Ibid., 57. During WWI, trenches changed hands daily, and sometimes several times a day. The Ordnance Survey may have entrusted maps to the regular militia both for ease of navigation and defense, and because, if the maps did fall into enemy hands, they would likely be changed in a short period of time anyway.

³¹ Ibid., 60, 63.

garner support from civilians, and decrease morale in enemy territory. Propaganda was created because governments saw it as a necessary tool, and was preserved because it eventually became an administrative function for the various records' offices in the war. Many propaganda records, though seemingly transient in nature, were considered archival once the war was over.

Propaganda, although considered a vital part of military efforts today, had humble beginnings in the First World War, and it was not considered an administrative responsibility by the British until midway through the war. Before the war, *propaganda* was a neutral term meaning the spread of information; it did not have the same negative connotations that it does today, nor was it used in the same way.³² Propaganda was part of British life and was administered by many organizations other than the government.³³ Propaganda did not fall under the purview of the British government until 1916, when David Lloyd George became the Prime Minister of Britain and the war was relabelled a "total war."³⁴ Henceforth, propaganda was considered a form of journalism and a necessary tool of war.³⁵ In this case, "total war" means that the British would no longer see war in traditional terms of small professional armies facing each other on the field of battle, but of massive, untried armies needing to use every means at their disposal;³⁶ a label of "total war" meant that, in the eyes of the British government, the politics of war

³² Gary S. Messinger, "An Inheritance Worth Remembering: the British Approach to Official Propaganda during the First World War," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 13, no. 2 (1993): 117, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01439689300260161#.VOYsZC5WLt8>.

³³ *Ibid.*, 117.

³⁴ Peter Putnis and Kerry McCallum, "Reuters, Propaganda-inspired News, and the Australian Press During the First World War," *Media History* 19, no. 3 (2013): 285, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13688804.2013.817836#.VOYZeS5WLt8>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 295, 285.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 289.

were irrevocably altered. Propaganda could take many forms: images, either moving or static, published reports, newspaper stories, leaflets, and word-of-mouth, to name a few.

The British government primarily utilized single leaflets, newspapers, and advertisements in their propaganda campaign.³⁷ With the help of Canadian, Sir Max Aitken, who was lauded as “the most experienced war propagandist” in Britain, the British government increased its involvement on this new psychological field of battle.³⁸ At first, propaganda targeted social elites, but soon the government hoped to influence the home front as well as across No Man’s Land to the enemy side.³⁹ The main goal was to advance the interests of the Empire whether through advertising the heroic deeds of its soldiers, or circulating stories about the abhorrent nature of the Germans.⁴⁰ In an effort to gain more support financially, materially, and in terms of enlistment throughout the British Empire, the government pitted its colonies and dominions against one another to see which ones could provide the most support for the war effort.⁴¹ The British were not as aggressive in their propaganda campaign as the Canadians because they did not want to inflict irreparable damage on international relations once the war was over.⁴² Nevertheless, the British did print many more newspapers than Canadians and

³⁷ Messinger, 119.

³⁸ A.J.P. Taylor, quoted in Putnis and McCallum, 298; Messinger, 119. It is also important to note that Max Aitken was called Lord Beaverbrook after WWI. For our purposes, however, I will only use Max Aitken. Aitken was a Canadian-born business man who made millions of dollars in a short amount of time. He rubbed elbows with the most important social and political elites in Canada. He moved to Britain in 1910 and gained a seat in Parliament by 1911. He had many high-ranking friends, but just as many enemies. For more information on Aitken, see Tim Cook, “Documenting War and Forging Reputations: Sir Max Aitken and the Canadian War Records Office in the First World War,” *War in History* 10, no. 3 (2003): 270, <http://wih.sagepub.com/content/10/3/265>.

³⁹ Putnis and McCallum, 289.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 291, 294.

⁴¹ Ibid., 293.

⁴² Messinger, 126.

Australians.⁴³ Furthermore, news of German war crimes had to come from somewhere: stories of German atrocities permeated both the Allied and neutral press, particularly any act against women and children.⁴⁴ Assertions of enemy war crimes provided motivation for the allied troops and civilians, as well as a moral obligation to continue the war.⁴⁵

Propaganda at home came in many forms and produced many different effects. Britain, Canada, and Australia all implemented new laws, during and after the war, to support propaganda and limit the rights of enemy aliens. For example, the 1919 Immigration Act in Canada allowed the government to reject immigrants from current and former enemy countries, and Chapter Two of the British War Measures Act of 1914 provided the Governor in Council with “censorship and control and suppression of publications, writings, maps, plans, photographs, communications, and means of communications.”⁴⁶ Australians had a similar War Precautions Act and Alien Restrictions Order.⁴⁷ The governments created a massive number of records for the war effort. There were departments that wrote letters asking for money and recruits and created countless newspapers and advertisements.⁴⁸ Australian and Canadian home front propaganda was similar: it was written by war correspondents (Charles Bean and Max Aitken, respectively) who wanted to spread the message about their countries’ heroic troops and

⁴³ Jeffrey A. Keshen, *Propaganda and Censorship during Canada’s Great War* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), xiii.

⁴⁴ Nicoletta F. Gullace, “Allied Propaganda and World War I: Interwar Legacies, Media Studies, and the Politics of War Guilt,” *History Compass* 9, no. 9 (2011): 686, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2011.00798.x/>.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 686.

⁴⁶ House of Commons, *Statutes*, 5 George V, Chapter 2, 22 August 1914, section 6.

⁴⁷ Keshen, 121.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 56; 46; 18.

increase morale at home and at the front, though both correspondents were far from the actual carnage.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, each country used specific types of propaganda to get its message heard. At home, civilians read censored newspaper articles that were manipulated to control the country's morale and to limit exposure to the realities of warfare. Military newspapers, however, were very different. The men and women at the front already knew the harsh reality of warfare, and therefore a different tactic was necessary to appease the readers. Military newspapers ran poems, short stories, and images, with black humour and satire, written by soldiers.⁵⁰ In this way the controlling bodies allowed the soldiers to share their views about war, while containing disillusionment.⁵¹

Although not as overt as some forms of propaganda, government-issued postcards disseminated a particular picture of the war to families at home. The Field Service Postcard provided a template for soldiers to check off the appropriate information, or strike through the inappropriate information, that pertained to them.⁵² For example, one section of the postcard had to do with the soldier's well-being. These were the options: "I am quite well; I have been admitted to the hospital {sick / wounded} and am going on well, and hope to be discharged soon; I am being sent down to the base."⁵³ Soldiers were also warned that if they strayed from the formulaic postcards by adding more information, the information could be erased or the postcards could be destroyed

⁴⁹ Ibid., 117-119.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 145.

⁵¹ Ibid., 148.

⁵² Allyson Booth, *Postcards from the Trenches: Negotiating the Space Between Modernism and the First World War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), 14; Archives of Manitoba, Edgar S. Russenholt fonds, Postcard addressed to Mr. N. Russenholt, P2828/4.

⁵³ Ibid., 14.

altogether.⁵⁴ In this way, the government created a fixed template to narrate the war and both provide assurance to the public at home and limit unwanted assumptions and mental images of the war.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the template prevented the need for censors to read the information on the postcards and thus allowed them to deliver the messages more efficiently.

There were other commercially produced postcards, such as from the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), that were often patriotic or depicted scenes from the European countryside.⁵⁶ One postcard included the poem "To Friends in Canada," reminiscent of the Canadian national anthem:

O Canada! Dear Canada!
Of all fair lands the best,
I love each ray of light that shines
Upon thy mighty breast
When I have fought for Motherland,
I shall return to thee,
O Canada! Dear Canada!
Home ever blest to me!⁵⁷

Postcards are one of the most common types of propaganda that have been kept since the war because of their personal and sentimental value and their visual appeal, regardless of their propaganda purpose.

Similar to postcards, photographs are also one of the most sought-after and exhibited types of WWI record today. One of the most notable and accessible ways in which cultural institutions, individuals, and historical groups remember the war is

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁶ Archives of Manitoba, "Remembering the First World War – Archives Blog: 20 July 2015 Postcards sent during the First World War," Archives of Manitoba, accessed 23 July 2015, <http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/ww1blog/index.html>.

⁵⁷ Archives of Manitoba, Rooney Halldorson Linekar fonds, postcard #421, P7474/3.

through visual representation. Documentary art and photography are important means of historical representation. Their variety and narrative properties allowed governments to stage, doctor, and organize photographs, videos, and artwork to tell a specific story of the war, and are a primary example of propaganda.

Military art has a history reaching back into ancient times. In British North America it appears as early as the Seven Years' War (1756-63) as a documentary tool.⁵⁸ Military artists, using paintings and drawings, documented strategic landscapes and waterways for soldiers from Britain for much of the next century. By 1859, during the Crimean war, greater reliance on photography led to the decline of paintings and drawings.⁵⁹ Documentary art set the precedent for many visual representations of war, particularly cartography, photography, paintings, and film. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, documentary art was generally created with the goal of being as accurate a representation of the three-dimensional plane as possible. During WWI, however, art would be used for a wider variety of purposes, including memorialization, remembrance, propaganda, and accurate representations of battlefields. Photography was the most common type of visual documentation at this time because it was both inexpensive and, more importantly, photographers could develop their photographs fairly quickly and easily. However, several agencies, including the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO), commissioned war art to be created in 1916.⁶⁰

The Canadian government also commissioned professional filmmakers, starting in 1916, to capture the war through film and motion pictures. As a result of this late start,

⁵⁸ Jim Burant, "The Military Artist and the Documentary Art Record," *Archivaria* 26 (1988): 34, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/385>.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 47.

⁶⁰ Cook, "Documenting War," 288.

there was little visual documentation of early battles.⁶¹ The photographs captured by professional photographers were made to tell a particular narrative of the war: the images were composed and constructed for the purposes of propaganda. The British government forbade photographers to photograph deceased allies and actual combat, although displaying German dead was acceptable.⁶² In 1916, the British government amended the Defence of the Realm Act, proclaiming that “any expression of opposition to, or criticism of, the war in any art form . . . [is] a criminal offence.”⁶³ Some of the most famous WWI photos were staged, doctored, and disseminated to the civilians who were hoping for news from the front, as well as soldiers reading about their own exploits and those of their allies.⁶⁴

Like photographs, motion pictures would also become a promising medium for propaganda, and popular with families at home in Britain, Canada, and Australia, and soldiers in Europe. Like professional photographs, motion pictures were made for multiple purposes. In 1916, war films gained increasing popularity at home and were staged in much the same way as photography. One film for example, *Battle of the Somme*, portrayed the death of a WWI soldier by showing him falling and sliding down a trench wall. The death was staged; there was no blood or dismembered body parts, and no other deaths were included in the film.⁶⁵ In a letter to his daughter Jean, Canadian resident Isaac Cowie stated that *Battle of the Somme* “did not come up to expectations one formed from reading newspapers.”⁶⁶ Perhaps the photographs from the newspapers

⁶¹ Ibid., 282.

⁶² Booth, 21.

⁶³ Quoted in Booth, 21-22.

⁶⁴ Cook, “Documenting War,” 283-285.

⁶⁵ Booth, 22.

⁶⁶ Isaac Cowie, “Isaac Cowie to Jean Cowie,” Archives of Manitoba, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, Isaac Cowie fonds, 8 November 1916, HBCA E.86/67.

were more telling, or the stories written by the CWRO were more dramatic than the film; whatever the explanation, it seems that the civilians, at least some of them, knew that the films were inaccurate. Nevertheless, cameramen and photographers often had to follow troops in the trenches, but, after analyzing their footage, the modern consensus is that they were rarely ever near the front lines.⁶⁷ The British Cinematography Committee commissioned cameramen to create two short films a week, aimed at showing the glory of the British and Canadian units to the public. Two full-length films, nine shorts, and rolls of additional footage on Canadian exploits were given to the British Cinematography Committee at the end of the war.⁶⁸ Films moulded the imaginations of civilians to contain and minimize the realities of warfare. They were patriotic and demoralizing to British enemies.

Documentary visual representations, such as commissioned photographs, films, and art constituted the story that Max Aitken and his contemporaries wanted to tell. Today, images are one of the most sought-after records of WWI as they are constantly being shared and distributed across the world via the Internet and archival institutions, despite the lack of descriptive information. The visual representation of WWI is probably far greater in volume than in any previous war. In *The Ballad of Abu Ghraib*, Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris eloquently state,

. . . photographs cannot tell stories. They can only provide evidence of stories, and evidence is mute; it demands investigation and interpretation. Looked at in this way, as evidence of something beyond itself, a photograph can best be understood not as an answer or an end to inquiry, but as an invitation to look more closely, and to ask questions.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Cook, "Documenting War," 287.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 288.

⁶⁹ Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris, *The Ballad of Abu Ghraib* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 148.

Although photographs cannot tell the stories themselves, government offices staged and interpreted them to tell their story of the war. Where once they were used for propaganda, now we can interpret and re-interpret the war for years to come.

WWI was both a physical and psychological battle and the allies used whatever was in their power to counter enemy actions on and off the battlefields. Today, thanks to various archival institutions, we have access to many different types of war propaganda, including newspapers, items for public consumption such as recruitment posters, postcards, and advertisements to buy war bonds to support the war, photographs, artwork, and films. They serve as an indicator of how war had changed and how government leaders decided to change it. Propaganda, like so many other war records, was subject to the approval of government leaders and censors. More than in any other previous war, the government had a hand in the records created during WWI and the narratives that came out of it. Propaganda archives speak volumes about what the British, Canadian, and Australian governments found most important to disseminate on a massive scale.

Sir Max Aitken, Sir Arthur Doughty, and the Canadian War Records Office

Although both Australia and Canada had a records office where the war records were preserved, the Canadian War Records Office produced and distributed an inordinate amount of administrative records despite Canada's dominion status particularly in the form of propaganda. Canada realized the potential of propaganda earlier than others. Unlike in Britain, the Canadian government controlled the distribution of news.⁷⁰ Canadian propaganda, under Aitken's direction, began relatively early in the war. Aitken

⁷⁰ Keshen, ix.

combined eyewitness testimony, second-hand narratives, personal reflections and well-chosen images to disseminate information about the war. For Aitken, propaganda became a fusion of the real and imaginary to paint a specific picture of the war. It was, both literally and figuratively, an art form. His purpose was to fashion a history that was appealing to soldiers, censors, and the public at home. Although Aitken's legacy is much broader in scope than only his work in the area of propaganda, it is significant to this project that one of his main aims was to show the Canadian military in a positive light. Aitken saw the potential of the written word as a powerful propaganda tool.⁷¹ Aitken was head of the Canadian War Records Office as well as a rich and influential individual in British society as a member of the House of Lords, and therefore was able to use his many resources to pursue his personal goal.

In January 1916, Aitken appealed to Prime Minister Robert Borden for a grant of \$25,000 to establish and run the Canadian War Records Office.⁷² The mandate of the CWRO was to collect all of the Canadian war records created during the war and to promote the efforts of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF).⁷³ The CWRO received, sorted, filed, and indexed records, and then created strategies to fill the gaps in the historical narrative.⁷⁴ Aitken went so far as to criticize war diaries, created by fighting units to document their actions, for being too sparse. He also sent Records Officers to the

⁷¹ Ibid., 32. For example, Aitken's first report as Canada's "eyewitness" was on 23 March 1915, when he covered the second battle of Ypres. It was on that day that Aitken began his mission to show the world that Canada was a distinct nation and worthy of its attention. He emphasized the role that Canadians played in the battle and made it seem as though they alone had stopped the advancing German army. On 1 May 1915, this account was published in several newspapers and was read widely across the British Empire. Cook, "Documenting War," 272-273.

⁷² Peter Robertson, "Canadian Photojournalism during the First World War," *History of Photography* 2, no.1 (1978): 39, <http://www.tandfonline.com/uml.idm.oclc.org/doi/abs/10.1080/03087298.1978.10442955#.VeHPS5dWJeI>.

⁷³ Cook, "Documenting War," 277.

⁷⁴ McIntosh, 6.

front to give advice on the writing of war diaries, provide assistance in solving controversies over the historical record, and accumulate knowledge of the terrain over which the war was fought.⁷⁵ These officers gathered both oral and written testimonies from soldiers at the front.⁷⁶ The CWRO also commissioned photographs and war art to document war activity on the home front, at sea, in the air, and on the Western front, to promote enlistment, among other things. Professional photographs were rarely candid and were, in fact, usually staged far behind the front lines.⁷⁷ One photographer in particular, William Rider-Rider, who was commissioned by the CWRO, got closer to the front, and closer to actual shell bursts, than any other cameraman during the war.⁷⁸ The artists and photographers were instructed not to capture Canadian war dead, but to promote the excellence of the Canadian militia. Aitken wanted the records both for posterity and to add to his ongoing CEF publicity campaigns.⁷⁹

In January 1916, Aitken helped to publish the anthology *Canada in Flanders*, which went through twelve editions in four months because of its popularity in Canada and Britain.⁸⁰ *Canada in Flanders* depicted the life of a soldier, and emphasized that the Canadian Expeditionary Force was made up almost entirely of amateurs whose effortless soldiering ability was a natural extension of the wilderness skills needed to live in Canada.⁸¹ One selling feature was that it did not focus on military officers, like most histories of war, but on the regular militia, which appealed to soldiers and their families.⁸² Aitken fought with the censors because he wanted to include names of lieutenants and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁸ Robertson, 46.

⁷⁹ Cook, "Documenting War," 277.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 275.

⁸¹ Ibid., 275-276.

⁸² Ibid., 275.

privates so the people at home could identify with the troops.⁸³ Aitken used war diaries, oral testimonies, and his own experiences to craft *Canada in Flanders*. He avoided controversies and showed the CEF in the best possible light.⁸⁴ Aitken's target audience was civilians, and it is obvious that they supported his work based on the number of editions sold.

One year later, the CWRO published *Canada in Khaki*, a large volume filled with journalistic prose, witty cartoons emphasizing the robust, rugged, and youthful Canadian Army, poetry written by soldiers and their family members, pictures, reproductions of paintings, advertisements, and short stories.⁸⁵ Approximately forty thousand copies of *Canada in Khaki* sold in Britain within the first week of publication, and more were immediately printed for distribution in Canada.⁸⁶ One father, James L. Hughes, dedicated a poem to his son who died in 1915, a portion of which is transcribed below:

I cannot know the story
Of what you might have done;
I can but dream of honours
You would have earned, dear son.

But I shall keep the record
Of how you did your part,
True to your highest, ever
Deep in my happy heart.⁸⁷

I chose this poem in particular because it reflects the need for a father to keep a record of his son: the war records are his only connection to his son, and he expresses the hope that

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 276.

⁸⁵ See Canadian War Records Office, *Canada in Khaki: A Tribute to the Officers and Men now Serving in the Canadian Expeditionary Force* (London: Pictorial Newspaper, 1917).

⁸⁶ Cook, "Documenting War," 281.

⁸⁷ James L. Hughes, "His Unfinished Story," *Canada in Khaki*, 25.

they will be able to bring his son “back to [him].”⁸⁸ What is both interesting and convoluted about the history of these records of war is demonstrated in this poem: Hughes kept the personal and administrative records of his son, wrote a poem which became another record of war, and then the poem was published as propaganda and kept as a different record of war. Each reincarnation of the original record, those belonging to Hughes’s son, has its own context, history, and uses during and after the war.

After Aitken was knighted in 1916 for his work during the war, he did not visit the front again, but relied on CWRO staff to continue his work.⁸⁹ By 1917, Aitken began to lose interest in the daily operations of the CWRO, although its work continued. Nevertheless, Aitken played a major role in the collection and maintenance of Canada’s war records. Without his efforts, and those of his subordinates, any records that commanding officers and war administrators considered operationally useless would have been destroyed, and there would be fewer war records in Library and Archives Canada today.

Like Aitken, Sir Arthur Doughty, Dominion Archivist and head of Canada’s national archives, the then Public Archives of Canada, wished to document all aspects of the war effort, but preferred to stick with the traditional accumulation of war records.⁹⁰ He stated that “all original sources have value, but for accuracy of fact, the documentary evidence left by the transaction itself is almost always of more use than the descriptive account of the transaction written by an onlooker.”⁹¹ Doughty offered his archival advice

⁸⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁹ Cook, “Documenting War,” 276.

⁹⁰ McIntosh, 5.

⁹¹ Quoted in McIntosh, 12.

to Aitken only after Aitken assured him that all records collected by the CWRO would be turned over to the national archives after the war.⁹²

In 1917, Doughty created the War Records Survey and sent questionnaires to those at home to better understand the war effort on the home front, rather than relying solely on the records that Aitken was collecting in Europe.⁹³ Despite their differences, however, Doughty admired Aitken's efforts in Europe. He said that the anthology depicting life as a soldier, *Canada in Flanders*, represented an "excellent picture . . . of the achievements of our troops at the Front, at least as far as the army and the censor would allow the picture to be shown," and added that any forms of historical literature written without access to official documents, "serve little more than the temporary purpose of tickling the palates of patriotic readers."⁹⁴ Once the war ended, however, official and public interest in documenting it quickly declined. Too many people wanted to put the memory of the war behind them. The fallout from the war was still very present. Administrators quickly realized that the number of records that needed to be stored were monumental.⁹⁵

Although it may seem as though Doughty followed the traditional accumulation of records by not literally creating records to fill in gaps, he did alert the records' creators to the secondary uses to which their records might be subject. He thereby identified which records were of significance, and placed greater value on records created by direct participants in events, rather than by onlookers. So, although Doughty was more subtle about it, both he and Aitken helped author many Canadian records of the First World

⁹² Cook, "Documenting War," 274.

⁹³ McIntosh, 13

⁹⁴ Quoted in Cook, "What is Past is Prologue" 45-46.

⁹⁵ McIntosh, 14.

War. Furthermore, like Hankey, without the efforts of Doughty and Aitken, the Canadian war records stored across the country would be significantly less extensive than they are now. Aitken was exceptional at promoting the CEF and safeguarding its war records for use in the present, as well as the future.

What is striking about the various propaganda publications is their wide readership. Aitken selectively chose items for his publications that told a story, and which were either sent to the CWRO or recorded in other records. Although his story usually extolled the greatness of the CEF, he also included pieces that would speak to his audience. Furthermore, he included many of the photographs and reproduced paintings that depict the CEF relaxing, smiling, and awaiting battle, rather than the horrors of war. The photographs included in *Canada in Khaki* were taken by commissioned photographers. The CWRO created similar publications, such as the *Canadian War Pictorial*.⁹⁶ Today, the term propaganda has inherent negative connotations, but during the war it was used to bolster spirits as much as to condemn the opposition.

Administrative Records From the Soldier's Perspective

Administrative records were created not only by top government officials and onlookers of the war, they were also written by those on the ground and in the trenches. Though typically letters from the front held positive news from loved ones, it was also the primary method of informing next-of-kin of a death. The initial contact from the front was a formulaic telegram indicating the time and place of death, which was usually

⁹⁶ There were four volumes of this journal published during WWI.

followed by letters of condolence from commanding officers and friends.⁹⁷ Death for the family members was intangible: it was a series of lines on paper, rather than a body to mourn and bury.⁹⁸

Aside from official correspondence, some soldiers also had to record daily events in War Diaries for each nation. The War Diaries of infantry units were recorded by battalions of approximately one thousand men; artillery units, recorded by brigades of around four thousand men; brigade, division, and corps commands, which were recorded by junior officers or clerks; and support units, recorded by their own men and women.⁹⁹ The purpose of the War Diaries was to capture the “Actions in the Field,” a tradition started in the mid-nineteenth century by the British Army.¹⁰⁰ The War Diaries were written on legal-sized paper and were uniform. Some information, written in columns, included the place, date, hour, summary of events and information, and remarks and references to appendices.¹⁰¹ Appendices included general and operational orders, maps, intelligence reports, artillery schedules, and code names.¹⁰² In Canada, Aitken and Doughty tried to ensure that the War Diaries were as complete and accurate as possible for the benefit of future research.¹⁰³ Charles Bean had a similar goal for Australian troops.

⁹⁷ Booth, 25. For an example, see the condolence letters written from Reverend G.D.B. Poole of the British Expeditionary Force to F.C. Ingrams. Archives of Manitoba, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, “private letters to F.C. Ingrams, Secretary of the Governor and Committee,” Governor and Committee general inward correspondence, 1912-1922, HBCA A.10/189b.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Library and Archives Canada (LAC), “War Diaries,” Library and Archives Canada, Accessed 18 February 2015, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/firstworldwar/025005-1000-e.html>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ McIntosh, 8.

Lastly, unlike films used as propaganda, another use for motion pictures was to document the effects of Shell Shock on soldiers. Arthur Hurst, a physician who was interested in the treatment of Shell Shock patients, thought that filming the patient would not only help in his recovery, but also assist physicians treating Shell Shock patients elsewhere.¹⁰⁴ There was a severe stigma against Shell Shock patients and these films were not intended for public consumption. Today these films are used to provide insights into the care and treatment of these patients, while also highlighting the popularity and increased use of visual media during the war.¹⁰⁵

Administrative records were an essential tool in the war and were first used for the purposes for which they were created: to win the war, the fewer casualties the better. Many archivists of the time, following Jenkinson's theory of the archive, would have considered them the epitome of an archival repository's collection, rather than the personal war records. Administrative records were the focus of archival efforts both during the war and immediately after it.

¹⁰⁴ Fiona Reid, "'His Nerves Gave Way': Shell Shock, History, and the Memory of the First World War in Britain," *Endeavour* 38, no. 2 (2014): 95, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160932714000210>.

¹⁰⁵ Many videos have been posted on YouTube for public consumption. For one primary example please see War Archives, "British Pathé War Archives," YouTube, accessed 28 March 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/user/WarArchives>.

PERSONAL RECORDS

Letters, Diaries, Poems, and Other Personal Reflections

Today, personal records are highly sought after and provide a glimpse into the social and familial history of a time long past. Personal records were not preserved by governments during the war, but rather were kept by families as a memento, keepsake, and sometimes the final words of a loved one. Though the records were often censored, both by commanding officers and soldiers themselves, they offer a dimension of the war that cannot be found as readily in the administrative records. Personal records came in the form of written communication, personal reflection, artwork, and photography. We have access to them today because of the recordkeeping efforts and generosity of countless private individuals who eventually made these records available to archives when archival interest in them emerged after, and in the case of Canada and Britain, long after the war.

The First World War was fought over four long years, and millions of letters were written between soldiers and civilians. In 1918 alone, Canadian soldiers forwarded over 660,000 bags of mail to Canada and received 100,000 in return.¹⁰⁶ At this time, British enlisted men were more literate than ever before, which is reflected in the many pieces of writing to have come out of the war.¹⁰⁷

In letters home, soldiers rarely talked about the death of their friends in detail, and they minimized their own hardships. In WWI, as in other wars, there was a cult of

¹⁰⁶ R.B. Fleming, *The Wartime Letters of Leslie and Cecil Frost, 1915-1919* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2007), 16.

¹⁰⁷ Booth, 11.

masculinity that required soldiers to have courage in the face of danger and death.¹⁰⁸

Soldiers also encouraged their family members to continue on with their lives should they, the authors, die. For example, Joe Cumberland, writing to his sister Una, explained:

If anything does happen to Oliver or I, don't let it upset any of you too much, because dear Una, you must remember that thousands of sisters are losing their brothers daily, and Una, if the boys are prepared to die fighting for their country, I reckon their sisters ought to be prepared to give them up if need be, when they know they are fighting for a noble cause . . . Don't get gloomy over this letter.¹⁰⁹

Soldiers passed on this cult of masculinity, causing families to alter their bereavement practices to be publicly strong and silent, like their soldiers, thus creating a culture of silence, particularly in Australia. This culture of silence then affected the types of records produced and their contents. Silence changes the ways in which the war is remembered by future generations.

A uniquely Australian form of communication was the "In Memoriam" column in local newspapers.¹¹⁰ It allowed families to grieve their losses in public; however, the grief was also stunted. One mourner wrote: "We mourn for them in silence / but not with outward show / for they who mourn sincerely / mourn silently and low."¹¹¹ Another "In Memoriam" poem reflected the impact of letters and photographs on families at home:

I thought I must die as I read them [their letters] through, / and cry as I laid them there,
For I could not see a spark of hope / through the stupor of my despair;
I could only know my boys had gone, / and I knew as the evening came
I might solace seek from their letters, / from their photos in their frames.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Pat Jalland, "Death and Bereavement in the First World War: the Australian Experience," *Endeavour* 38, no. 2 (2014): 71, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160932714000246>.

¹⁰⁹ Joe Cumberland, 13 January, 12 March, 31 May, 26 July 1915; quoted in Jalland, 72.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹¹ *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 2 July 1921; quoted in Jalland 75.

¹¹² *Argus*, 25 April 1917; quoted in Jalland, 73.

The “In Memoriam” entries reflect this culture of silence and demonstrate a continuation of similar letter-writing traditions in other forms of media from the time period. The latter “In Memoriam” poem also reflects the importance of personal records for sentimental and psychological well-being. We can see that the habits formed in writing letters to soldiers are not easily or readily forgotten.

Letters home were the most common form of written communication between soldier and civilian that was preserved after the war, but there were other types of letters created during the war as well. For example, if family members wanted information about their relatives in the war, financial matters, honours and awards, or the belongings of the deceased, they would pen a letter to army headquarters.¹¹³

Letters helped the war effort by raising soldiers’ morale and providing a medium for soldiers and their families to escape the harsh reality of life at the front. Letters from home provided information about local news as well as friends and family back home. For example, Isaac Cowie, a Winnipeg resident, wrote to his son on 15 July 1915 about the all-consuming scandal and corruption with regard to the erection of the parliament buildings that was filling the *Winnipeg Free Press*.¹¹⁴ What is really striking from the exchange between father and son, however, is the constant need to know how the other is doing. His son, “Billy Boy,” also known as William, always asked how his family and his garden were doing.¹¹⁵ Often William would ask about every member of his family individually, and his father always enquired about William’s health.

¹¹³ Kathryn M. Hunter, “Australian and New Zealand Fathers and Sons During the Great War: Expanding the Histories of Families at War,” *First World War Studies* 4, no. 2 (2013): 187, <http://www-tandfonline-com.libproxy.uwinnipeg.ca/toc/rfww20/4/2#.VOUFOi5WLt8>.

¹¹⁴ Archives of Manitoba, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, “Isaac Cowie to William Cowie,” Isaac Cowie fonds, 15 July 1915, HBCA E.86/67.

¹¹⁵ Before he went to war, William planted a garden on his family’s land. The care and fruitfulness of the garden appeared often in correspondence between him and his family. Hudson’s Bay Company Archives,

As historian and biographer, R. B. Fleming writes: “While food and shelter can warm the body, and weapons defend and defeat, a letter can set the mind at ease and provide hours of happy memories.”¹¹⁶ It is clear that it takes more than machinery to fight a war; without a motivated fighting force, often helped by letters from home, a government would be hard-pressed to defeat their enemy.

Like letters, personal diaries were also created as an outlet for soldier’s pent-up emotions. Michael Piggott states that human beings have both an “urge to witness” and an “impulse to save”.¹¹⁷ To Piggott, war was an example *in extremis* of why people found it necessary to keep a journal: soldiers needed to tell their story and bear witness to the tragedy of warfare for future generations, which often resulted in valuable, emotionally laden, and informative diaries.¹¹⁸

A striking example of where the administrative meets the personal in regard to diaries was “The Soldiers Own Diary [sic],” available through the YMCA in military camps.¹¹⁹ The diary was comprised of several pages of practical information, such as maps, martial information on weapons and hand-to-hand combat, and medical advice, as well as an area for personal comments.¹²⁰ The diary was small, meant to be carried in a pocket or a wallet, and the diary portion was organized by date in relatively narrow

Archives of Manitoba, “William Cowie to Isaac Cowie,” Isaac Cowie fonds, 10 November 1915, HBCA E.86/69; Archives of Manitoba, Hudson’s Bay Company Archives, “Isaac Cowie to William Cowie,” Isaac Cowie fonds, 15 July 1915, HBCA E.86/67.

¹¹⁶ Fleming, 15.

¹¹⁷ Michael Piggott, “Human Behaviour and the Making of Records and Archives,” *Archives & Social Studies: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Research* 1, no. 0 (2007): 237, http://archivo.cartagena.es/publicas/catalogos/social_studies/vYni1KYCfL-ZPeZr1dQhYw.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹¹⁹ Alicia (Ala) Rekrut, “Reconnecting Mind and Matter: Materiality in Archival Theory and Practice,” (Master’s thesis, University of Manitoba, 2009), 43, <http://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/3161>. “The Soldiers Own Diary” can be found in a wallet in the Norman Mattheson fonds P4352, file 2, at the Archives of Manitoba. The wallet was the property of Arthur Morrison. For more information on the wallet, refer to the thesis, 41-48.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

rows.¹²¹ Because there was very little room for personal reflection, it is clear that this was not meant to be a forum for eloquent oeuvres, but included enough room to record the most important information.¹²²

Personal diaries may not have had a unified form or similar contents, but they do tell a story. The soldiers recorded both what they had experienced and what they believed to be true about the war.¹²³ Readers cannot necessarily take their content at face value, nor should they. Nevertheless, it is more likely to find accuracy in personal diaries than letters to family; soldiers were more forthcoming when they were writing down their experiences in this format.¹²⁴ Soldiers wrote for varying purposes, but often, as Piggott suggests, they wanted to tell their stories. Taking Australian personal diaries as an example, there were few inclusions of topics regarding religion, politics, or sex.¹²⁵ Soldiers wrote down their feelings, drew cartoons, and even composed poetry in their personal diaries.

There are also many existing war diaries from civilians that have been preserved in various archives. Civilian war diaries allow us to see the war from other perspectives, as well as the political, economic, and social situations that continued at the time of the war. Vera Brittain's war diaries led to possibly the most well-known autobiography of a woman in the war, *Testament of Youth*. Her diaries provide a glimpse into the social and political life of a young society girl caught up in feminist ideals and a duty to participate in the war in whatever way she could. News of the war is intermingled with life at home

¹²¹ Ibid., 43-44.

¹²² The author, Arthur Morrison, filled in the diary with his actions in relation to his unit.

¹²³ Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974), xiv.

¹²⁴ Keshen, 159.

¹²⁵ Gammage, xiv.

and school. Brittain has a particularly telling perspective as her fiancé and brother fought in the war, and she went into nursing in Malta and France. She was also distrustful of newspapers, and it is clear that she, at least, saw through some of the propaganda. Brittain recorded many passages from letters she sent and received, quotations from passages and poetry she was reading, as well as her own poetry. Personal reflections, such as this, allow the modern viewer to see that war was not all-encompassing for everyone, but that it still touched every part of a person's life.

Poetry, often found in letters and diaries, was a popular way for soldiers and civilians to express their thoughts and opinions about war. The Poetry Foundation, a recently formed American association that publishes poetry in a monthly magazine, compiled a list of over one hundred poems from their archives that were written by soldiers and civilians during the First World War.¹²⁶ Poems even discuss other war records and their effect on the soldiers. In the first stanza of his poem, "The War Films," Henry Newbolt wrote in 1916:

O living pictures of the dead,
O songs without a sound,
O fellowship whose phantom tread
Hallows a phantom ground –
How in a gleam have these revealed
The faith we had not found.¹²⁷

In this stanza, Newbolt reveals the dual nature of war films. For civilians, films represented the reality of war, but for soldiers, they were mockingly inaccurate in their representations of the war because they reflected scenes of faith that the soldiers

¹²⁶ Poetry Foundation, "The Poetry of World War I," Poetry Foundation, accessed 23 February 2015, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/article/248460>.

¹²⁷ Henry Newbolt, "The War Films," 1916; quoted on Poetry Foundation.

themselves had not yet found.¹²⁸ Another poem, titled “Photographs” by Ivor Gurney, talked about the many different types of images that soldiers carried with them. For Gurney, photographs evoked a feeling of homesickness, but also enabled soldiers to forget where they were and to remember happier times. He wrote in 1917:

. . . Though in a picture only, a common cheap
 Ill-taken card; and children—frozen, some
 (Babies) waiting on Dicky-bird to peep
 Out of the handkerchief that is his home

(But he's so shy!). And some with bright looks, calling
 Delight across the miles of land and sea,
 That not the dread of barrage suddenly falling
 Could quite blot out—not mud nor lethargy.

Smiles and triumphant careless laughter. O
 The pain of them, wide Earth's most sacred things!
 Lying in dug-outs, hearing the great shells slow
 Sailing mile-high, the heart mounts higher and sings.¹²⁹

The most famous poem from WWI, however, is John McCrae’s “In Flanders Fields.” The poem was first published in December 1915 in *Punch*, a humour, satire, and literary magazine that had been popular in Britain since the late 1800s. Over the years, the poem has come to represent to Canadians the utter devastation of war, but also its necessity when faced with injustice. It speaks to soldiers and civilians alike, and asks both to keep faith in knowing that men and women are dying for a noble cause. “In Flanders Fields” is still recited in school gymnasiums and memorial parks for Canada’s, Australia’s, and Britain’s Remembrance ceremonies.¹³⁰ Poppies are worn every year as a physical symbol

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ivor Gurney, “Photographs,” 1917; quoted on Poetry Foundation.

¹³⁰ Australians participate in ANZAC day on the 25 of April and largely focuses on the Gallipoli campaign. Britons and Canadians observe Remembrance Day on the 11 of November. The AWM, Veterans Affairs Canada, and British Legion websites describe the customs for remembrance ceremonies, which includes the recitation of “In Flanders Fields”. Australian War Memorial “Commemoration Customs – Poems”, accessed 14 September 2016, <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/customs/poems/>; Veterans Affairs Canada, “Educators – Resources for the Classroom,” accessed 14 September 2016,

of McCrae's poem and what it represents historically. The poem itself meant many different things to different people, such as remembrance, bravery, and commemoration, and because of its popularity, continues to do so.

Poems evoke many different kinds of emotions, and, like personal diaries, they are not uniform in their composition. Soldiers and civilians composed poems and diary entries to express emotions, rail against their enemies, or challenge their own government's use of propaganda. Poems constituted another form of personal reflection and helped soldiers and civilians cope with the war. Today, these personal archival records are often paraphrased and quoted, sought after, and exhibited in various forums, including archival institutions.

Although government-regulated reflections, such as war diaries, were automatically kept as archival material after the war, personal records did not receive as much attention from governments and their archives. It is fortunate that personal reflections, found in letters and diaries, survived to be deposited in a repository, particularly in Britain where personal records were not considered archival by leading archivists like Jenkinson. Personal records had to survive the rigours of warfare, countless years thereafter, and then be donated, often by bereaved family members, to archival institutions.

Personal Visual Representations

Like the written word, visual representation is a personal reflection of one's world. Photographs are rarely candid from the photographer's point of view, and artwork is either thought of in advance, or a passionate creation of one's feelings in the moment. Visual representations, photography in particular, are often more striking and have greater exhibition potential than many other mediums.

There were two very different types of photography during WWI, and both played significant and distinct roles throughout the war. The first type of photographs, discussed above, were taken by paid professionals and developed as quickly as possible. Starting with the Crimean war, professional photography was an essential component of documenting events, and was necessary for propaganda campaigns in WWI. The second type was amateur photographs, taken by soldiers with their own cameras and often sent home to be developed. It was not until WWI, with Kodak's hand-held camera, that amateur photography was practiced during warfare.¹³¹ Kodak targeted soldiers in their advertising campaign for the Vest Pocket model urging, "[m]ake your own picture records of War."¹³² Kodak's advertisement proved effective when cameras were sold quickly and in large numbers.

Amateur photography was very popular among the soldiers, who often took shots of daily activities, such as training, being with their friends and comrades, and "sightseeing" across Europe.¹³³ It reflected a truer account of soldier activities because it

¹³¹ Andrew C. Rodger, "Amateur Photography by Soldiers of the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Archivaria* 26 (1988): 164, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/385>.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

was often candid; however, similar to letters sent home, amateur photographers did not usually capture the horrors of war.¹³⁴ Amateur photographs also make it seem as though the soldiers were akin to tourists, focusing on sites and comrades, rather than warfare. Officers had the best chances of acquiring and developing their film and sending it home, especially after 18 March 1915, when Routine Order 189 instructed British soldiers, both officers and regular militia, to send their personal cameras home because they were afraid that the developed or undeveloped photographs could fall into enemy hands and provide important information about Britain's war effort.¹³⁵ However, the populace was no longer content to simply read about events in newspapers; the general public now knew that it could and would see the war effort from the comfort of their homes, causing reporters to appeal to amateur soldiers for images of the front.¹³⁶

Aside from amateur photography, soldiers also composed artwork in their spare time. Although some of the artwork was commissioned and therefore relatively under the control of those agencies, many works of art were created for personal use. Even in the latter cases, many of the artists refrained from including images of the deceased allied soldiers.¹³⁷ Whether the art was commissioned or created for personal use, however, soldiers still had to adhere to the amendments of the Defence of the Realm Act wherein criticism of the war in any art form was a criminal offence. Artists usually focused their attention on the battlefield itself and the sombre atmosphere of the environment.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 167, 163; Cook, "Documenting War," 282.

¹³⁶ Caroline Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 5; Rodger, 163.

¹³⁷ Cook, "Documenting War," 288-289.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 289.

Because there were no commissioned photographs of the early battles of the war, personal art helped to fill in the gap in the visual narrative.¹³⁹

Administrative and personal records written during the war contain significant information that continues to be interpreted and re-interpreted over time. Personal recordings, such as private letters and diaries, often reflect the mood of the soldier in relation to the war as a whole, but are not always filled with the information that one might expect. Those documents that were commissioned by the government played a significant role in creating official histories and were archived for historical purposes. The authors were told exactly what to write by their superiors or representatives of the records offices of each nation, and how to write it, and then if it was not satisfactory they were instructed on how to make it better.

CONCLUSION

The First World War was not the first to create, disperse, and preserve massive amounts of war records, but it did help to demonstrate the absolute necessity of records in this new phase of warfare that was only then just beginning. Despite the advances in recordkeeping during WWI, countries had to deal with similar situations in 1939, even as they were still trying to manage the records they already had. In WWI, military administrators had to change with the times; they were fighting a new type of war, which required changes in strategies and a dramatic increase in communicating those changes to others efficiently and effectively. Today, military strategists have to deal with another change, one that requires the safeguarding of the digital realm along with the analogue.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 288.

WWI records are still vast in number, despite being culled over the years to save space or for their seeming unimportance. After this brief sketch of war records, their variety, magnitude, and centrality to the war effort and historical posterity, it is easy to see the necessity of their study.

Analyzing WWI records and the record creators demonstrates the variety of record types, their contexts of creation and preservation, the various uses throughout the war, as well as how important the records were to the people who made and disseminated them. Without a clear indication of the types of records and record creators, we would have less knowledge about the war on administrative and personal levels. Although the information content in the records is important, and often the most sought-after element of records, the context of their creation and initial use is fundamental to locating records, interpreting them, and maximizing their informational value. The records created during the war were vital to the war effort as a whole, and to the lives of the individuals who were affected by it. As history reveals, these records continued to be of use after the war, not only to historians and archivists, but to politicians, military tacticians, and even the public at large.

Chapter 2

“[We’ve] Got the Power!”:¹

Preservation, Prestige, and Producing Myths of the First World War

The world cannot be allowed to forget. Records are necessary to knowledge. There can be no history without them.

- Sir Max Aitken²

After the First World War, participating countries had a difficult challenge: they had to figure out how to rebuild the economy after such a devastating and all-encompassing event. One of the many decisions that the leaders of the countries had to make was what to do with the vast quantities of war records created during the war. Throughout the war, many people, within the government and without, understood the importance of the records for posterity. After the war, governments faced a seemingly insurmountable task of records management. Administrative offices in Britain, Canada, and Australia each preserved and used their war records in slightly different ways, culminating in divergent of war histories.

The war records were used to paint a particular image, sometimes literally, of each country’s efforts throughout the war on both a national and international scale. Britain in particular had a reputation to defend and though Canada and Australia were just beginning to develop their standing in world politics, they too had burgeoning reputations to protect. The records, in both cases, were vital to the protection of reputations. With the help of propaganda campaigns and other war records, Canadians

¹ Snap!, “The Power,” *World Power* (Ariola and Arista: 1990).

² Quoted in Tim Cook, *Clio’s Warriors: Canadian Historians and the Writing of the World Wars* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 10.

and Australians began to see themselves as more than just British citizens, but as patriots of their own countries. After the war, a myth was born in Canada and Australia, wherein the war turned a group of individuals from across vast stretches of untamed land into countrymen fighting for justice. Countless secondary sources supplemented the Canadian myth, some of which were backed by official documentation. Australian officials, however, published their war records promptly after the war to advance this patriotism, and relied less on secondary sources. Furthermore, Australians went one step further and collected, shared, and exhibited their records to honour the Australian soldiers by building a national memorial, the Australian War Memorial, to help the nation heal from the wounds left by the war.

In the aftermath of the war, war records were used for various purposes, but the most striking was the least tangible: to form a particular, and often nationalistic, memory of the war. While some countries, such as France, Britain, and Germany, spent most of their efforts defending their reputations, others, such as Australia, were building up a mass of records in an effort to reconcile with, remember, and immortalize the loss of the fallen. Charles Bean said, “[h]ere is their spirit, in the heart of the land they loved; and here we guard the record which they themselves made.”³ But forming a nationalistic memory was not the only use to which the records were put. Archives are not static accounts of the past, but continue to be interpreted, contextualized, used, and memorialized in different ways throughout time and space. In this way, WWI records are ever-changing. And the only reason we have access to the records today is because of the efforts to preserve them after the war. The following is but a glimpse into the life of war

³ Charles Bean, 1948, regarding the Australian War Memorial. Australian War Memorial (AWM), “About,” Australian War Memorial, accessed 27 October 2014, <http://www.awm.gov.au/about/>.

records in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, one that demonstrates the very beginning of their power to shape the memories of millions and the development of the archival profession.

THE PRESERVATION OF WAR RECORDS

Before we can discuss how Britain, Canada, and Australia used, manipulated, and controlled the records after the war, we must understand how they preserved the records. Without the efforts of the various organizations and individuals during and after the war to ensure the safety of the records, the following events would have turned out much differently, for better or for worse. British, Canadian, and Australian governments and scholars had different ideas about how to preserve, and later use, the records. The preservation of the records is but one vital step in understanding the history of the record, and the history helps to demonstrate the record's significance to the past, the present, and the future. The different preservation tactics often affected how they were used afterward, and thus how the memory of the war has been constructed.

British War Records

Before the war, Britain had established archival practices, based in part on the *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* of 1898, colloquially known as the Dutch Manual. In 1922, Hilary Jenkinson, soon to be one of the most well-known archivists in the western world, wrote a treatise on archival administration, including the

proper and necessary care of WWI records. These ideas reflected British archival practice at the time. Jenkinson, who had joined the staff of the Public Record Office (PRO) in 1906 and primarily worked with medieval records, wanted to illustrate the importance of both rigid protocols for administering archives, and a strict definition of an archival document.⁴ He stated several times in his *Manual of Archive Administration* that archives were only those documents that were created as a part of an official transaction.⁵ In other words, archives were only those documents that came into an institution's office, left an office, or were circulated within an office that related directly to official operations and were not created with posterity in mind.⁶ British archivists most often kept the records of government institutions. In essence, Jenkinson stressed that appraising records based on conjecture about future uses would skew the validity and evidence of the record and therefore argued that the original use of the record mattered most. Furthermore, Jenkinson explained that an archivist's primary responsibility was the safeguarding of the archives, and the second was helping researchers use them.⁷ After explaining the necessary tasks of an archivist, Jenkinson dictated how they must approach war records.

According to Jenkinson, WWI archives were unique in various ways. The first and foremost characteristic was their massive volume; the volume of WWI records exceeded that of any previous war. Not only their number was unique, but also the fact that they were created in a short amount of time. Furthermore, the archives went from

⁴ Richard Stapleton, "Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison," *Archivaria* 17, (Winter 1983): 75-76, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/376/showToc>.

⁵ Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making*, (London: Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1922), 4. Jenkinson served in WWI (1916-18) and capped his distinguished career at the PRO by becoming its head, or Deputy Keeper, from 1947 to 1954. The PRO is now known as the National Archives (United Kingdom).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 11, 23.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

being a practical record to a historical record in a very short time.⁸ Despite these peculiarities, Jenkinson decided that war records were to be treated like any other administrative records. They were to adhere to the requirements listed above, namely that they had to be created in an administrative capacity, and the creators of the records should survey, attenuate, and organize them quickly and efficiently before transferring them to their final destinations.⁹ Furthermore, only the creators of the records, from the various administrative offices such as the War Office, could legitimately cull the records because they alone understood their importance.¹⁰

The reality after the war was that these administrators needed the assistance of creators. For example, in Britain the War Office, established in 1854 under the Secretary of State for War, was responsible for army affairs and should have been responsible for organizing the preservation of the records. As early as 1915, the Secretary of State for War had transferred some functions initially undertaken by the War Office to new ministries that were created for the sole purpose of the war effort because of the massive scale of the war.¹¹ After WWI, the massive volume of war records remained for a time in the offices where they were created, or were put in temporary storage because there was no central control over the archives.¹² Custodians in government departments sought the

⁸ Ibid., 165.

⁹ Ibid., 164, 174.

¹⁰ Ibid., 173.

¹¹ Some of these new ministries include the Ministry of Munitions, which was in charge of maximizing resources needed for the manufacturing and supply of munitions for war; Ministry of Pensions, which was responsible for military pensions; and the Ministry of National Service, which handled recruitment and correspondence between some departments attached to the Public Record Office. The records of the Ministry of Pensions and of National Service are not yet available on the National Archives of the United Kingdom website.

¹² Hilary Jenkinson, "British Archives and the War," *Society of American Archivists* 7, no. 1 (January 1944): 4, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40288366>. One place where records were stored during the war was in the tin mines of Cornwall. Denis Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), 245.

help of the Public Record Office to manage the volume of records.¹³ It was not until 1932, with the urging of Jenkinson, that the British Records Association was created and run by volunteers, to co-ordinate the whereabouts of Britain's war records, which had slowly been dispersed after the war. The Association also promoted better care of the war record, and provided assistance and advice to record custodians who had little training.¹⁴

In the seven years before WWII, the British Records Association established contacts with repositories all over the western world.¹⁵ These contacts would become increasingly more important immediately before and during WWII as paper drives threatened WWI records. Almost as soon as the British government declared war on Germany in 1939, the British Empire prepared for the war effort by recycling and re-using common, but necessary, materials such as rubber, paper, rags, and metals, excluding iron.¹⁶ People were overzealous to supply anything needed for the war effort and, thus, WWI records, among other important historical documents, were in danger of being destroyed.¹⁷ The British Records Association worked to combat this destruction of war records.¹⁸ Nevertheless, approximately sixty percent of WWI service records were destroyed in 1940 when the War Office was bombed in a German air raid.¹⁹ Other such war-related departments and repositories were also destroyed during WWII.²⁰ After WWII, the colloquially named "Burnt Documents" had to be repaired, primarily with

¹³ Jenkinson, "British Archives," 6.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶ Bruce Smith, "Lost Memory: The Paper Drives of World War II," *The Australian Library Journal* 47, no. 4 (1998): 309, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00049670.1998.10755857#.VSLP-eFWLt8>.

¹⁷ Jenkinson, "British Archives," 7.

¹⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹⁹ The National Archives, "Service Records for the First World War," The National Archives, accessed 9 March 2015, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/service_records/sr_soldiers.htm.

²⁰ Jenkinson, "British Archives," 8.

water, so that the paper did not crumble to ash.²¹ These records eventually were deposited with the nation's main repository of archives. In 2003, the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission consolidated to become the United Kingdom National Archives. The National Archives now holds the majority of war records, some of which can be accessed online.

Canadian War Records

In 1918, Dominion Archivist of Canada Sir Arthur Doughty recommended that a repository in the form of a memorial building be constructed to house war records and trophies.²² However, his entreaties fell on deaf ears at the time due to budget cuts and general disillusionment with the war.²³ The records collected by the Canadian War Records Office (CWRO) had to come home nonetheless. In 1919, ten thousand boxes of documents were shipped to Canada, were organized by the CWRO in Ottawa, and sent directly to the Canadian Army Historical Section, rather than the Public Archives, for the purpose of writing the official Canadian history of the war.²⁴ The records of the Canadian War Narrative Section (CWNS), which included just over ten tonnes of records, in turn sent to the Department of Military Defence, which administered the transfer of the records. They had to be stored in an old garage because the department had not prepared

²¹ Jenkinson explains that the burnt documents were immersed in water for a long period of time, followed by active fermentation, and hung to dry. Ibid.

²² McIntosh, 15.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, 32. For more information on the Canadian Army Historical Section, see Archives Association of Ontario, "Fonds 92/252; 2010/8 – Canadian Army Historical fonds," Archives Association of Ontario, accessed 9 March 2015, <http://www.archeion.ca/canadian-army-historical-section-fonds-2>.

for the arrival of so many records.²⁵ There was no clear indication of who owned the totality of all of these records: the Department of Defence, the CWRO, or the CWNS.²⁶ During the war, the CWRO and the CWNS eventually worked together, despite their differences, so it is only fitting that the records of the two divisions both made their way to the Army Historical Section in preparation for the creation of the official history of Canada's war effort.²⁷

Most of the administrative documents for the war, however, were in the care of the Department of Militia and Defence. Here, the records were either kept or discarded based on their historical value; Boards of Officers were tasked with determining this for each military unit, sending documents to the Canadian Army Historical Section in Ottawa, or discarding them.²⁸ Some were destroyed because they were duplicates,²⁹ had not been used for several years, or because they were considered routine. Medical and court records, in particular, were to be kept for future administrative uses.³⁰ As in Britain, Canadian war records and trophies went through a series of selection and destruction processes, each often more critical than the last.

In 1956, the records collected by the CWRO, including photographs, were sent to the Public Archives of Canada. In 1960, personnel records from military departments were placed in the Public Archives of Canada, where, in 1971, a new storage facility for

²⁵ Ibid., 36. In 1918, Sir Arthur Currie, the first Canadian Commander of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF), created the CWNS to write his account of the war because he did not approve of the publications produced by the CWRO during the war. Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, 29.

²⁶ Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, 36.

²⁷ Ibid., 29, 37.

²⁸ McIntosh, 15.

²⁹ Some of the records that were thought to be duplicates, but were not, were also destroyed due to human error and carelessness.

³⁰ McIntosh, 15.

the Archives was created, called the Personnel Records Centre.³¹ War art went to the National Gallery of Canada, and then to the Canadian War Museum in 1971.³²

Along with records, Doughty, among others, collected war trophies during and after the war. War trophies were mainly munitions and weapons related to the enemy war effort.³³ Doughty understood that war trophies, like archives, were important to the memorialization of the war and wanted to preserve them as part of the nation's heritage. By the end of the war, Canada had amassed nearly four thousand machine guns; more than nine hundred field guns, howitzers, and trench mortars; dozens of aircrafts; ten thousand rifles; and a considerable amount of other material.³⁴ The war trophies were shipped all over Canada to instill patriotism and keep the memory of the war alive. There were so many trophies, however, that in 1934 the War Trophies Disposal Board was created to parcel out those that were suitable for what would later become the Canadian War Museum, and to dispose of the rest.³⁵ Furthermore, like the paper drives of WWII, every piece of scrap metal was collected for the new war effort, which threatened many of these trophies.

³¹ Ibid., 16.

³² Ibid.

³³ Jonathan F. Vance, "Tangible Demonstrations of a Great Victory: War Trophies in Canada," *Material Culture Review*, 42 (Fall 1995), <http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/article/view/17659/22307>, accessed March 8, 2015.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Australian War Records

Many Australians rejoiced when their country entered the First World War on 6 August 1914 because they thought it would be the biggest event in their history.³⁶ As a relatively new settlement, the history of Australia seemed uninteresting to Australians, which meant that many greeted the coming war with excitement and relief.³⁷ In 1917, John Treloar, who became an army officer during the war, encouraged the Defence Department to maintain its own records.³⁸ On 13 July 1917, the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) distributed a memorandum that stated: “In the interests of the national history of Australia and in order that Australia may have the control of her own historical records, especially in so far as they relate to the present war, the Australian War Records Section has been formed.”³⁹ Playing a similar “eye-witness” role as Max Aitken, Charles Bean became War Correspondent to the AIF just after Australia joined the war effort. It was not until after the AIF memorandum that Bean approached the Department of Defence and proposed the creation of a memorial building to house these records of the war. At that time, there was no Australian national records office or archives, so it is no surprise that they thought to house the records in a national war museum.⁴⁰ Treloar and Bean were equally instrumental in establishing the Australia War Records Section (AWRS) specifically for the purpose of preserving the records of the biggest event in Australian

³⁶ Gammage, 4.

³⁷ Anne-Marie Condé, “Capturing the Records of War: collecting at the Mitchell Library and the Australian War Memorial,” *Australian Historical Studies* 36, issue 125 (2005): 137, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10314610508682915#.VFeSXMnp-zs>.

³⁸ Anne-Marie Condé, “Imagining a collection: creating Australia’s records of war,” *recollections: Journal of the National Museum of Australia* 2, no. 1, (March 2007): 27, http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol_2_no_1/papers/imagining_a_collection.

³⁹ AIF Order 758, quoted in Condé, “Imagining a collection,” 26.

⁴⁰ Piggott, “Sacred Archiving,” 121.

history thus far.⁴¹ Both Bean and Treloar understood the value of the records and wanted well-kept documents for the official history as well as for historical research to be undertaken by future generations.⁴² Bean was impressed by Max Aitken's work at the CWRO and modeled the AWRS after Aitken's design.⁴³ The AWRS was given the authority to undertake archival work, and Australian records would play a significant role in Australia after the war.⁴⁴ Through Bean and Treloar's efforts, the records would help to form Australia's first national archival repository: the Australian War Memorial (AWM).

Bean may have recognized the fact that the war would be the most important event in Australian history, but it took the "administrative imagination" of Treloar to help make it so.⁴⁵ Treloar was in his element when records started to pour in to the AWRS. Not only that, the AWRS was the first agency to enforce strict standards, rather than just strongly suggest them, for the creation, acquisition, and disposal of the AIF's records.⁴⁶ The enforcement of the standards is especially important because it was the AWRS, and not solely the unit members, that decided what constituted historical importance. Treloar had to create complex recordkeeping practices because of the number of records being collected; many of these practices are still used today.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Treloar was able to procure unit diaries, precisely drawn maps, photographs, administrative records, film, objects, and art. He even created special stationery for diaries so that they would all be uniform, and encouraged maps and reports to be included, along with exact locations,

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 122.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 131.

⁴⁵ Condé, "Imagining a collection," 27.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 28; Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 119.

distances, and positions in each of the diaries.⁴⁸ The British War Office also allowed the original diaries to go to the AWRS, providing that it received exact duplicates.⁴⁹

Over the course of the war, the AWRS grew extensively and began to oversee special histories, such as unit histories, to supplement the official history planned for the end of the war.⁵⁰ Because the AWRS was the first formal archival program in Australia, it had official archival authority over the records, something that the CWRO and the British Public Record Office did not have. The first priority of the AWRS was not necessarily to promote the Australian Imperial Force, nor to help the war effort in an administrative sense, but to protect the integrity of the history for future generations.⁵¹ The AWRS understood that preserving the records for posterity was the best way to serve their country.

The AWRS organized the records within the military hierarchy to protect the identity of the creating party and thus preserve the provenance of the records.⁵² Without any archival training, Treloar and Bean had to deal with approximately forty tonnes of records, and made impromptu disposition decisions.⁵³ After the war, the AWRS would be subsumed by the AWM, but continue under the overall control of the Department of Defence.⁵⁴ The AIF's records were collected on a massive scale and the AWRS, more than any other similar agency, used these records to their advantage. If Treloar is credited with their collection and maintenance, then Bean took the lead in putting them to use quickly and efficiently.

⁴⁸ Condé, "Imagining a collection," 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁰ Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 122.

⁵¹ Ibid., 123.

⁵² Ibid., 124.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Although the Australian government, like the Canadian and British governments, emphasized administrative records, Australians did make some effort to collect wartime material from civilians less than six months after the war.⁵⁵ To inspire the public's participation, Principal Librarian W.H. Ifould at the Mitchell Library in the Library of New South Wales (NSW), who wanted to house the permanent record of the "greatest event in Australian history," sent out a bulletin asking for manuscripts, journals, diaries, letters, and anything connected to the war.⁵⁶ The Library would pay for records that it thought best encompassed the Australian experience, and rejected the records that did not.⁵⁷ The Library was looking for lengthy entries filled with facts that could help future users learn about it from the perspective of a serving soldier; Ifould wanted "first hand impressions recorded by the soldiers themselves soon after the events happened."⁵⁸ The entry, however, could not be too long or over embellished because it would not be believable. Typed copies, or anything written down after the war, were also not accepted.⁵⁹ By 1922, the Library of NSW had bought approximately two hundred and fifty manuscripts.⁶⁰

The Australian War Memorial was backed by federal legislation in 1925.⁶¹ The act also allocated a fund to help keep the AWM operational.⁶² During the war, the Australian War Record Section acquired many administrative documents, which Treloar, with the help of Bean and Arthur Bazley, deposited and preserved in the AWM. Some of

⁵⁵ Condé, "Capturing the Records of War," 136- 137; Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 124.

⁵⁶ Condé, "Capturing the Records of War," 136-137.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 140-141.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 141.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 140-141.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 140.

⁶¹ Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 120; 124.

⁶² Australian Federal Register of Legislation, *Australian War Memorial Act*, 26 September 1925, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C1925A00018>.

the documents included administrative records, photographs, works of art, battlefield models, weapons, vehicles, uniforms, and military equipment.⁶³ After the war, the AWM also tried to build up its holdings of private records to add to the already amassed official documentation. Because the AWM was created after the Mitchell Library already had a collection policy in place, the AWM had to settle for what was left over.⁶⁴ In order to compile more of the personal soldiers' records, the members of the AWM had decided to address letters to next-of-kin asking for donations of private documents.⁶⁵ Unlike in Britain and Canada, the AWM wanted anything and everything to do with the Australian experience of WWI, although it could not afford to pay for the material.⁶⁶

Unlike Britain and Canada, where administrative records rather than personal records dominated preservation policies during and after the war, Australian organizations such as the Library of NSW and the AWM had greater interest in personal testimony immediately after the war. Nevertheless, administrative records were highly valued and the collecting of personal records fell by the wayside once administrative records were transferred to the AWM in 1931.⁶⁷ Personal records were largely unexplored until 1974 when Bill Gammage used them to publish an account of the war using soldier's personal diaries and letters.⁶⁸

In 1931, the Department of Defence transferred the administrative records that were created in the Headquarters of the Australian Imperial Force, some of which included records regarding postings, pay and promotions, medical administration,

⁶³ Condé, "Capturing the Records of War," 142.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 139.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 144.

⁶⁶ Condé, "Creating Australia's Records of War," 32.

⁶⁷ Condé, "Capturing the Records of War," 135.

⁶⁸ Condé, "Creating Australia's Records of War," 31. See, Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1974).

finance, transport and supply, courts-martial, war graves, education, and demobilization.⁶⁹ In 1947, Treloar and his staff carefully reappraised the records at the AWM due to increasingly limited space.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, without the influence of Treloar, staff at the AWM reappraised the records again in the late 1950s and destroyed almost ninety-five percent of the records in some series.⁷¹

The repetition of appraisals over time demonstrates changes in what archivists deemed historically important, and therefore how archivists have the ability to shape historical memory through their actions. The AWM was the first institution in Australia that dealt with the preservation of records, predating even the National Archives of Australia.⁷² Although the AWM has lost some of its priceless wartime collection over the years due to limited space and harsh reappraisal, it still has a vast collection, and continues to be a site of remembrance to this day. The massive Australian War Memorial building, with its museum and large archives of government and private records, located opposite the Parliament buildings in Canberra, opened in 1941 to house the collections gathered to commemorate the country's great sacrifices and victories in the First World War.

A Comparison

Britain, Canada, and Australia all dealt with their war records differently. The British government preferred only to keep the administrative records in part because they were the only documents that British archivists considered archival. Administrative

⁶⁹ Condé, "Creating Australia's Records of War," 32.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 126-127.

offices had the task of determining which records were of historical value in both the British and Canadian contexts. For Canada, records were given immediately to the Canadian Army Historical Section, rather than to the archives, after they were culled. In Australia, where, unlike Britain and Canada, no formal national archival repository existed, the Australian War Memorial and to a lesser extent the Library of NSW collected and preserved many of the records of the war. Both personal and administrative records were desired and the records went to several storage locations before they made their home at the AWM when its building opened in 1941.

After the war each nation struggled with the massive amount of war records, and developed its own approaches to handling them based on its assumptions about proper archival theory, and the political and legal status of its archives. The Australian government established the AWM after it realized that preserving the nation's participation in the war was vital to its history, and there was no national archival institution in which to house the records. Neither Britain's PRO nor Canada's Public Archives had the authority in law or through political support to compel the immediate transfer of the war records to their custody, especially from powerful military agencies. Each nation had a choice to make regarding the destruction of its war records and, despite the efforts of the men like Aitken, Doughty, and Bean, no collection remained unscathed during the appraisal processes. In reality, it was impossible to keep the massive amount of records created during the war, no matter how useful they might have been to future researchers. The Second World War only exacerbated this situation when new records started pouring in to the various records offices. Nevertheless, many WWI records were

kept and were used in the years immediately following the war, for every nation had a reputation to keep and a story to tell.

SOME USES OF WAR RECORDS AFTER THE WAR

Composing the Official War Histories in Britain, Australia, and Canada

In 1906, Lord Esher, a British politician and historian, suggested that the Committee of Imperial Defence should create a subcommittee under the Imperial Defence committee's directorship that would control the nation's military and naval archives to ensure that the lessons of war were not lost for future military strategists.⁷³ Thus, the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence was created in 1907; it undertook the writing of the official histories of the second Boer War and all subsequent wars, including WWI.⁷⁴ In 1914, the Historical Section halted all of its projects to focus on the collection and indexing of incoming war records. As early as 1915, and before becoming the Secretary for the British War Cabinet, Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the War Council, suggested that the British government prepare official histories to provide an authoritative account for the public, for educational and reference purposes, and to curtail the impact of unofficial histories that tended to blame military failures on the government.⁷⁵ Although progress on the official history was slow during the war due to various oversights and a lack of manpower, and the benefits of an

⁷³ Andrew Green, *Writing the Great War: Sir James Edmonds and the Official Histories 1915-1948*, (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

official history were questioned after the war, the government decided to create an official history that was subject to scrutiny by the War Office and Cabinet before it could be published.⁷⁶

In April 1919, Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds became director of the Historical Section.⁷⁷ He was saddened to see the poor condition, organization, and control of the records, as well as the mediocre state of the writing that official historian and Royal Archivist, Sir John Fortescue, had completed by that time.⁷⁸ Edmonds understood the gravity of the work to be done. He originally intended to publish a series of dispatches; however, by the end of 1919, he stated that

[t]he necessity for an account founded on official documents, elaborated by statements and private records of officers and German information has become more and more apparent. Many complaints have been heard and received with regard to the garbled and misleading accounts given in their books by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, John Buchan and others.⁷⁹

Thereafter, Edmonds advocated for an official history that conformed to Hankey's initial suggestion in August, 1915.⁸⁰ Although the official history was not written by Edmonds alone, he had considerable influence over its direction.⁸¹ In fact, Edmonds had almost total control over the documents that the rest of the members of the Historical Section could see and of the chapter drafts.⁸²

The British official history's overall framework was based on Commander-in-Chief Haig's dispatches and his typewritten diary. Between 1948 and the 1960s, British academics and politicians analyzed the official histories and primary sources in the Public

⁷⁶ Ibid., 8-9.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁷⁸ Green, 9.

⁷⁹ Quoted in Green, 10.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁸¹ Edmonds supervised the project after being appointed director in 1919 and wrote almost half of the twenty-nine volumes. The remainder were largely written by retired servicemen and staff officers. Ibid., 1.

⁸² Winter, *Haig's Command*, 246-247.

Record Office to form narratives about the war. However, in the 1960s, Cabinet Papers and War Office records were opened to the public and told a much different story of Britain's war effort.⁸³ It was very clear that the official history and some of the files once assumed to be represented in the PRO in their entirety, had been falsified, doctored, and appraised by politicians. In the 1980s, historian Denis Winter evaluated the many new records that surfaced in the 1960s to determine a new version of Haig's command, and the writing of the official histories. From the records, Winter concludes that Haig himself falsified his wartime and postwar records to place himself in a positive light, and to prove that his command and the loss of life during some of the worst battles was justified.⁸⁴ Winter discovered that the political and military official records were distorted during and after the war for propaganda purposes and to follow Haig's narrative of the war.⁸⁵ He notes that the records held at the Public Record Office had been vetted and those that did not follow the agreed-upon narrative were destroyed.⁸⁶ He concludes that gaps remain in the war documentation and they may never be filled.⁸⁷ The creation of the official histories was just that: a narrative moulded to suit a specific need with the help, or absence, of archival material.

The official British histories were constructed using carefully selected records, and then the chapters were sent for approval to the Army Council, which was composed of representatives of the major government departments and some high-ranking military

⁸³ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid. He confirmed the destruction of many British records by comparing them to the duplicates in Canada and Australia, including the minutes to Cabinet meetings, and unit diaries. He also stated that there was a suspicious lack of Haig's personal orders, known as OADs. Winter, *Haig's Command*, 6-7.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

officials.⁸⁸ Winter states that there are not many Army Council comments still available to the public, but the ones that he did find were highly critical of any departure from the established narrative and generally favoured the established historical narrative.⁸⁹ After the official histories were approved, the documents were processed; those that maintained the official line were kept, and those that did not were discarded. This process took four years.⁹⁰

The first volume of the official histories, which outlined the first three months of the war, was published in 1922. The Preface states that the official records of the British government were the primary resource required to write the history, and the history was intended for public consumption and educational purposes.⁹¹ The authors mainly used official war diaries and their appendices, the Commander-in-Chief's typewritten diary, dispatches and other administrative documents, as well as private documents on loan in order to write the histories.⁹² Furthermore, there is a disclaimer that notes "[o]n a modern battlefield . . . knowledge of events is extraordinarily local, and the transmission of information difficult,"⁹³ effectively minimizing criticism of any person who tried to discredit the official history without direct access to the records.

In total, it took thirty-three years and twenty-nine volumes to write the official military history of Britain's involvement in WWI. The members of the Historical Section had to analyze over twenty-five million records. The last volume was published in 1948

⁸⁸ Ibid., 247.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 249.

⁹¹ J.E. Edmonds, *History of the Great War Based on Official Documents: France and Belgium, 1914*, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1922), v.

⁹² Ibid., v-vi.

⁹³ Ibid., vi.

when Edmonds was eighty-seven.⁹⁴ Not surprisingly, the histories were heavily criticized, primarily for being biased in favour of British military command by blaming any failures on politicians, allies, the conditions of the battlefield, and the state of the army before the war; for ignoring important lessons of the war; and for being boring.⁹⁵ As Winter says regarding the official histories, “The end product of Edmond’s work was therefore an Official History which presented a fraudulent account of the Western Front, supported by documents mischievously selected and leaks maliciously planted in the path of writers pressing too hard on the truth.”⁹⁶ It is likely that the only person who saw the truth behind the lies was Australian Official Historian C.E.W. Bean who spent the entire war researching for the Australian official histories.

Bean was also largely credited with the creation of the Australian official history. Bean had many of the same responsibilities as Edmonds. However, unlike Edmonds, who remained at General Headquarters, Bean was the Australian official war correspondent for the AIF during the war, and visited battle scenes, wrote many notebooks of personal impressions, and interviewed many commanding officers within days of each battle in which Australians participated.⁹⁷ He started the official history project in 1920 and completed it by 1942.⁹⁸ There were twelve volumes in the core series and all except for one are available digitally on the AWM website.⁹⁹ There were also three volumes

⁹⁴ Green, 1.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁹⁶ Winter, *Haig’s Command*, 254.

⁹⁷ Denis Winter (ed.), *Making the Legend: The War Writings of C.E.W. Bean*, (Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1992), xi; Winter, *Haig’s Command*, 253.

⁹⁸ Peter Stanley, “First World War Official Histories: Introduction,” Australian War Memorial, accessed 12 March 2015, https://www.awm.gov.au/histories/introduction/first_world_war/.

⁹⁹ Volume XII, *The Photographic Record of the War*, is the only volume that is unavailable on the AWM website because all of the images have already been digitized and are accessible through personal searches. Australian War Memorial, “First World War Official Histories,” Australian War Memorial, accessed 12 March 2015, https://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first_world_war/.

dedicated to the Australian Army Medical Services, as well as supplementary material. Bean wrote the histories from the perspective of the battlefield, particularly of the commanding officers, something that he wanted to do from the outset. As war correspondent, he was instructed to send updates, via letters and dispatches, to officials back home. After the war, he corresponded with officers and soldiers to clarify his own notes and to glean more information about specific battles.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, he and his colleagues arranged the official records chronologically to make writing the history easier.¹⁰¹ This organization would make it more difficult for future historians to use the records because the arrangement was particularly suited to Bean's needs as the official historian, rather than by provenance.¹⁰²

Not only did Bean observe the war, he was also one of the important collectors of Australian war records during and after the war. Furthermore, Bean's official history was written for a lay audience and focuses on the experience of the soldiers, providing as much detail as possible from the official records and his own observations and notebooks. He also included over six thousand biographical sketches of Australian soldiers.¹⁰³ Where Britain's official history was written partly to discredit unofficial and foreign histories, Bean wrote his official histories as a memorial for those who served in WWI and, more importantly, as a testament to those who died. Bean helped propagate the idea that, through service and sacrifice, "Australia became fully conscious of itself as a nation."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Winter, *Making the Legend*, xi.

¹⁰¹ Condé, "Creating Australia's Records of War," 29, 33.

¹⁰² There are approximately twenty-five metres of textual information that Bean used to write the official history. Winter, *Making the Legend*, xi.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in AWM, "First World War Official Histories."

Principal Historian at the AWM between 1980 and 2007, Peter Stanley, states that Bean's official histories "remain one of the great achievements of Australian history" and "retain their integrity as the single greatest source of interpretation of Australia's part in the First World War."¹⁰⁵ Anne-Marie Condé, a curator at the National Museum of Australia and a former historian at the Australian War Memorial, states that "his history has been so dominant that it has held back other modes of history, and other types of records, from finding their moment."¹⁰⁶ Bean's official histories have embedded themselves in Australian society as *the* authority on Australian participation in the First World War. Unlike Edmonds's reputation, Bean's remains as strong today among the general public as it was when the histories were initially published.

Bean's histories, however, were not without critics. Nearly all of Bean's battlefield interviews were done with officers, rather than regular soldiers, thus creating a gap in his narrative, which he tried to rectify near the end of the war.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, like many creations of national importance, Bean de-emphasized or omitted persons or events that he found, or thought the nation would find, uncomfortable. Also, a recent analysis of Bean's first volume demonstrates that, despite having access to and using the official documentation, Bean misrepresented a memorandum in order to give credit to the wrong battalion, a battalion of which his brother was a part, for saving a unit of Australian marines from the colloquially named "Death Trap Valley," officially known as Wire Gully. Kit Cullen, author and educator, states that, "[w]hether the boys from the 4th Battalion who went into the valley died or survived, Bean failed to provide them or their families with public acknowledgment of their courage and sacrifice. Quite simply, Bean

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Condé, "Creating Australia's Records of War," 33.

¹⁰⁷ Winter, *Making the Legend*, 230.

denied them their place in history”; an unfortunate truth of which many writers of official histories were probably guilty.¹⁰⁸ It demonstrates how easily archival records can be misread, misinterpreted, and misrepresented.

Despite the shortcomings of Bean’s narrative, the official history did make an impact on Australian society and, as the AWM website indicates, continues to do so to this day. Unfortunately, Canada’s official history project was not so successful, despite the efforts of the CWRO. Like the British approach, Canadian war records went to the newly created Canadian Army Historical Section.¹⁰⁹ In 1917, Brigadier-General E.A. Cruikshank was assigned to the CWRO to compile records for the purpose of writing an official history.¹¹⁰ During his time as official historian, Cruikshank wrote four volumes of Canadian military history by 1920, starting with the mid-eighteenth century and ending with the 1915 Battle of Second Ypres.¹¹¹ The fourth volume contained hundreds of de-contextualized reports and orders, without accompanying maps or illustrations, and only twenty-eight pages of text.¹¹² This lack of context demonstrates the inability to rely solely on poorly analyzed archival records to explain a historical event.

Cruikshank’s works were deemed unacceptable and unintelligible and, in 1921, Colonel A.F. Duguid, a decorated artillery officer with a prewar engineering degree, succeeded Cruikshank as the official historian of the war and began a life-long career in the Canadian Army Historical Section.¹¹³ In May 1921, the Army Historical Section was

¹⁰⁸ Kit Cullen, “Charles Bean and the First Casualty of Our Gallipoli Records,” *The Australian*, (14 September 2013), accessed 12 March 2015, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekend-australian-magazine/the-first-casualty/story-e6frg8h6-1226718429225>. Cullen discovered this misrepresentation by first reading Bean’s official history, and then analyzing the archival documents for himself.

¹⁰⁹ Cook, *Clio’s Warriors*, 42.

¹¹⁰ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 167.

¹¹¹ Cook, *Clio’s Warriors*, 42.

¹¹² Cook, *Clio’s Warriors*, 42-43.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 43.

tasked with compiling and supplying “authentic information concerning the military history of Canada” during the First World War.¹¹⁴

The Historical Section’s mandate required it to organize the records, prepare the history, defend Canadian accomplishments in the war, and answer enquiries. During the first eight years, while trying to write the official history, the section sorted and catalogued approximately one hundred and twenty-two tonnes of documents, over seven thousand photographs, created outlines of the history of every unit in the CEF, answered more than eight thousand enquiries, and published dozens of summaries of the war.¹¹⁵ Because its mandate was so broad, the section had to distribute its resources rather than focus solely on writing the history. Duguid put a lot of time and resources into challenging Edmonds’s British official history, which downplays the roles of Canadians and Australians in many battles throughout the war, causing one of the biggest delays in completing the official history.¹¹⁶

In the late 1920s, Minister of National Defence James Layton Ralston created a committee to determine whether the official history should remain in the purview of the Historical Section, or be written by the Dominion Archivist, or not written at all.¹¹⁷ Duguid suggested that the Historical Section should focus solely on the official history and, in the end, the committee agreed.¹¹⁸ Duguid wanted the history to be accurate and impartial. He therefore studied the war records with an analytical and critical eye, organizing them into a complicated series of cross-referenced piles that only he

¹¹⁴ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 167.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Cook, *Clio’s Warriors*, 50, 54.

¹¹⁷ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 167. The suggestion that the histories might be better written by the Dominion Archivist, rather than another historian, demonstrates confidence in an archivist’s historical knowledge and scholarship.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 168.

understood.¹¹⁹ Although he wanted to include first-hand accounts of the war, he always gave preferential treatment to official war records and those created during the war rather than after it.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, it was not until 1938 that the first volume, plus appendices, of the official history of Canada's participation in WWI was published.¹²¹ Although the reviews were generally positive, Duguid was only able to publish a single volume that encompassed the entirety of the war.¹²² Because the first volume of the official history took twenty years to finish, it made little impact on public opinion, which had already been exposed to many unofficial histories of individual units and personal accounts.¹²³ Unlike in Britain and Australia, a detailed Canadian official history would not be available as a resource for future researchers.¹²⁴

The official histories of the nations that participated in WWI were meant to provide war narratives from particular perspectives. Nearly all nations wrote them, some faster and more detailed than others, but they all relied on their war records to do so. For some, the official history would help to legitimize their actions in war; for others, it was a way to maintain war reputations; and still others sought to create a testament to those who fought and died. Official histories may be considered just another form of propaganda, but their creation was a priority after the war and they provide immeasurable insight into what each nation thought was important enough to disseminate to its public and the world. Analyzing which archival material was used to create the histories and,

¹¹⁹ Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, 45, 49.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹²¹ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 168.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 168-169.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹²⁴ Aside from Duguid's official history, G.W.L. Nicholson wrote an Official History of the war, which was published in the 1960s on behalf of the Army Historical Section. Both histories can be found on the website of Directorate of History and Heritage (DHH), "Official Histories", DHH (19 December 2008), accessed 9 January 2017, <http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/his/oh-ho/index-eng.asp>.

just as importantly, which records were not used, demonstrates the effect they have had on society. As the histories, particularly in Australia, become embedded in the national consciousness as the authorities on wartime actions, the archival documents that support these actions are given more weight, status, and historical value. Those records that were disregarded were sometimes destroyed, as in the case of Britain, or remained in the shadows. Neither the official histories, nor any other written or oral testimony, are the ultimate authorities on what happened; they are only one nation's opinion, albeit an opinion supported by carefully chosen written documentation.

Reputations, War Guilt, and International Relations

After the war, the nations that had participated in it used their war records for a variety of purposes, many of which served to enhance a country's flagging reputation. The official histories were just one of many ways to manipulate the records to bolster a country's reputation. As demonstrated by the French Revolution, for example, it is apparent that access to historical knowledge is a gateway to power.¹²⁵ Power comes in many forms and affects people differently; it can be both internal and external. For the nations that participated in WWI, power came in part from the records created during diplomatic activities before the war, the many different war records created during the war, and those records that were created in the Versailles treaty negotiations. The power of the records resides mainly in the way in which they are used and interpreted. As Judith Panitch, Director of Library Communications at the University of North Carolina,

¹²⁵ For more information on the fate of records and archives during the French Revolution, see Judith M. Panitch, "Liberty, Equality, Posterity?: Some Archival Lessons from the Case of the French Revolution," *The American Archivist* 59, no. 1 (Winter, 1996): 30-47, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40293951>.

concludes, “That the archives of the past are also the mutable creations of the present is perhaps one of the most enduring and vivid lessons of the French Revolution.”¹²⁶ The records of WWI were also gathered, doctored, made visible, hidden, and manipulated for specific purposes. Archives, now and in the past, are mutable indeed, and can help to transform international relations for better or for worse.

Using records to bolster a nation’s reputation started long before WWI and continued long afterward. In the context of WWI, the beginning of the war prompted many nations to publish what are now known as the “coloured” books.¹²⁷ Each major combatant nation selectively published its political and administrative documents to try to prove that its policies were not the cause of the war.¹²⁸ The British “Blue Book,” for example, was published so soon after the beginning of the war, and in such a short period of time, that it contained multiple errors and the British Foreign Office was accused of falsifying the documents deliberately.¹²⁹ These nations used their foreign policy records to defend their actions. British historian and diplomat Sir Charles Webster stated that “[n]o country can afford to neglect the study of its own foreign policy, without taking the

¹²⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹²⁷ Germany published “The White Book,” Britain published “The Blue Book,” Russia published “The Orange Book,” France published “The Yellow Book,” and the Austro-Hungarian Empire published “The Red Book.”

¹²⁸ For a compilation of the war books, see Harrison and Sons, *Collected Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1915). Australia and Canada, whose foreign policy was under British direction before the war, were not involved in debates over its cause. Nevertheless, they had both garnered reputations during the war and, Canada at least, had to defend its reputation on numerous occasions, particularly from criticism in American (see below) and British official histories.

¹²⁹ Keith Hamilton, “The Pursuit of ‘Enlightened Patriotism’: The British Foreign Office and Historical Researchers during the Great War and its Aftermath,” *Historical Research* 61, no. 146 (October, 1988): 318-319, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2281.1988.tb01070.x/abstract;jsessionid=3A0DD6B7E43278AB121B578BBC13AD77.f04t04>.

risk that its ideals will be misunderstood and misconstrued.”¹³⁰ In other words, the countries had to set the record straight, or at least their perspective on it.

In the years following the war, many nations struggled with public access to archives. In many countries, public access was often limited to scholars or politicians, and they had to get special permission to access these records, and even then they could not see recent documents. Public access, in many minds, meant transparency of politics: records were equated with hard evidence. As early as 1895, Germany, for example, allowed researchers greater access to its archives than Britain did for British archives, and the Germans considered heavier restrictions antiquated.¹³¹ Official documents of all involved parties were used as another kind of weapon after the war to try to safeguard national reputations.¹³² German officials published their records first, and made it seem as though Germany was being threatened by the alliance between France and Russia. France and Britain responded in kind, also selecting with care the records that they published. Newly established Bolshevik officials, likely attempting to embarrass the democratic countries, claimed that they published all of their records, thus demonstrating how selective the other countries were being.¹³³ Because of their seemingly forthright commitment to openness, whether they skillfully selected the records available or not, German leaders were then able to plant a seed of doubt in the widely held view that Germany was the sole architect of the war by implying that the allies were less than truthful.¹³⁴ This led to the infamous “war guilt” debate, wherein Germany was solely

¹³⁰ Quoted in Hamilton, 316.

¹³¹ Ibid., 317.

¹³² Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, 48.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Hamilton, 330.

responsible for the war, which lasted through much of the interwar period and is still debated today.

Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, colloquially known as the war guilt clause, was forcefully opposed by many German citizens, who denied that Germany was solely responsible for the war. The article states:

The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.¹³⁵

This article led to a fierce propaganda campaign in Germany, the purpose of which was to revise this clause. Most of the campaign was carried out by the *Schuldreferat*, also known as “the guilt department” of the German government, which had unlimited access to their war records.¹³⁶ In the 1920s, the German government maintained that Article 231 must be proven through public access to all archives of those nations involved in the war.¹³⁷ When Britain and France complied, many thought it was only as a result of Germany’s fine example.¹³⁸ It was not long before revisionist authors joined in to help establish a consensus that Germany alone was not responsible for the war.¹³⁹ One way in which the Germans and other revisionists attempted to prove their case was by trying to discredit allied propaganda disseminated during the war.¹⁴⁰ The issue of Germany’s war guilt sprang up anew in the 1960s. Fritz Fischer, a German historian, re-analyzed German

¹³⁵ *Treaty of Versailles* (28 June 1919) excerpt available on The National Archives (UK), accessed 16 March 2015, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/aftermath/p_versailles.htm.

¹³⁶ Herman J. Wittgens, “War Guilt Propaganda Conducted by the German Foreign Ministry During the 1920s,” *Erudit* 15, no. 1 (1980): 228-247, <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/030859ar>.

¹³⁷ Wittgens, 231.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 238-245; Annika Mombauer, “The Fischer Controversy, Documents and the ‘Truth’ About the Origins of the First World War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 2 (2013): 295, <http://jch.sagepub.com/content/48/2/290>.

¹⁴⁰ Gullace, 689.

archives relating to the war and concluded that Germany was responsible for its outbreak.¹⁴¹ Both Fischer and his critics used the same evidence, but reached opposing conclusions, thus demonstrating the “potential limitations to the way historians interrogate and employ their documentary evidence.”¹⁴² Researchers began to question the authenticity and provenance of the official documents.¹⁴³ This was a debate between those who questioned the objectivity of historical enquiry, and Rankean authors who believed that history could be written as it really was.

Many of the writings after the war can be reduced to contests over reputation and power. In historical writing, someone’s reputation is almost always being contested. Official histories, propaganda, and interpretations of the war can affect a nation’s international standing. However, it was not always on a global level that reputations were at stake. Sometimes, it was closer to home. In 1920, Lord Southborough, a British civil servant and solicitor, addressed the British House of Lords hoping to establish a Committee of Enquiry into the execution of soldiers during the war for what was considered cowardice.¹⁴⁴ But how could a true coward be distinguished from a person who was psychologically impaired by the war? The only conclusion that the committee could draw was that, in cases of war neurosis, a charge of “cowardice” may be justified, but that it was up to medical officers to decide if it was true cowardice, as in a failure of moral character, or an illness that required treatment.¹⁴⁵ Although the Committee of Enquiry was just one small corner within a larger postwar framework of political and

¹⁴¹ Mombauer, 291.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 302.

¹⁴⁴ Ted Bogacz, “War Neurosis and Cultural Change in England: The Work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into ‘Shell-Shock’,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 24, no. 2, Studies on War, (April 1989): 227, <http://jch.sagepub.com.libproxy.uwinnipeg.ca/content/24/2.toc>.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 246.

social concern, it nevertheless demonstrated both a willingness and need to acknowledge and deal with what happened during the war. In this case, Britain had to restore its own reputation at home.

Canadian official war historian, A. F. Duguid, had to deal with a different situation in Canada, but on a similar scale. At the time, both Canada and the United States had proven their worth in the eyes of the international community. After the war, some in the American press minimized Canadian achievements and stated that it was American intervention that led to Germany's defeat.¹⁴⁶ In his article "The Truth About War," published in *Maclean's* in 1928, Major George A. Drew, with the help of Duguid and the Historical Section, used war records to prove that the British Empire, and Canada in particular, contributed more to the war effort in almost every way than the Americans, including the supplying of men, building of munitions, and fighting on land, air, and sea.¹⁴⁷ Drew wanted, above all else, to ensure that Canadians and the rest of the world knew about Canada's contributions to the war effort. This article, in conjunction with Duguid's efforts to gain recognition of Canada's role in the war, used war records to help establish Canada as a proud and brave country on an international level.

War records have immeasurable power to affect the thoughts and opinions of others when they have been interpreted and disseminated on a massive scale. The war records, and the purposes for which they have been used, have greatly affected the way in which the war is remembered. They have the power to create myths, bolster or harm reputations, and fight for social justice. However, it is the power that they have over the

¹⁴⁶ Cook, *Clio's Warriors*, 70

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 71. It is also interesting to note that the first time that the moniker 'The Great War' was applied to the First World War was in *Maclean's* October 1914 publication. See Patricia Treble, "Maclean's Named the Great War," *Maclean's* (2 August 2014), <http://www.macleans.ca/authors/patricia-treble/the-start-of-the-great-war/>.

creation of social memory and myth-making that is the most striking and long-lasting. These myths were often steeped in national pride, emotional investment, and a specific narrative that would not be refuted, no matter how much evidence one had to discredit it. Once a narrative is part of a national consciousness, it will be there for a long time to come.

Myth-Making and Memory Shaping in Canada, Australia, Britain

In their article, “Archives, Records, and Power: the Making of Modern Memory,” Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook described the true power that archives have over memory. If archives beget history, then what creates memory? The obvious answer would be that a memory is an internalization of one’s participation in a historical event. This is a superficial explanation, however, and does not account for social memory passed on through familial, societal, and geographical frameworks. Memories are fickle and subject to change as time progresses. Memory is an elusive phenomenon that is constantly renegotiated in light of social trends. People start to rely on the collective memory and the myths formed from that memory. Robert McIntosh, an archivist who holds a PhD in history, says “[o]ur memory of the past is embedded in a vast array of documents whose contents and meaning have been constituted and shaped along a long continuum of records manufacture astride which archivists are crucially poised.”¹⁴⁸ The events of the

¹⁴⁸ McIntosh, 20.

“Great War” are no exception to this, and they were only strengthened further by the war records and personal testimony that were published immediately after the war.¹⁴⁹

For Canada and Australia a particular myth was created during the war and flourished thereafter: that the war was foundational to their nationhood.¹⁵⁰ Myths are often based on real events, as in this case, but are exaggerated and manipulated to tell a particular story, or justify a social institution. In Canada, this nation-building myth was propagated largely by the efforts of Max Aitken. The CWRO produced and disseminated images, articles, and films during the war that helped to establish the myth by portraying Canadian soldiers as tough, strong, and rugged men who were designed for the rigours of warfare; the soldier’s exploits on the battlefield, particularly in the latter half of the war, only strengthened Aitken’s argument. The Canadian public was particularly interested in reading about the war effort, and Aitken and the CWRO provided a narrative intended to instill pride in these exploits. Canadian collective memory, however, was not only shaped by what was available, but also by what was *unavailable*. What stories were not being recorded or, if they were recorded, were not made public? Memory is as much about the gaps in history as what is shared. The disposition of war records in the years after the war reflects what McIntosh calls “a politics of memory.”¹⁵¹

As noted previously, the first and only volume of the Canadian official history took two decades to complete, and by that time the Canadian myth was already accepted

¹⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that even naming an event holds power. The war of 1914-1918 was called the Great War and the War to End All Wars, giving it a special place in history. Many wars, up to this time, were labelled with the length of the war or the countries fighting in them.

¹⁵⁰ Vance, *Death So Noble*, 163; Bart Ziino, “‘A Lasting Gift to His Descendants’: Family Memory and the Great War in Australia,” *History and Memory* 22, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2010): 128, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/ham/summary/v022/22.2.ziino.html>.

¹⁵¹ McIntosh, 17.

and internalized.¹⁵² Countless stories published by individuals and military units, coupled with those works published during the war, did more to establish the memory of the war than the official history. Future publications that tried to disprove the myth, whether backed by historical evidence or not, could not sway the public away from the myth's power.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the myth was slightly different depending on the locality and there were always some who did not believe the myth at all. Nevertheless the myth generally focused on cooperation, unity, and determination and it helped the world see Canadians as a nation united, rather than as a group of individuals.¹⁵⁴ Publications such as George Drew's article in *Maclean's* continued the myth, as did war memorials, and acts of commemoration.

For Australians, public commemoration was essential to the grieving process, which helped to foster a similar type of national myth: Australians were strong, brave, dutiful, and silent, rather than mewling, which is how many Australian soldiers saw the British during and after the war.¹⁵⁵ During WWI, there was a cult of masculinity that encouraged soldiers to withhold their fears and anxieties with a show of courage.¹⁵⁶ This idea of courage was transmitted to the families of soldiers as well; family members, men and women alike, were expected to carry on with their lives despite their grief.¹⁵⁷ With so much death in a short period of time, and in a country thousands of kilometres away from the burial places of its soldiers, the majority of Australians would not get the chance to grieve publicly for their deceased family members at their gravesites; this practice

¹⁵² Vance, *Death So Noble*, 172.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁵⁵ Gammage, 22.

¹⁵⁶ Jalland, 71.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

translated into what British and Australian historian Pat Jalland describes as a culture of silence, which altered social customs.¹⁵⁸ The minimization of public grief for lost loved ones lasted until the 1970s when increased public expression and higher immigration rates encouraged Australians to look at, and internalize, new ways of dealing with death.¹⁵⁹

Not only was public bereavement a problem for family members who lost loved ones in the war, war veterans themselves did not want to participate in public commemorative activities. Many soldiers preferred to forget the atrocities of war.¹⁶⁰ For soldiers, silence did not just extend to the public either, since most veterans would not share their experiences even with members of their own family.¹⁶¹ Silence regarding the horrors of war only helped to foster the myth. After the war, the public understood the war to be a positive event in Australia's history because, like Canada, it supposedly helped to establish Australia as a country united.¹⁶² Newspapers, political figures, and religious persons all espoused the distinct qualities of Australians, exemplified by the soldiers who fought in the war.¹⁶³ Soldiers and civilians alike helped to popularize the myth by publishing biographies and letters, or selling their documents to the Mitchell Library, thus they advanced the mythology through old and new documents.¹⁶⁴ As time passed, this myth grew and affected the children and grandchildren of the soldiers until it was accepted as truth.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 75.

¹⁶¹ Ziino, 134.

¹⁶² Ibid., 128.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 129; Condé, "Capturing the Records of War," 140-141.

¹⁶⁵ Ziino, 128.

The Australian War Memorial would also become a place of healing and myth-making. The AWM had to make it very clear how important the personal records of the soldiers were and, by doing so, managed to build up its collection by appealing to the next-of-kin who, sometimes hesitantly, donated their records. C.E.W. Bean wanted to offer a sense of healing to families still in mourning.¹⁶⁶ The personal effects of soldiers, particularly soldiers who died during the war and were buried so far away, become objects of memory. When families decided to give personal records to the AWM, they were able to control their own memories of their loved ones, as well as society's memory of the war.¹⁶⁷ Australian historian and philosopher Tanja Luckins states that "the very materiality of soldiers' diaries and letters helped the next of kin contextualise memories [that] were rendered invisible by language alone."¹⁶⁸ She describes the need to understand the context of the creation and use of the records, not just their content, before using archival material as a form of evidence.¹⁶⁹ The next-of-kin were more likely to donate their material to the AWM because they were reassured that the memory of their family members would thereby live on. Bean treated the AWM like a place of worship and thought it would be the greatest place to commemorate and mourn the soldiers who fought in the war; the materials, objects and documents alike, were akin to sacred material.¹⁷⁰ Australian archivist Michael Piggott labels Bean's efforts an act of "sacred archiving".¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Condé, "Capturing the Records of War," 152.

¹⁶⁷ Tanja Luckins, "Collecting Women's Memories: The Australian War Memorial, the Next of Kin, and Great War Soldiers' Diaries and Letters as Objects of Memory in the 1920s and 1930s," *Women's History Review* 19, no. 1 (2010): 23;33, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rwhr20>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 33.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Piggott, "Sacred Archiving," 127.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 119.

A war myth was born in Britain as well, but, despite what British official war historian Sir James Edmonds would have liked, it was not one of heroism and valour. In Britain, the past was divided into the time before, during, and after the war.¹⁷² Civilians and soldiers alike blamed old Edwardian values of excess and luxury for the war. The German people were not the true enemies; the enemies were the incompetent old men who stayed safe in England and planned the deaths of millions.¹⁷³ Those who believed and propagated the myth saw the soldiers as innocent young men who went to Europe and died for a Britain that no longer existed and for values that no longer mattered because ignorant generals did not understand modern warfare and refused to adapt.¹⁷⁴ It is important to note that this myth began during the war with the soldiers themselves, but it was not until the war ended that Britons saw the war as one full unit of history, and the myth began to take a more concrete shape in the writings and records of soldiers and civilians.¹⁷⁵

After the armistice, there was a new battle between those who still believed in pre-war values and military enthusiasm, and those who were disillusioned by the war. Autobiographies brought the myth to the public in a new way by the mid-1920s, and many shared a similar tone of discontent and irony.¹⁷⁶ Anti-war sentiments were also found in paintings, poems, novels, histories, plays, and music.¹⁷⁷ By the 1930s, Britons began to fear a new war and, rather than dreams of glory, the new generation of soldiers,

¹⁷² Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture*, (New York: Atheneum, 1991), xi.

¹⁷³ Hynes, xii.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 257, 423.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 426.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 283.

steeped in the myth of disillusionment, would expect little except suffering, loss, and death.¹⁷⁸

Only through the context of the creation, use, and archiving of records can scholars understand the impact that archives have on the individual and on society. The processes of archiving, such as how archives are acquired, appraised, and reappraised, shaped the nature of what we have access to today.¹⁷⁹ The myths that were internalized and propagated were different for each nation because of the various ways in which the records were used, housed, and made available. A history of the records, particularly how they were preserved and used, helps to understand past societies by giving us a glimpse into what they deemed important then, and what they thought would have historical value in the future.

CONCLUSION

The records of the First World War have deeply affected the knowledge and understanding that we have today. The creation of many records during the war led to an information-rich environment in the years following it. Britain, Canada, and Australia all had varying policies regarding the preservation of records and what constituted an archival document. Britain, with the strictest definition, focused its collection on administrative records and used these to bolster a quickly diminishing international reputation. Canada did have policies in place for the treatment of its archival records, but followed them to a lesser degree. Despite the short length of the Canadian official history,

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 467.

¹⁷⁹ Condé, “Creating Australia’s Records of War,” 34.

publications based on official and unofficial accounts led to an ever increasing positive reputation and a growth in national pride. Canada's efforts in the war may have cost many lives, but it garnered respect from the international community, and more importantly, from its citizens. The Australian experience of the war was similar to Canada's, but it also fostered years of memorialization by the AWM. Canada's war records were not archived in this centralized manner at the Public Archives until the 1950s and were never used there in formal public memorialization akin to the AWM. Furthermore, a small Canadian War Museum was not created until 1942 and did not have its own modest building until 1967. Since most war archives of national significance were housed at the Public Archives, the war museum held few such records. Its archival program has grown and deals with Canadian military history in general. It now enjoys a prominent place in the impressive new facility for the museum that opened in 2005. The war museum, however, does not have the legal mandate that Library and Archives Canada has as the repository of federal government records related to WWI and all Department of Defence records. If not for the records of the war, few of the events discussed above could be known. And without the visibility of these records today at various archives, it is unlikely that we would still be talking about the war to the same degree of detailed personal and institutional understanding.

The interwar period was only the beginning of war memory and myth-making. Over the years, the memory of the war would change and adapt to new social and political environments. War records would be used in different ways and the events of the war would become commercialized. The preservation of specific war records during the interwar period, along with the publication of official histories, the war of reputations,

and the inception of collective memory would be vital to these later interpretations of the war. If the interwar period was about the power that the archives provided to the governing bodies, then the modern era is about their resurgence, popularity, and dissemination in the public consciousness.

Chapter 3

“Paradise by the [Laptop] Light”¹: Records of the First World War in the Information Age

In the course of this huge project I have become increasingly aware of how important and precious handwritten testimonies of a time long past could can be [sic] – and how good it is not only to have journals from the great and the powerful, but from ordinary people.

- Jan Peter²

Records of the First World War have now survived one hundred years of history and are used in many new ways. Although academics, war enthusiasts, and government departments still analyze records for their insight into how the war was fought, as well as for the records' ability to inform about the memory of the war, they are also utilized as sources of entertainment, modern social ideologies, cultural public programming, and for the renewed fascination with genealogy. WWI records have sparked the interests of many people, academically and personally. In this century, the records have become more accessible to a wider audience through online access, exhibitions, and, partly as a consequence, greater awareness of their existence. WWI records have now also become more accessible to more people because, unlike in the immediate post-WWI period, access to them is no longer restricted to a few select scholars and politicians. Coupled with the increased attention due to the centenary of the war, the records have the ability to bring archival institutions into the spotlight by sparking the interests of the general public. Where once political proponents and academics had control over the records to

¹ Meat Loaf, “Paradise by the Dashboard Light,” *Bat Out of Hell*, (Epic: 1977).

² Jan Peter, “Great War Diaries: Turning Diaries into Compelling Drama,” *BBC Blogs* (5 August 2014), accessed 15 June 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/tv/entries/89f6b75e-76e4-3d84-974d-2426bfd3a562>.

justify and solidify a specific myth about the war through histories and limited access, they are now used, shared, and re-contextualized widely by the general public.

Records inspire authors to create books, shows, newspaper articles, social media, and advertisements. More than any other time, WWI records are available and visible on a massive scale, and used by the general public. The popularity of genealogy, the loss of lived-experience of the war itself, and the great interest in the centenary are helping to bring archives and the public closer together. Over the past one hundred years, the preservation and exhibition of WWI records have shaped the way we think about and understand the war. With the help of academics and politicians, WWI records have also shaped the memory of the war. It is important for the public to understand how records are used in order to see how foundational they are to the historical narrative, and archival institutions are especially well placed to show them. Archival institutions must use this newfound enthusiasm to their advantage, for if records are to have enduring power, they must be accessible and visible to the general public.

The uses of WWI records have changed over their one-hundred-year lifespan, and yet they have also stayed the same. Broadly put, governments still use the records to portray a specific understanding of the war, academics use them to learn more about the war, films are being created to inform and entertain, and individual civilians use them to describe or understand the war on a personal level. However, close analysis reveals a shift in how the records are used specifically. For example, rather than fostering the Australian war myth solely as a nation-building event, the records are being used to mark Australia's entry onto the world stage. Academics in all three countries are studying the more personal side of the war, from soldiers' and others' private records and information

in administrative records about individuals, in order to understand the social impact of the war, particularly for women, children, and minority groups. Films, television programs, books, plays, and games are created mostly for entertainment and often highlight an individual's perspective, adding to the nation's myth about the war, while also making wartime experiences more personal and relatable for modern audiences. In addition to those who approach archives to donate their personal or family wartime records, many more citizens now hope to understand who their ancestors are and where they themselves fit in history. Today war records have been introduced to a new forum where they will be used like never before: WWI records have gone viral. The records are now being used by the general public to share the personal testimonies of a war fought long ago, by those long gone. Although this level of accessibility and visibility is an asset to archival institutions in the form of growing awareness and use, it also leads to new problems in the digital age, such as lack of metadata, provenance, and ownership.

MODERN USES OF ARCHIVES

WWI records continue to be used by academics and politicians, as I will show later in this chapter. Yet, what is most striking is the public's increased interest in the records of the war, particularly the personal records. It is impossible to know every use of the war records, but evidence suggests that it is more common now than in the interwar period that records are being used for personal knowledge, particularly by people interested in their genealogy. Increasingly, however, WWI records have been re-

interpreted for the entertainment and instruction of mass audiences. Examples of the latter include books, plays, movies, and games.

Records and Popular Culture

Many authors use or take inspiration from archival records, and authors sometimes speak of their archival experiences in blogs and interviews. Rachel Billington, a renowned fiction writer in Britain, decided to try her hand at historical fiction, and the result was *Glory: A Story of Gallipoli*, published in 2015.³ According to Billington, *Glory* was both inspired by personal WWI records and researched using archival documents and secondary sources. In her blog post, “Why I Am Writing ‘Glory’,” Billington refers to a “family loss in the First World War” as “the inspiration for” her novel. She explains, “I have archive letters and diaries to bring the events alive.”⁴ In another blog she states,

. . . fiction gave me the freedom to invent characters and place them where I want them. It allowed me to bring a strong human element to the story, to introduce women who were important even if not on the peninsular, and to describe in detail the tortuous geography of Gallipoli in all its dangerous beauty. Of course, historical fiction must still be based on reality and proper research. For example, I read the almost daily letters that my grandfather sent home while in reserve with his yeomanry in Egypt. He voices the patriotic sense of duty common at that time, also his doubts about the progress of the campaign. His letters to his children, illustrated with little drawings are heart-breaking.⁵

It is clear from Billington’s testimony how personal this story is to her, and also how important archival research is to her narrative. She includes a bibliography to showcase

³ Rachel Billington has written twenty-one novels, ten children’s books, and several non-fiction works, while also making her living as a journalist, editor, reviewer, and Vice-President of English PEN.

⁴ Rachel Billington, “Why I am Writing ‘Glory’,” Rachel Billington, (December 2013), accessed 7 June 2016, <http://www.rachelbillington.com/thoughts/december-2013/>.

⁵ Rachel Billington, “Glory,” Rachel Billington, (April 2015), accessed 7 June 2016, <http://www.rachelbillington.com/thoughts/april-2015/>.

the extensive research needed for her novel. Although the story is fictional, it is based on true events, ones that Billington hopes to capture in her prose.

From a Canadian perspective, prominent Canadian author and Governor General's Literary Award recipient, Jane Urquhart, published *The Stone Carvers* in 2001, which explores the experiences of a Canadian family before, during, and after the war, including the erection of the Vimy Memorial. In an interview, Urquhart explains that her writing process was emotional, particularly throughout her archival research. She says,

I had been doing a lot of research about the First World War: sitting in archives weeping my eyes out. So often in Canada when you're reading about the First World War – or anything historical – you are doing the most primary research because nobody but you has ever been in the files. Which is not why I was weeping: I was weeping because the intimacy of the material is so heartbreaking. . . I couldn't really emotionally disengage from the material . . .⁶

Urquhart explains that *The Stone Carvers* is “about the redemptive nature of making art. . . just taking experience, reshaping it and reordering it.”⁷ As Urquhart demonstrates, archival records have the power to change perceptions, invoke powerful emotions, and be the inspiration for creative minds. Urquhart acknowledges the transmutative nature of archival records (a topic discussed in the previous chapter), wherein the experience of the record creator is analyzed and made anew in a completely different format. This transformation could be in the form of fiction novels, museum exhibits, and historical documentaries. There is no telling how often and in what form archival records can be reshaped and reconstructed.

Glory and *The Stone Carvers* present WWI soldiers' testimony and perspective to their audiences. They focus on individuals caught up in events beyond their

⁶ Linda Richards, interview with Jane Urquhart, *January Interview*, (June 2001), accessed 20 October 2016, <http://www.januarymagazine.com/profiles/urquhart.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

comprehension and exhibit this with the emotions of fictional characters. Although these examples are stories about war, they highlight people's personal testimonies of the war, rather than an overarching narrative, focused on the administration of the war. Unlike most researchers during the interwar period who primarily studied administrative records, many people today, from curators to authors and directors, focus on personal testimony about the war. And at least some of the researchers understand that the best way to access this information is through archival records.

As Billington states, "I believe that fiction has the power to bring out the truth of a story in a direct and personal way," and she is not the only one to think so, nor is she the only one to take inspiration from private WWI collections.⁸ Gail Bowen and Ron Marken researched postwar Saskatchewan in order to publish *1919, the Love Letters of George and Adelaide* in 1987, which provides an interesting perspective on soldiers coming back from the war. It also captures a time often overlooked in popular culture and history books. The book is comprised of fictionalized correspondence between the main characters. Bowen writes from Adelaide's perspective while Marken writes from George's. His ancestor's medals and letters influenced Marken, whereas family history was Bowen's inspiration.⁹ The book was turned into a play over a decade later entitled "Dancing in Poppies," bringing in many of the same elements as the book. For both the book and the play the authors and producers had to do research beyond that of WWI textual records. They had to recreate a postwar setting including music, dress, pictures, furniture, photographs, and newspapers.¹⁰ They also gained first-hand accounts through

⁸ Billington, "Glory."

⁹ Gail Bowen and Ron Marken, "Dancing in Poppies," (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2002), vii, xxv.

¹⁰ Ibid., vii-viii.

interviews.¹¹ The play includes many elements taken from the early twentieth century, wherein the characters read newspapers and advertisements, recite and record poetry,¹² and write letters. Both the play and the book demonstrate the importance that contemporary Canadian citizens give to letters of the First World War, and also how valuable they are to modern Canadian society. Letters give renewed life to the author and the recipient, as do other personal archives. Through them, we are a little bit closer to history, albeit a small snapshot of that history.

When turning their book into a play, Bowen and Marken had to do extensive research to ensure that the atmosphere and design, as well as the characters' mannerisms and colloquialisms resemble those of the time period. Film and television directors, whether for documentary or dramatic pictures, have to undertake research similar to that undertaken by novelists. They have to immerse their audiences in the realism and emotion of the story by incorporating contemporary music, costumes, and decor. As historian Robert A. Rosenstone argues, films are able to portray historical events better than any other medium and, in return, can shape a society's historical understanding.¹³ This is particularly true for dramatic feature films due to their popularity with the public.¹⁴ Rosenstone also notes that documentary films are more likely to utilize archival records.¹⁵ In 2006, Jay Winter made important similar conclusions about film and television: visual representations are able to carry messages and propagate myths that

¹¹ Ibid., vii.

¹² In this case they recited Siegfried Sassoon's poem "Suicide in the Trenches."

¹³ Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (Harlow, U.K.: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), 12-13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

viewers will internalize.¹⁶ Television programs and film, among other popular forms of historical narrative, constitute what he calls “public history,” which is history written by those employed outside of academia, which can have a more immediate impact on the public’s perception of an event than an academic work.¹⁷

Television programs can have a similar effect on a mass audience. The popular series *Downton Abbey*, which devoted several episodes to WWI, is one example of this. In an interview with the show’s historical advisor, Alastair Bruce, we can see the extent to which archival documents shaped the narrative and the outlook of the show. For Bruce, primary research is an essential and interesting task to perform:

I’ve always enjoyed primary research into letters in particular and also accounts, which give you such a wonderful insight into tiny details that might get referenced in a housemaid’s letter to her mother or a father’s letter to his new hall boy son who is just starting in the big house. They communicate things that are detailed, which are almost irrelevant to somebody who is not interested, but to me it can unwrap and embellish a whole area of misunderstanding that I had. And when the director turns and asks, ‘Alastair, should they do this or that?’, it helps me come up with a coherent and absolutely clear answer then and there.¹⁸

Bruce consulted county archives, as well as the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle, in his role as advisor. He personally prefers letters and account books than any other form of archival record for historical information.¹⁹ Account books, for example, can inform writers, designers, and directors about the clothing, food, and belongings of aristocrats and their servants.

¹⁶ Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 199.

¹⁷ Some other examples of popular visual media include video games, homemade videos, and interactive systems viewed at home. *Ibid.*, 201-203.

¹⁸ Jennifer Wood, interview with Alastair Bruce, “Q&A: Alastair Bruce, *Downton Abbey*’s Historical Advisor,” *Mental Floss*, 26 January 2015, accessed 7 July 2017, <http://mentalfloss.com/article/61267/qa-alastair-bruce-downton-abbey-historical-advisor>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Archival records about the war were particularly important for the seven episodes in the *Downton Abbey* series set during the First World War. Jessica Fellowes's behind-the-scenes look at filming these episodes demonstrates how well-researched and realistic the series is, but her analysis did not uncover which records were specifically cited for the creation of these works.²⁰ *Downton Abbey* is an example of where archival records may have been interpreted, but are not given the credit or visibility they deserve.

Although millions of people have watched *Downton Abbey*, only a small portion of the audience would understand the role archival documents played in shaping the narrative. Albeit for a smaller audience, the British Broadcasting Company's (BBC) *Great War Diaries*, which aired August 2014 in the UK, combines drama and overt references to archival documents to create a compelling, information-rich, and emotional narrative. *Great War Diaries* is a three-part miniseries written and directed by Jan Peter, and broadcasted by the BBC, as well as twenty-five other broadcasters, primarily in Europe. The miniseries was created using published and unpublished letters and diaries written by individuals from all over the world who participated in, or were affected by, the war. The many archival repositories and collections cited during the credits demonstrate the extensive research in various countries behind this project.²¹ Both historical researchers and historical advisors helped form the narrative.

²⁰ Jessica Fellowes, "The World of Downton Abbey: Bringing Downton Abbey to War," PBS.org, accessed 7 July 2017, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/downtonabbey/season2_world_war.html.

²¹ Some of the archives credited include: the British Pathé, Gaumont pathé archives, Imperial War Museum, Film Museum Österreich, Bundesarchiv/Transit Film GMBH, Library of Congress, Filmarchiv Austraï, Praesens-Film AG, Istituto per la Storia del Risorgimento Italiano, Süddeutsche Zeitung photo, Genocide Museum Armenia, Kulturhistorisches Museum Rostock, Niederösterreichische Landesbibliothek, Brett Butterworth, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen AMTS, National Army Museum London, Bertl Strasser, Ullstein Bild, Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marback, Edition Memoria – Thomas B. Schumann, RGAKFD/Krasnogorsk, Cinémathèque Royale de Belgique, National Archives (Washington), and Heimatkreis Schneidemühl E.V. *Great War Diaries*, directed by Jan Peter, written by Jan Peter, BBC, 29 April – 13 May 2014.

Like the previous examples, the miniseries focuses on individuals' personal stories throughout the war and includes passages from texts, film footage, photographs, and dramatic interpretation. It is a blend of fiction and nonfiction wherein actors portray events as the record creators may have experienced them, based on the written testimony. The series follows the stories of fourteen individuals²² throughout the three episodes, and includes brief monologues by unseen individuals. Along with the monologues, archival footage augments the emotions and experiences of the main characters.²³ The dramatic recreations show the characters writing letters and diary entries, reading newspapers, and looking at photographs and maps. One of the main characters, Charles Edward Montague, works for the Propaganda and Press Censorship Project. The actors portraying the individuals also speak in the original languages of the historical figures for authenticity.

The miniseries portrays the emotional climate, the sense of duty, the fear and horror, the atrocities on both sides, and the elation of war's end. The archival documents give it a greater sense of authenticity, as do the diverse perspectives, to accompany Peter's historical interpretation. Although *Great War Diaries* claims to reveal "human experience unsullied by historical interpretation,"²⁴ it is impossible to recreate historical narrative in an unmediated way, particularly because the directors and writers dramatized the events and chose which passages to include. The use of direct passages and archival footage provides valuable evidence, but the BBC promotes the idea that the use of

²² Namely, Sarah MacNaughtan, Käthe Kollwitz, Marina Yurlova, Charles Edward Montague, Yves Congar, Elfriede Kuhr, Gabrielle West, Karl Kasser, Vincenzo D'Aquila, Ernst Jünger, Paul and Marie Pireaud, Louis Barthas, and Ethel Cooper. The individuals range in age from ten to forty-seven years old, come from all social stations, and from all over Europe, Australia, and the United States.

²³ *Great War Diaries*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

archival records ensures the objectivity of the narrative. The broadcaster does not account for the interpretive process required to select records and passages from letters, and to compose the narrative with an emphasis on specific storylines. Of course, exhibiting, analyzing, and studying archival records are never neutral. Every person brings their own context to the study of archives, just as every archivist will treat the historical records differently. Peter focuses on personal testimony of the war, ensuring that the characters are more relatable to the audience. As Rosenstone argues, “[h]istory on film is largely about emotion, an attempt to make us feel as if we are learning about the past by vicariously living through its moments.”²⁵ However, we must not forget that it is a constructed narrative. Nevertheless, the miniseries was an extraordinary international effort to commemorate the courage and sacrifice of individuals from all over the world and noticeably used archival material to do so.

Great War Diaries is another example of the twenty-first-century trend in popular treatments of the war of focusing on individual experiences rather than an overall history of the war. The epigraph at the beginning of chapter three demonstrates not only how much Peter relied on diaries and letters from the top brass, but also from average citizens and soldiers. The miniseries is an excellent example of the importance of both personal and administrative records, as is the historical drama *Testament of Youth*. The film *Testament of Youth* was based on Vera Brittain’s autobiography, which was based on the diaries she kept before, during, and after the war. The film was released in 2014, the first year of the centenary. At the very end of the film, the credits state, “Vera Brittain went on to write *Testament of Youth* based on her wartime experiences. The book became an

²⁵ Rosenstone, 118.

instant bestseller and was heralded as the voice of a generation.”²⁶ Although the film does not credit McMaster University Archives where Brittain’s records are held, we can safely say that her records had an effect on the creation of this film. Throughout the film, letters, diaries, and newspapers are used to move the plot forward, emphasizing the original creation of the records and how vital they are to historical narrative. For example, in the movie Brittain learns of most of the important events pertaining to the warfront from either newspapers or letters, which mimics how civilians at that time learned about the war. Brittain also quotes one of the many poems that Roland Leighton wrote to her in one of his letters. This poem was also recorded in one of her diaries, thus the same passage is reflected in two different types of war archive.²⁷ At the climax of the movie, Brittain finds her letters to Roland amidst his personal effects, which brings Brittain to tears and emphasizes the importance of written communication during the war. His letters are the only remaining link she has to him.

Both *Testament of Youth* and *Great War Diaries* were created based on personal testimony and focus on the individual, and yet neither can truly capture the same tone, emotion, and magnitude found in the records. There are both elements gained and lost in the transition from record to film. Emotion, action, and expression are more easily portrayed in film, but thoughts and experiences are more personalized, detailed, and contextualized in the original. The diaries also provide better insight into Brittain’s home life before and during the war. Archival records add to historical fiction and nonfiction, by making the interpretation more realistic, emotional, and engaging.

²⁶ *Testament of Youth*, Netflix, directed by James Kent, written by Vera Brittain (autobiography) and Juliette Towhidi, Lionsgate, 2015, 2:03:36.

²⁷ Brittain, 184.

Archival records have also been consulted to add an element of authenticity to traditionally non-academic media, such as WWI board games and video games. An excellent example is the Australian video game, “AE2 Commander,” developed by Edith Cowan University in Perth in 2011 after receiving a research grant (the Ian MacLean Award) from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) in 2009.²⁸ The AE2 was an Australian submarine that was instrumental in the Gallipoli campaign, particularly in successfully navigating the Dardanelles in 1915.²⁹ The game designers consulted archives from both the National Archives of Australia and the Australian War Memorial to improve its historical accuracy.³⁰ Game players can view the sources in-game as well as via a website interface.³¹ As the title suggests, players act in the position of the commander of the submarine to complete the mission. Archival records were necessary to provide the background of the war effort up to that point, details of the commander’s mission, and the overarching Gallipoli campaign.³² Official reports of the submarine’s captain, Lieutenant Commander Henry Stoker, personal diaries of two crew members, and operational statistics were instrumental in developing the game metrics and the emotional climate of the game.³³ Not only did the game include the AE2’s mission, but also the capture of the crew members and their experiences as Turkish Prisoners of War; details of the capture are found in the reports of the Australian Naval Representative in London.³⁴

²⁸ Mark Brogan and Martin Masek, “E-Learning with Docugames: AE2 Commander,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 41, no. 1 (2013): 58, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2013.779207>.

²⁹ Edith Cowan University, “AE2 Commander”, accessed 12 January 2017, <http://ae2.ivec.org/Home.htm>.

³⁰ Mark Brogan and Martin Masek, “AE2 Commander: Simulation and Serious Games in the Online Cultural Heritage Space,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 39, no. 1 (2011): 91.

³¹ Brogan and Masek, “E-learning with Docugames,” 62-63.

³² Brogan and Masek, “Simulation and Serious Games,” 92.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Brogan and Masek, “Simulation and Serious Games,” 93.

The game's designers intended the video game as an experiment aimed at making archives more accessible and inviting online.³⁵ In 2013, they conducted a study of its effectiveness as a "docugame", or a computer game that incorporates archival records in the game's working environment.³⁶ They concluded that game players spent approximately fourteen percent of playing-time reviewing documents to create a mission strategy, and two-thirds of the players in the study "felt that the inclusion of digital reproductions of documents from the AWM and NAA had the effect of making the game more interesting."³⁷ As of 2013, according to research done in Australia by a consumer research group, approximately seven out of ten Australians play video games on a regular basis, making games like "AE2 Commander" a relevant way to bring archival records to the general public.³⁸

Because of the volume of history books, articles, and other secondary sources currently available, it is not always clear if authors, producers, and designers considered primary sources when developing recreational activities because archives are not always cited. For example, the board game "Axis and Allies 1914", released in 2012, maintains the feel of the stagnated war front, as opposed to many other variations of the popular board game. Game designer Larry Harris states in an online forum, "I communicate to others by way of games – it's what I do. My task was to design a game that captured the magnitude and feel of this unique struggle. It was with that in mind that I designed this game."³⁹ However, he adds that some specific details were ignored to enhance game

³⁵ Edith Cowan University, "AE2 Commander: Project Overview", accessed 12 January 2017, http://ae2.ivec.org/Project_Overview.htm.

³⁶ Brogan and Masek, "E-learning with Docugames," 58.

³⁷ Ibid., 66.

³⁸ *The Globe and Mail*, "G'day, Gamers," *The Globe and Mail* (24 October 2013), L8.

³⁹ Larry Harris, "Axis & Allies 1914," Harris Games Design, (17 November 2012), accessed 29 June 2016, <http://www.harrisgamedesign.com/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=12&t=10635&p=55531#p55531>.

play.⁴⁰ Harris examined history books, images, and geographical markers to create his board game. Unfortunately, he does not clearly define the methodology and resources used to create the game, nor did others in the forum ask. The unfortunate truth is that records often get neither the credit nor the visibility that they deserve, particularly in popular media.

Similarly, the designers of the computer game “Verdun, 1914-1918” have recreated trench warfare in a first-person shooter genre.⁴¹ The game's creators boast of having accurate settings, uniforms, music, and tactics. They used maps as well as personal exploration of European territory to construct the gameplay.⁴² They note that the weapons’ designs and uniforms are replicas with the hope that “Verdun is as historically accurate as it can get.”⁴³ As with “Axis and Allies,” however, the game makers did not confirm exactly which archival records were used, although trench maps and photographs were mentioned as two types of sources.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it is clear from reviews of gameplay that the designers undertook extensive research.⁴⁵

Lack of acknowledgement for archival records is a poignant and regrettable truth; this limited awareness of the uses of archival records in daily life makes it all the more necessary to help the general public understand the importance of archival institutions

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ M2H and Blackmill Games, “Verdun, 1914-1918,” accessed 7 July 2016, <http://www.verdungame.com/>.

⁴² “Ibid.

⁴³ “Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.,

⁴⁵ On 8 May 2015, 3ishop said, “Uniforms/weapons/maps researched and based on historic information is great, the items look great and realistic. Been to enough re-enactments to handle dated items that look worse then the game ones [sic];” On 12 May 2012, Fwuffy said, “Verdun is a great game made by a group of 3 developers. It offers a fantastic mix of historical realism and exciting game-play. If you think World War 1 was a boring period of time, then this game will clearly prove you wrong: with both tense long range combat and exhilarating close combat warfare in the enemy's trenches;” on 10 August 2014, Cocolf said, “There are currently 8 classes, 4 maps, but the game stays true to the era it represents. Verdun well puts you in the shoes of a soldier of the First World War (except you re-spawn),” Metacritic, “Verdun,” accessed 18 October 2016, <http://www.metacritic.com/game/pc/verdun/user-reviews>.

and the work that they do for society. Visual media, unlike the original records, can more easily capture an audience, provide a specific message of the war, and demonstrate some of the many uses, as well as the existence, of WWI records. If archival institutions and documents can gain more visibility and credit through entertainment and the media, then more people will be able to understand their overall importance.

Records and Politics

WWI records are still used for political means worldwide, by governments and national cultural institutions. For example, in 2006, after much debate, soldiers executed for cowardice in WWI were pardoned by the British government.⁴⁶ The British government, wishing to pardon the individuals before the centenary, opened WWI court-martial records early, which required that the normal hundred-year restriction for personnel files be reduced to a seventy-five year restriction. The government temporarily changed the restrictions in order to obtain the names of the 351 soldiers executed for cowardice and desertion.⁴⁷ From 1914 to 1918, these records were used to condemn men to death. After nearly ninety years, they became honorific. The debate over the definition of cowardice started soon after the war, but it was not until the twenty-first century that the government officially pardoned men who were executed.

Another recent political use of WWI records was made when archivists in the United Kingdom used WWI records for political protest unrelated to the war. In 2014,

⁴⁶ Douglas Carl Peifer, "The Past in the Present: Passion, Politics, and the Historical Profession in the German and British Pardon Campaigns," *The Journal of Military History* 71, no. 4 (October 2007): 1108, <https://muse-jhu-edu.uml.idm.oclc.org/article/222546>.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1114.

many archives protested the new copyright laws by exhibiting empty cases that should have contained WWI records. Instead each case contained a note saying that due to the new copyright laws, the records were restricted despite being over one hundred years old.⁴⁸ In this way the records were used as a form of socio-political commentary against access restrictions.

Under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Conservative Canadian government from 2006 to 2015 also highlighted Canada's wartime effort in the lead up to the centenary. Rather than dwell on shame or guilt for lives lost, it focused on Canada's great military traditions, particularly those associated with the Battle of Vimy Ridge.⁴⁹ For example, the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France, designed by Canadian sculptor and architect Walter Seymour Allward, has been depicted on the Canadian twenty dollar bill since 2012.⁵⁰ The commemorative twenty-dollar bill also includes depictions of poppies that have, according to the Bank of Canada, "become an international symbol of remembrance and . . . can trace their roots directly to McCrae's poem."⁵¹ Furthermore, Remembrance Day ceremonies in Ottawa were well-funded and

⁴⁸ Cory Doctorow, "UK Cultural Institutions Leave their WWI Cases Empty to Protest Insane Copyright," Boing Boing, 2 November 2014, accessed 6 March 2016, <http://boingboing.net/2014/11/02/uk-cultural-institutions-leave.html>.

⁴⁹ Yves Frenette, "Conscripting Canada's Past: The Harper Government and the Politics of Memory," *Canadian Journal of History* 49, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014): 55, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/uml.idm.oclc.org/ehost/results?sid=12d3cf9d-c3e0-419f-99e2-e02dfc7c4%40sessionmgr110&vid=1&hid=128&bquery=JN+%22Canadian+Journal+of+History%22+AND+DT+20140401&bdata=JmRiPWE5aCZ0eXB1PTAmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl>.

⁵⁰ Allward's architectural drawings of the Vimy Memorial are housed in Library and Archives Canada. See, Library and Archives Canada, Walter S. Allward fonds [architectural drawing], 1923-1928, R10248-0-0-E.

⁵¹ Bank of Canada, "Bank Note Design – Design Elements of the Commemorative Note," Bank of Canada, accessed 4 January 2017, <http://www.bankofcanada.ca/banknotes/bank-note-series/polymer/design/>.

grandiose, and the myth of Canada becoming a nation in WWI was renewed.⁵² The Harper government promoted both monarchism and militarism during its term in office.⁵³

Aside from exhibiting records for commemorative events, the Harper government had a negative effect on Canada's archival institutions. Rather than promoting Canada's national archival institution, Library and Archives Canada, the Harper government cut its budget drastically and funnelled money into the newly named and reorganized Canadian Museum of History, formerly known as the Museum of Civilization.⁵⁴ Historians were not consulted about the decision to change the orientation of the museum.⁵⁵ Despite a loss in funding for archival institutions across Canada, the museum has hosted WWI exhibitions and is undergoing a project to digitize thousands of personal archives from soldiers and civilians from the time of the war.⁵⁶

Similarly, the Australian War Memorial and the changing Australian curriculum may have an effect on how the history of the war is taught and remembered. According to a blog post by Stuart Baines, Assistant Director of Community Outreach at the National Library of Australia, the *Australian Curriculum: History* version 7.2 is attempting to create a context for WWI military campaigns and broaden ideas about WWI from a nation-building event to one of Australian participation in a global commitment.⁵⁷ In contrast to the Canadian experience, Baines explains that the Australian curriculum is

⁵² Frenette, 52.

⁵³ Ibid., 55.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 58. It was originally called the Canadian Museum of Civilization and had an anthropological focus, rather than a socio-historical one.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 59.

⁵⁶ Canadian Museum of History, "Soldiers' Perspectives on the First World War," (1 November 2013) accessed 15 September 2016, <http://www.historymuseum.ca/blog/soldiers-perspectives-on-the-first-world-war/>.

⁵⁷ Stuart Baines, "Blog: What have we learned?- The Australian experience of war and the Australian Curriculum," AWM (22 October 2014), accessed 26 November 2015, <https://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2014/10/22/what-have-we-learned-australian-experience-war-and-australian-curriculum/>.

beginning to revise national myths about the war, and thus distance the country from its colonial roots. Baines explains that the new curriculum promotes an understanding of Australian participation in WWI as the country's first foray into world politics as a nation already united. As discussed in chapter two, during the interwar period, the efforts of the Australian War Memorial and C.E.W. Bean helped to establish an Australian war myth similar to Canada's. Currently, the education programs at the AWM are linked to the curriculum and aim to "assist students to remember, interpret, and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society" using objects, archival material, and stories.⁵⁸

National galleries, museums, and archives are an excellent conduit for promoting specific messages of the war. Although not always political in their messages, national cultural institutions have the ability to reach a wide audience and have the authority to ensure their messages are more likely to be believed. Leading up to Remembrance Day 2014, the AWM website highlighted the Memorial's efforts in five areas: Remembrance Day, family history, WWI personal papers, a quote from Charles Bean regarding the AWM,⁵⁹ and the Afghanistan story.⁶⁰ The AWM explains its purpose:

The Australian War Memorial combines a shrine, a world-class museum, and an extensive archive. The Memorial's purpose is to commemorate the sacrifice of those Australians who have died in war. Its mission is to assist Australians to remember, interpret and understand the Australian experience of war and its enduring impact on Australian society.⁶¹

⁵⁸ AWM, "Education programs," accessed 30 October 2014, <http://www.awm.gov.au/education/schools/programs/>

⁵⁹ The quote is also on the "About" page: "Here is their spirit, in the heart of the land they loved; and here we guard the record which they themselves made."

⁶⁰ AWM, "Home," accessed 29 October 2014, <http://www.awm.gov.au/>

⁶¹ AWM, "About," accessed 29 October 2014, <http://www.awm.gov.au/about/>

Unlike the Mitchell Library, the AWM sought to include a sense of healing, rather than just recordkeeping, among its purposes by acknowledging the need to heal from emotional wounds caused by war. It also acknowledges its interpretive role in how Australians remember the war. It provides a commemorative website and, as such, what it chooses to highlight is indicative of what the AWM staff consider the most important aspects of the war in relation to present society. The AWM emphasizes new exhibits featuring archival documents such as “Anzac Voices,” which was on display while the WWI galleries were under construction until late 2014.⁶² The AWM is currently supporting “Anzac Connections,” which provides easier public access to the WWI collection,⁶³ greater online interactivity, new galleries dedicated to WWI,⁶⁴ and a link to the AWM’s YouTube page that features WWI film footage.⁶⁵ The AWM has done much to commemorate WWI.

As explained in chapter two, the Australian understanding of WWI has shifted over time. At the outbreak of the war, there was excitement about Australia’s role in it. During the war there was disillusionment and loss, but also a sense of nation-building, purpose, and camaraderie. Immediately after the war there was mourning, a culture of silence, and efforts to pick up the pieces of prewar era life. Now, there is remembrance, commemoration, and enthusiasm for Australia’s participation in global affairs more generally. The AWM website, through its display of the numerous records from WWI,

⁶² AWM, “Anzac Voices,” accessed 30 October 2014, <http://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/anzac-voices/>.

⁶³ AWM, “Anzac Connections,” accessed 30 October 2014, <https://www.awm.gov.au/1914-1918/anzac-connections/>

⁶⁴ AWM, “New First World War galleries,” accessed 30 October 2014, <https://www.awm.gov.au/1914-1918/first-world-war-galleries/>

⁶⁵ YouTube, “AustWarMemorial: First World War,” accessed 30 October 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL35CE2FC7B0C3C2B6>.

reflects this shift in ideas and will continue to influence the direction of ideological and sociological change in Australian society.

Like the AWM, as of July 2016 the Canadian War Museum has several exhibits and articles featuring WWI archival records, including information about the air war from 1914 to 1918,⁶⁶ a hands-on travelling exhibit for students using artifacts and documents,⁶⁷ and an interactive computer game.⁶⁸ Each of these exhibits balances education, interactivity, and family engagement. The "Deadly Skies" exhibit, for example, is constructed in a graphic novel format, in order to be more relatable to a broader audience.⁶⁹ There are activities for children and adults, such as a flight simulator and the opportunity to create WWI-era maps. The exhibit follows the stories of nine WWI pilots. The CWM also has a page dedicated to projects for the centenary of the war.⁷⁰ The CWM seems to focus both on the personal and on the overall war experience in its exhibition spaces. Most importantly, it is designed for the family.

The CWM states that

The Museum's exhibition galleries and public programs have been designed to emphasize the human experience of war. The [Canadian Experience Galleries](#) present the military history of Canada from earliest times to present day, as well as Canada's history of honouring and remembrance. Each gallery highlights defining moments in Canada's military history and the ways in which past events have shaped the nation.⁷¹

The CWM's address since 2005 on newly named Vimy Place in Ottawa itself reflects the importance of the war to Canadian memory. The CWM's focus on the younger

⁶⁶ Canadian War Museum (CWM), "Deadly Skies – Air War, 1914-1918," accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/deadlyskies/>.

⁶⁷ CWM, "Supply Line – First World War Discovery Box," accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/supplyline/about-supply-line/>.

⁶⁸ CWM, "Over the Top," accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/overthetop/>.

⁶⁹ "Deadly Skies – Air War, 1914-1918."

⁷⁰ CWM, "First World War Centenary," accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/centenary/>.

⁷¹ CWM, "About," accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.warmuseum.ca/about/>.

generation, particularly school children, and its efforts to relate them to the soldiers who fought in the war on a more personal level, will likely shape their understanding of war and appreciation of the records that are still available.

Unlike the AWM and CWM, the Imperial War Museum in London is not as focused on WWI, despite owning material that has been commissioned for military purposes, such as art and film, and personal testimony of the war, such as diaries and letters.⁷² The main page has links to war museums across Britain and then highlights specific events, exhibitions, and recent articles about war.⁷³ Interestingly, as of July 2016, the majority of the articles and exhibitions highlighted on the main page feature the Second World War, despite the popularity of the centenary.⁷⁴ The mission statement for the IWM explains that it “is unique in its coverage of conflicts, especially those involving Britain and the Commonwealth, from the First World War to the present day. We seek to provide for, and to encourage, the study and understanding of the history of modern war and 'wartime experience'.”⁷⁵ It is clear from this mission statement that the museum mandate allows a focus on personal stories and experiences. For example, there is a permanent, free, exhibition space at the IWM that utilizes war records to demonstrate the lives of those on the fronts and at home.⁷⁶ The links on this page open up other online articles about the two fronts. Other than some photographs and online articles, there is little archival content on the website. Like the AWM and CWM, however, the IWM has a

⁷² For more about the IWM's collections, see Imperial War Museum (IWM), “Collections,” accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>.

⁷³ IWM, “Home,” accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ IWM, “About Us,” accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/corporate>.

⁷⁶ IWM, “First World War Galleries,” accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/exhibitions/iwm-london/first-world-war-galleries>.

dedicated centenary page highlighting news and projects, events, and articles.⁷⁷ It is also interesting to note that the museum has helped fashion many BBC documentaries such as *Great War Diaries*.⁷⁸

After the war in Britain, soldiers and civilians alike became disillusioned with British war governance. Administrative documents were highly valued, but individual stories and personal testimonies were often not thought to be archival. Rather than administrative accounts, personal testimonies and experiences are now coming to the fore, whether in private records or personal information in administrative records. This lack of emphasis on the personal testimony in Britain could be due to the prioritization of preserving administrative records over personal testimony immediately after the war, and on then current archival theories in Britain. This is evidence that the initial use of documents, and the choice of which ones to keep or discard, continues to influence later uses of the records as well as the overall memory of the war for that nation. Nevertheless, the Imperial War Museum encourages people to find personal testimony in administrative records, making up for a lack of personal records.⁷⁹ As we will see later in the chapter, a significant portion of the British people still maintain the anger felt towards the once ruling British class and the waste of the war; this sentiment is reflected in the new war memorial entitled *Letters to an Unknown Soldier*. In Britain, dark sentiments about WWI remain.

⁷⁷ First World War Centenary, "Home," accessed 4 July 2016, <http://www.1914.org/>.

⁷⁸ Winter, *Remembering War*, 215, 221.

⁷⁹ For example, the Imperial War Museum is calling for volunteers to research the histories of individual soldiers and civilians affected by the war in their project, "Lives of the First World War." Imperial War Museum, "Lives of the First World War," accessed 9 January 2017, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/corporate/projects-partnerships/lives-of-the-first-world-war>.

All three national war museums utilize war records, particularly photographs, for website and exhibition spaces. Archival documents influence information panels at cultural institutions around the globe. Furthermore, exhibitions that display records give credence to the information that visitors are receiving throughout the institution. In my experience, visitors often trust the information implicitly, particularly when selected documents are available and on display. The AWM has gone one step further by digitizing countless WWI records for their website. Similarly, both Library and Archives Canada and the National Archives of the United Kingdom have dedicated sections of their respective websites for digitized records and information about records. The differing archival systems of the three countries are visible in how they have handled, used, and now exhibited their archival holdings. However, each of the nations' archives features WWI records and centenary projects despite the different collecting and appraisal policies.

The National Archives of the United Kingdom has gone to great lengths to commemorate the centenary of the war with online exhibitions, blogs, WWI podcasts, and digitized collections.⁸⁰ The majority of the collection is made up of administrative records, although there are some personal records among them as well, such as letters. Although many of the records in the National Archives are administrative, the website emphasizes the personal stories found within the administrative records, thus continuing to stress the personal interest people have in the war records, as opposed to interest in overall war policy. The National Archives created an interactive map of the world from their records to demonstrate how the war affected different parts of the world as well as

⁸⁰ The National Archives, "First World War," accessed 7 July 2016, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/>.

highlighting specific events of the war.⁸¹ The map is an excellent way to visualize the political and economic effects of the war. Despite the negative memory of the war, the archives is doing much to commemorate it by highlighting WWI records on its websites and, more importantly, making so many of them accessible in-person and online through digitization projects.

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is also energetically digitizing its records and hopes to digitize the service files of the members of the Canadian Expeditionary Force by the end of 2018.⁸² They have also digitized war diaries, death and grave registers, and have war-related online exhibitions.⁸³ The digitized service records have fostered the Lest We Forget Cenotaph Research Project for students who can research and write about individuals who served in the war.⁸⁴ The LAC's exhibition and digitization efforts suggest that they value the personal experiences of the soldiers above the administration of the war. Genealogy is particularly popular and the digitization of service files is aiding many in their hope to discover more information about ancestors who fought in the war. Digitizing WWI records may help to draw in those who may have never visited an archival institution and would be unable or unwilling to do so in person.

The National Archives of Australia (NAA), which holds administrative war records, also focuses on genealogy in regard to WWI soldiers; like the UK National Archives, it is helping people discover what types of personal stories can be found in the administrative record. It has a section of its website dedicated to the records of the First

⁸¹ The National Archives, "Interactive Global First World War Map," accessed 7 July 2017, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/interactive-global-first-world-war-map/>.

⁸² Library and Archives Canada (LAC), "First World War," accessed 7 July 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/Pages/introduction.aspx>.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ LAC, "Lest We Forget: Cenotaph Research," accessed 7 July 2017, <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/lest-we-forget/pages/lest-we-forget-project.aspx>.

World War called “Discovering Anzacs.”⁸⁵ On it, there are digitized service files and photographs. In conjunction with Archives New Zealand, people can create profiles of their ancestors using digitized records, and there is also an option to “adopt” a service member wherein researchers create a profile of an individual not yet represented on the website. The profiles are similar to the popular social media site, Facebook, wherein images, personal information, anecdotes, and digitized textual records are included. There are profiles of men and women who participated in WWI. The National Archives and the general public can add to the profiles and researchers can search for those already created.⁸⁶ Like LAC, the focus is on genealogical information as well as commemoration. Both the National Archives of Australia and the United Kingdom went one step further than LAC in their promotion of war records, with the profiles and the map respectively, and are maximizing their online presence to make access to the records easier and more engaging. All three archives demonstrate how useful and multifaceted records are, and they are attempting to reach those audiences that are unaware of this fact. The Internet is one portal where they can hope to reach them.

Aside from cultural institutions, messages can be found in many different types of acts, one of which is the act of commemoration. Commemorative gestures can be found all over the world in local museums and archives, libraries, and online exhibitions. Many

⁸⁵ National Archives of Australia, “Discovering Anzacs,” accessed 7 July 2017, <http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/>.

⁸⁶ National Archives of Australia, “Profiles,” accessed 7 July 2017, <http://discoveringanzacs.naa.gov.au/browse/person>. An exhibition entitled “Grief and Glory” toured Melbourne, Australia undertaken by Melbourne photographer Michael Silver, who was assisted by the Anzac Centenary Major Grants Program. It features the photographs taken by Australian soldiers during the war. It is coupled with a digitization project so that photographs still held by the families or by small cultural institutions can add to Australia’s national memory of the war. It also doubles as a preservation practice to maintain the photographs for years to come. Tim Lee, “Grief and Glory: World War One Photographs,” Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 23 April 2016, accessed 6 March 2016, <http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2016/s4449200.htm>.

of the examples listed above and below are commemorative acts as well; however, some are more politically charged than others. 14-18 NOW is an organization made up of a team of artists and individuals with the purpose of commemorating the war in the United Kingdom through various art installations and events, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council of England, the IWM, and the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport.⁸⁷ This project both draws on and leads to the creation of new archival records about the First World War. In effect, the records and artwork born out of these exhibitions are contributing new administrative and personal records about the war. These installations are less about using old records of war for displays of them, and more about creating records, inspired by the awareness and power of the old, as a type of use of the archival record. Some of the records will be deposited in a specially designated archive, whereas others, such as photographs of the art installations, will be distributed worldwide online. This shows how people in Britain today think about, remember, and commemorate the war with a strong archival consciousness. These records inform us and future citizens about current perspectives on this historical event, which may, in some ways, influence the memory of the war later even more than those records made one hundred years ago. The records created during these art installations are testimony for the future of twenty-first century responses to the war.

As noted in chapter two, war memorials were erected immediately after the war to commemorate the fallen. One such war memorial, created by Charles Sargeant Jagger, was erected in 1922 at London's Paddington Station to honour employees of the Great Western Railway who had fought in the war. The statue depicts a man in uniform reading a letter. On 22 June 2014, 14-18 NOW asked the general public to help create a new kind

⁸⁷ For more information about the organization, please see the following: <https://www.1418now.org.uk/>.

of war memorial by writing a letter to this Unknown Soldier. There were no rules about what to write or how. People mailed and emailed letters from all over the world. 14-18 NOW received over twenty-one thousand letters in four weeks. It published a book with a selection of letters and all of the letters are available on their [website](#) until 2018 after which they will be archived digitally.⁸⁸

Letters were written by school children, grandparents, mothers, fathers, politicians, actors, and activists. One person even participated in the event as a reaction against centenary commemoration by commenting that governments “invoke your name and speak of peace, and a desire to end war, while they sell tanks, planes and guns . . . They will use this centenary as a celebration, a carnival of vomitous jingoism.”⁸⁹ Many others also expressed negative reactions to the war and the centenary. However, many wrote in their letter to the soldier to say thanks for his wartime effort, and to promise the soldier that his sacrifice will not be forgotten. Oska Read, a twelve-year-old student, wrote: “Soldiers died. They died because they disappeared from people’s memory. Do people die when they get shot by a gun? No. Do people die when a bomb explodes? No. Do people die when they get poisoned? No. People die, people die when they get forgotten.”⁹⁰ Read sees death as a loss of lived memory and archives around the world seek to keep at least some of these memories alive. Another writer captures the essence of what archival records and memorials do when he says, “Your statue was never meant to represent one thing, one position, one person. You stand as a springboard for each of us, to our own little spot. . . . Regardless, you stand resolute. Your stance is firm. Your

⁸⁸ Bartlett and Pullinger, xi; 14-18 NOW, “Letter to an Unknown Soldier,” accessed 7 July 2016, <https://www.1418now.org.uk/letter/?skipenter>.

⁸⁹ Anonymous, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier*, 223.

⁹⁰ Oska Read, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier*, 68.

posture is sure. Your eyes: a mirror into ourselves.”⁹¹ This is particularly potent as records are never the same to different people, as everyone who reads them brings a piece of themselves to their analysis. The project does not focus on letters that were written in the past, but asks individuals to make a record for the future. Though the war ended nearly one hundred years ago, war records are still being sought and used, while also inspiring the creation of new records today as a symbolic extension of the older war archives.

The book itself is comprised of a fraction of the letters written. Like Jan Peter’s *Diaries of the Great War*, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier* is a carefully selected representation of the public’s opinion of war and soldiers. Though not identical, this process is similar to archival processes, such as appraisal, description, and exhibition. Archiving is a personal process that needs to be recognized and internalized. The editors of *Letter to an Unknown Soldier*, Neil Bartlett and Kate Pullinger, state, “In creating this anthology, we have resisted any temptation to organise our chosen letters by theme or place of origin.”⁹² Nevertheless, the choice of which letters to include was inherently biased to maximize publication potential. They include very poignant letters, some of which are referenced above, as well as letters from prominent individuals like actor Stephen Fry and the British prime minister. Appraisal is a key instrument in altering public perception. *Letter to an Unknown Soldier* and *Diaries of the Great War* both demonstrate the impact of choosing a few examples to summarize momentous events. They are utilizing specific records, recreating them in different media, and sharing them

⁹¹ Sean Spain, *Letter to an Unknown Soldier*, 35.

⁹² Bartlett and Pullinger, x.

with the world in a relatable and entertaining way to encourage participation and reflection.

Archival institutions have limited exhibition space and are primarily forums for research. Many people do not realize that they are open to the public, do not know what would be of interest, and do not know how to find information pertaining to themselves. Archival institutions are often in elaborate, grandiose buildings that may be guarded and are therefore imposing to non-academics. They are often seen as elitist and for academics only. Archival institutions need to gain an even larger presence on the Internet for the public to truly get a sense of the importance of these records and the institutions that hold them. In the meantime, historians and history enthusiasts are maintaining a presence online for the benefit of archival repositories everywhere.

PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

National cultural institutions, including museums, archives, and private organizations all use social media, blogs, online visual media, and exhibits to their advantage. In the twenty-first century, online presence is both expected and advantageous. Archives in particular have to reach new audiences and get the general public interested in their holdings.

It would be impossible to note every use of WWI records online. Both the benefit and the drawback to this medium is its seemingly endless nature. It seems that anyone can post anything at anytime and it will remain forever. However, there is no guarantee

that the information will remain available.⁹³ The online world is ephemeral, ever-changing, growing, and disappearing. Nevertheless, a few blogs and social media outlets are more popular and steadfast than others. Looking at but a few, we can see their popularity and, more importantly, their ability to reach a wide public.

Twitter and Facebook are two of the most popular social media sites. The IWM has a Twitter account dedicated to the centenary of WWI.⁹⁴ As of 7 March 2016, there were 22,500 followers of this one account. The administrators of the account post archival images and short tidbits of information. They follow along with the war chronologically and update regularly. They also inform their followers of centenary-related events and other blogs. The CWM and the AWM also have Twitter feeds, but not ones dedicated to the war.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, they post many WWI images and information. Social media is a way to use archival records, particularly photographs, to reach a large audience and hopefully garner online followers and in-person supporters.

The national cultural institutions of Britain, Canada, and Australia are also on Facebook. The Facebook pages of national cultural institutions augment the work done in their physical and digital domains. There are also independent companies that share information about the war, events, and archival documents. Some examples include War History Online, designating itself as “THE place for military history news and views”⁹⁶

⁹³ For example, Rachel Billington’s personal webpage was available as of 7 June 2016 and not as of 7 July 2016. Thanks to Internet Archive’s Way Back Machine, we can still access Billington’s webpage. <https://web.archive.org/web/20150910103139/http://www.rachelbillington.com/home/>. Billington’s broken webpage is a primary example of why it is important to archive online content.

⁹⁴ Imperial War Museum, Twitter, accessed 7 March 2016, https://twitter.com/IWM_Centenary.

⁹⁵ Canadian War Museum, Twitter, accessed 7 March 2016, <https://twitter.com/CanWarMuseum>; Australian War Memorial, Twitter, accessed 7 March 2016, <https://twitter.com/AWMemorial>.

⁹⁶ War History Online, Facebook, accessed 7 March 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/wrhstol/timeline>.

and the Canadian Virtual Military Museum.⁹⁷ Facebook is used as a forum to enhance interest and the ability to inform because it is able to reach people who cannot easily access the physical site. Furthermore, Facebook automatically generates Facebook pages based on users' interests, and therefore there are hundreds of pages that have images and information about the war, despite not being endorsed by a specific person or institution. However, some social media websites, such as Facebook, require followers to be signed up to the community. There are still many people who are not Facebook users, and therefore archival institutions need other means of reaching audiences. Archival images can also be found on other social media websites such as Imgur: the most awesome images on the internet, Reddit: the front page of the Internet, Flickr, Wikipedia, Academia, BuzzFeed, Tumblr, Historypin, YouTube, and Ancestry, when you search for "World War One" and "First World War".⁹⁸ Images in particular have been uploaded, downloaded, shared, liked, edited, appropriated, collaged, and archived.

Podcasts are another excellent way to reach audiences. The Imperial War Museum has created a series of WWI-related podcasts released between 9 September 2014 and 19 August 2015. Some of the podcasts feature records whereas others utilize recorded oral testimony. One podcast, "News From the Front," is a set of old interviews with WWI veterans who discuss how important correspondence was during the war.⁹⁹

Today, many people expect information to be free and readily accessible on the Internet. However, one information portal, Adam Matthew Digital (AMD), has put a

⁹⁷ Canadian Virtual Military Museum. Facebook, accessed 7 March 2016,

<https://www.facebook.com/Canadian-Virtual-Military-Museum-132262350165568/timeline>.

⁹⁸ <http://imgur.com/>; <https://www.reddit.com/>; <https://www.flickr.com/>; <https://www.wikipedia.org/>; <https://www.academia.edu/>; <https://www.buzzfeed.com/>; <https://www.tumblr.com/>; <https://www.historypin.org/>; <https://www.youtube.com/>; <http://www.ancestry.ca/>.

⁹⁹ Kate Clements, "Podcast 21: News From the Front," Imperial War Museum, 10 November 2014, accessed 7 July 2017, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/podcasts/voices-of-the-first-world-war/podcast-21-news-from-the-front>. There is no indication of when the interviews were done.

price on accessibility. Although it requires subscription-based access, AMD has become a single forum for historical study, including WWI studies. It brings together primary and secondary sources from Europe, America, and Australasia.¹⁰⁰ As of 2010, there were seven archives and libraries providing AMD access to their records.¹⁰¹ AMD organizes the records by subject, such as personal experiences of WWI, visual perspectives and narratives, propaganda, and recruitment.¹⁰² It is a fully searchable and indexed resource for historians, students, and history enthusiasts. It seamlessly interweaves oral testimony, letters, diaries, administrative records, images, newspapers, maps, and posters. It also makes Vera Brittain's wartime diaries available in digital format. However, for all its worth as a research tool, it lacks accessibility, visibility, and availability because of the proprietary nature of the website. Like the famed genealogical website, Ancestry, AMD has put a price on knowledge. Nevertheless, AMD does provide an excellent example of how records can be used to create a specific narrative and as a teaching apparatus. Whatever one thinks of charging for access, it may well be that portals, like AMD, will become a new forum to access millions of records from countless archival repositories in one place.

Archival records provide access to information that is on the one hand educational and sometimes even entertaining, but on the other hand can also be very practical. There is an entire area of France, known as "Zone rouge", where people are not allowed to visit because of unexploded WWI munitions.¹⁰³ According to one blog post, French

¹⁰⁰ Beth Hall, "A New Digital Portal for first World War Studies," *First World War Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 57, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19475021003621077#.VrEEWFJEsq8>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 59.

¹⁰² Adam Matthew Digital, "Products," accessed 8 July 2016, <http://www.amdigital.co.uk/m-products/view-all/>.

¹⁰³ Imgur, "The Red Zone of France," 26 June 2016, accessed 7 July 2016, <https://imgur.com/gallery/CdxZM>.

authorities are working to excavate the explosives, but they estimate that it could take several hundred years to complete.¹⁰⁴ I do not know whether the authorities use archives to hasten the process, as has been done in other places for World War II, but trench maps, orders-in-council, or war diaries may aid in determining the approximate location of the explosives.¹⁰⁵ Helping to ascertain where these unexploded bombs are located may be one way that archival documents can be used in the future. Access to records from multiple archival institutions would be necessary to attempt this feat, and an information portal would be valuable.

It is impossible to know what the future has in store for WWI records, but we can see the trend toward digital access and distribution. Looking at the history of the record is important because it provides context otherwise unknown. It also helps archivists and users prepare, in what little way they can, for how the records will be used in the future. Looking at the history of the record also provides another benefit: it helps inform people about what archival institutions do, what they can do, and how they shape historical consciousness. By demonstrating how fundamental records are to the everyday lives of community members, they are more likely to gain the support needed to sustain the profession and archival repositories.

Digitization is both a help and a hindrance to archival institutions. On the one hand, it increases the visibility and accessibility of archival documents. On the other hand, it propagates the misunderstanding that archives are storehouses of information, which therefore leads to assumptions that are incorrect. Archival institutions are not storehouses of information, but rather agents of social change, particularly those relating

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ NPR, "World War II Bombs Still Menace Germany," 5 June 2010, accessed 29 November 2016, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127476757>.

to human rights, and progenitors of historical memory through access and exhibition. Furthermore, many expect everything to be available online which is not, and will likely never be, feasible. Although digitized records help individuals research genealogy and makes archives more visible to the public, they may prevent people from visiting the archives in person and gaining even more understanding of the past. That being said, many of these lay researchers may never have visited an archival institution, and therefore providing digitized records is the best way to reach them. Serious researchers may be able to see the records in person, whether they have been digitized or not. Although digitizing records is costly and time-consuming, it often garners more support and visibility for the records and the institution. What is important is to get more users and record creators interested and involved in archives.

Another problem with digital records is the lack of contextual information. Countless images were created during the war. From an archival point of view, many photographs, especially those taken by amateur photographers, do not include important metadata, or descriptive information about the record, such as the name of the photographer, the date, the subject, or place where the photograph was taken. The lack of metadata is a problem for today's researchers, archivists, and history enthusiasts because that information is difficult to obtain so many years after the event, particularly at the rate that images and content are dispersed online.

Privatization of archival records is another issue, particularly when digital records are so easily shared and manipulated. Do companies like Ancestry and AMD have a right to sell access to information that is freely available? Should they? Digitization is expensive and it often comes down to private corporations paying, and charging, for the

convenience. Currently this trend to charge for information has not shifted from the digital to the physical world, but aid from the private sector has allowed archival institutions to reach a wider audience. Privatization may be an avenue to explore in order to open archival research further, but it challenges the very nature of community-oriented or public archival repositories, and the access to information that they freely and willingly provide.

Participatory archiving, whereby archivists and anyone with contextual knowledge about the records or knowledge of the contents of the records can provide information to an archival institution, is an alternate way for archival repositories to engage communities in the work of archives. In this way, communities get to say how the records are described, organized, and emphasized, thus providing more insight into the records. Another idea is from an old adage: if the people will not come to the records, bring the records, or at least reproductions of the records, to the people. Travelling exhibits and presentations are examples of this outreach strategy. For example, the Names and Knowledge Initiative at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), Archives of Manitoba, is helping northern communities reconstitute, and participate in, the creation of their cultural heritage by giving names and locations to otherwise unidentified images of people and places in HBCA's holdings.¹⁰⁶ The NAA's encouragement of community involvement in the creation of profiles for WWI soldiers is also an excellent way to engage people by getting them to use archival documents in the construction of their life-stories. It showcases their awareness of the popularity of social media. Popular television programs, such as the Canadian show *Who Do You Think You*

¹⁰⁶ For more information, please see:
http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/names_knowledge/index.html.

Are?, also demonstrate real uses for archival records, not only for students and scholars, but average citizens.¹⁰⁷ This sparks awareness and interest. But archivists must still care for the records, and have no shortage of work to do, particularly because funding is not always forthcoming. When funding becomes available, archival institutions may want to create an advocate position and put more effort into outreach initiatives to build awareness and hopefully increase funding further.

The potential challenges and possibilities increase exponentially as technology progresses and more individuals worldwide become more technologically adept. Understanding the histories of the records becomes significantly more difficult in the digital world. However, those histories are still important because they provide much-needed context for the records. Analyzing the contexts of creation and use speaks not only to the records' history, but also that of the society that preserved them. Digital technology can share information with millions in the blink of an eye and archival theory must stay abreast of this new phenomena. The digital world is vast and many archival institutions have not been able to scratch the surface of its potential to encourage present and future use.

CONCLUSION

Archival institutions are making excellent strides in becoming more visible and popular. Their online presence is ever-increasing through their websites and social media accounts where they are demonstrating the value of the records; they are focusing on

¹⁰⁷ Craig Heron, "Archives: Public Awareness and Engagement," *Archivaria* 78 (Fall 2014): 150, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/461>.

individuals and making research more relatable to the general public; and they are cooperating with other institutions and private companies to disseminate the information found in their holdings. The long list of modern uses, particularly commemorative projects, visual representations of the war, and social media, demonstrate the increased use and awareness of WWI records.

Deborah Morrison, former President and CEO of Canada's National History Society, argues that any framework for greater participation lies with the younger, digitally-competent, generation.¹⁰⁸ As Morrison argues, we must personalize history and demonstrate its relevance to the modern-day world.¹⁰⁹ She thinks that the world does not realize why archives are important. Traditionally, the priority has been to protect the records first and provide service to the public second. Morrison wants archival institutions to embrace the age of a user-focused community. We need to increase our public outreach because, as Morrison states,

It is no longer enough to just focus on doing the work of the archives itself; archivists need to invest in marketing and promoting those efforts. Otherwise you become like a product-centered company that produces the best thing in the world but fails because no one has ever heard of it.¹¹⁰

Community engagement is essential to awareness.

Individual archival documents and images have been used countless times, and therefore it is impossible to capture the complete history of a record. Nevertheless, looking at these collections of WWI records from Britain, Canada, and Australia, I can demonstrate how important they are to the fabric of society. The public today is inundated with references to the war, demonstrating uses of archival records, but not

¹⁰⁸ Deborah Morrison, "Archives and the Heritage Community," *Archivaria* 78 (Fall 2014): 166, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/461>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 167.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 168.

emphasizing the institutions that have housed them or the ways in which they were preserved and exhibited. With this knowledge, we can help citizens and politicians understand their importance to society and garner support financially and professionally. There are collections much older and larger, but none that are so visible to the public on an international scale. Archival institutions must continue to advocate for their continued support. If we can get the general public into the archives for personal research, there will be more awareness and, hopefully, more support for archives. Cultural institutions rely on community support while providing that community with the tools to form a coherent memory of the past. It is a symbiotic relationship, and while libraries, museums, and art galleries have vastly greater visibility and support than archives, archives now need their turn in the spotlight and much greater support.

Conclusion

“World Requiem”:¹ The Enduring Power of Records

Memory is short, and in the after time even those who have suffered most are apt to forget the extent of that despair which wasted so much youthful vitality, and darkened all the sunshine of the sweet years. Could we but have a few more records like these to aid the imagination of the militarist and the sceptic, I believe there would be few left who would be willing to condemn another generation to endure what this one has endured.

- Vera Brittain²

Vera Brittain’s war diaries are still among the most prominent personal records of WWI. Brittain quickly understood the importance of her war record after the war. She also saw that her records would “aid in the imagination” of the various individuals who would use them in the future. The same record can provide inspiration, condemnation, authentication, education, and even celebration, depending on its contextual environments. Records must be understood within their contexts of creation and use before and after they are deposited in an archival repository; therefore a history of the records is a valuable tool for archivists and the general public. Briefly looking at the history of the records of the First World War in Britain, Canada, and Australia, we can see the changing value that they have had over time and the enduring power that they will likely have for the future.

Greater understanding of the histories of the records will enhance an archive’s ability to represent the truth of the record.³ Although it is impossible to know every use and manipulation of a group of records, by looking at them throughout their existence, an

¹ John Foulds, “World Requiem, Op. 60,” Royal British Legion, Royal Albert Hall, London: 1923.

² Vera Brittain, “Foreword,” *A Chronicle of Youth*, 1922, in Vera Brittain, *War Diary, 1913-1917: Chronicle of Youth*, Alan Bishop and Terry Smart (eds.), (London: Victor Gollanca Ltd., 1981), 14.

³ In my opinion, if such a truth exists, the best way to capture it is to analyze the histories of the group of records.

archive can demonstrate their importance to the formation of social customs, memories, and historical narratives. While this thesis attempts to provide an overview with broad brush strokes of the history of a large group of WWI records in three countries, the thesis is merely starting the conversation, opening the door, to further study.

The history of the record plays a role in several archival duties, including appraisal, description, and provenance.⁴ The action of communicating the history of the record and publishing it in online databases further affects the history and future of a record. If archivists can embrace the necessity of a history of the record in their daily activities, they can truly maximize the effectiveness of their work. The information contained in the record can only communicate a fraction of the record's importance. Archivists can go beyond the information in the records by adding to the researcher's understanding of the processes the records went through and the uses they have had over time.

There is no telling what effect a history of the record may have on a user. To take one hypothetical example of the impact on research, a historical fiction writer may look at a WWI photograph of soldiers in the French countryside, smiling and waving cigars, looking like they are enjoying themselves. Without any contextual information, the writer may concoct a story of camaraderie and adventure. However, the interpretation may change if context is provided. The writer might learn that the photographs were being censored, suppressed, or completely doctored. Instead of using that picture for writing a novel about soldiers relaxing and joyful, now the author might use that picture as evidence for a novel about soldiers who had to suppress the trauma they were facing every day. The story would be less fictional with the help of archival records and

⁴ Nesmith, "Reopening Archives," 262, 270.

historical context. In other words, further contextual knowledge will help to shed light on a past that is often unknowingly shrouded in propaganda and socially constructed narratives. Furthermore, the histories would help archivists understand their collections and the records' creators more assuredly in order to provide more concise and precise descriptions. Lastly, a history of the record could speak to countless individuals looking to understand the past, or find more information about a piece of evidence. The histories could draw in those who would otherwise look elsewhere for what they are seeking.

As I noted in chapter three, other ways to spark public interest are an increased online presence, exhibitions, and making the records more relatable and visible to the general public. We must get the public excited about archives so that, in time, archivists may have the resources to expand their descriptions and improve other archival practices by utilizing the history of their records. The history of WWI records is vast, convoluted, interesting, and unique. It is important to look at the entirety of its history – from creation to present day – to understand how vital they were to the creation of wartime narratives over time and to demonstrate their increasing value in society.

In the first chapter we saw how integral the records were to the prosecution of the war on both physical and psychological levels, as well as the difficulty in collecting and preserving the war records. Records of the First World War were valued higher than any previous war, and individuals quickly saw their importance for posterity. The war deemed to end all wars in fact provided an impetus to keep the record of war. Many different types of records were created, but the vast majority were personal records and administrative documents, including propaganda. Where the latter helped the war to run more efficiently, the former inspired the soldiers to keep fighting for their loved ones at

the very least and for their families to continue support for the war effort. Governmental and personal records were both vital to the war effort. Propaganda, in the form of art, photography, text, and rhetoric, also had a lasting impact on the war and the memory of the war.

The second chapter shows that after the war one of the many problems governments faced involved what to do with the vast quantities of records created during the war. Records management often fell to the departments of defence and the records offices that administered and preserved them during the war. War records were culled, moved, lost, and eventually stored and organized. Many collections went through a series of appraisal processes throughout the interwar period. The governments knew the importance of the records and, selectively, cited them to defend their actions and reputations. Records were used for many different purposes, but political expediency was the most significant one for all countries involved in the war. The records were read by certain politicians and select historians, but rarely made available to the general public. The lasting effect of interwar handling of the records is how they were manipulated to consolidate certain ideas about the war. When only certain records are kept and are made public, they are the ones that will shape the public memory of the war, at least for those who did not fight. Returning soldiers were strongly encouraged not to speak about their war experiences, and therefore lived-experience counted for less than the propagandist messages extolled and controlled by political leaders. The tendentious official war histories, the memorials and exhibits, the photographs, and information given to the public all led to people's understanding of the war. Propaganda, in the form of art,

photography, text, and rhetoric, also had a lasting impact on the war and the memory of the war.

Aside from correspondence, visual representation of the war seems to be the most sought-after war record today. Where once administrative records were held in utmost regard in conducting the war, defending a nation in the postwar "war guilt" debate, and in official histories of wartime achievements, it is the personal testimony that has captured the imaginations of people today. If the sometimes questioned Canadian concept of total archives, or the idea that administrative and personal records should be archived, needs evidence in its favour, WWI records provide it. If the continued uses of records were unintended in the interwar period, they would be wholly unexpected today. More than anything else, records are used for education, commemoration, and entertainment. This shift away from their original military purposes is likely the result of the absence of the lived-experience of the war, the centenary of the war, the popularity of genealogy, ease of access, and political expediency. In this new Age of Technology, the public expects easy access to information, and more than ever before has the ability to share information on a global scale. The centenary of the First World War could not go unnoticed, and commemorative celebrations were expected. National archival institutions are digitizing their WWI records so they can be read, downloaded, Tweeted, shared, liked, edited, collaged, and distributed like never before. Furthermore, national cultural institutions have the ability to control the information shared with the public in exhibitions and information panels. The information provided, often supported by carefully chosen archival records, has the appearance of truth, and its accuracy is rarely questioned, thus giving the institution the opportunity to further mould ideas about the past. Historical

films and television programs can reach audiences on a massive scale. Remembrance ceremonies have increased in pomp and ceremony leading up to the centenary, and exhibitions are shared around the world. More than at any other time, WWI records are available and accessible to the general public. Now, historical study is both for academics as well as a host of new archival researchers.

However, despite the popularity of records, there are still countless people who do not understand the significance of archival institutions. Many do not question how or why the records are still available; they just expect them to be available. By looking at this mass of records in three different national contexts it is easy to see the importance of archival records and the archival repositories that preserve them. The popularity of these records exemplifies the fact that archives should be supported financially and socially. As Robert McIntosh explains, the “memory of the past is embedded in a vast array of documents whose contents and meaning have been constituted and shaped along a long continuum of records manufacture astride which archivists are crucially poised.”⁵ Archivists need greater support to perform well the key role McIntosh identifies. The history of WWI records demonstrates how, and sometimes why, they were used over time and this knowledge is necessary for both archivists and the general public. Over time, a larger variety of people used the records, starting solely with the military, bureaucrats, and politicians and eventually expanding to include school children and other members of the general public today. However, while use of the records has increased and diversified, understanding of archival institutions remains vague. Furthermore, despite being experts in their field and highly valuable in society, archivists are neither given enough support from governments and the community to which they

⁵ McIntosh, 20.

belong, nor do they have sufficient authority over the administration of some of their services.⁶

Tom Nesmith suggests that we are “entering the archival stage in the history of knowledge,” whereby archival research plays a larger role in the formation of historical understanding than ever before.⁷ The example of the widening use and impact of WWI records supports this idea. Archivists believe in open access, public scrutiny, and freedom to craft our own narratives from the “unadulterated” sources. However, we need to understand how archives are shaped, and how the archives themselves are not “unbiased” history, primal windows onto historical fact, just waiting to be moulded. They are in fact, selected, processed, and utilized, and I would argue that our perceptions of these records are influenced to a greater degree than we would like by propaganda and deeply ingrained mythologies. This is largely due to the digital environment, social media, education system, mass media, and many newfound and unexpected uses of archives.⁸ Records are fundamental to our daily lives, often unbeknownst to the general public. Nesmith almost pleads for the support of archival institutions, particularly to begin preserving born-digital records that are quickly disappearing. He explains that we need to create a foundation of support from the public in order to gain the financial support necessary to continue to preserve archival materials. Demonstrating the profound importance of the records of the First World War is one way to gain the public’s attention. We need to know where we have been before we know where we are going and

⁶ Tom Nesmith, “Toward the Archival Stage in the History of Knowledge,” *Archivaria* 80 (Fall, 2015): 119, <http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/issue/view/463>. For example, in the third chapter I noted how archival institutions in the UK were protesting restriction and copyright policies.

⁷ Ibid., 122.

⁸ Ibid.

the history of a record can shed light on the intricacies of the historical narrative and society as a whole.

When I started the Archival Studies master's program, I did not realize how important archival records are to society. I understood that records were the stuff of history, quite literally, but not how they have shaped societies on a local, national, and international level. It quickly became clear how postmodern theories would help to shape not only my understanding of archival records, but of the historical profession as a whole. What truly resonated was that the uses of archival records have shaped the way society views historical events over time. Memories of past events are fickle and easily manipulated. The uses of the records of the First World War, particularly the propaganda during the war, demonstrate this fact very well. There is no question that WWI records have shaped the way we understand the war in the past and the present.

This thesis is only a beginning. It will hopefully spur other projects, such as closer study of specific WWI records in a particular time and place; how archival institutions have shaped social memory and historical narratives; the histories of other records; the appreciation of a detailed analysis of records over time and what they can teach us about ourselves and each other; an increased understanding of the First World War; and the need for support for archival institutions. Cultural institutions have the ability to shape these historical narratives and therefore the memory of past events. Archival records need to be publicly accessible and administered transparently. In order to increase accessibility they also need to be understood, acknowledged, and supported on local, national, and international levels. I hope that my thesis will help, even in some small way, to bridge the gap between those few, but dedicated people who use archival records, and those who

have never heard of archives. The popularity of WWI records will prove a boon in bridging this gap.

It has been one hundred years since the war and the records endure, albeit a fraction of the number originally created. Seeing the evolution of their use over time demonstrates the versatility and power that records have in society. The popularity of these records has increased rapidly with the centenary of the war. If archives are going to gain the understanding and support of the public, they will have to utilize the deep connection many feel toward the past. They will have to use these records, and the many other records available around the world, to show the people how important archives are to society. Archives have the power to shape the fabric of social memory and popular culture, but only if archival records are available and visible for generations to come.

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